

To: [Committee, EC \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Inquiry into Environmental Offsets > Submission
Date: Thursday, 13 March 2014 12:22:41 PM

I note that Senate Environment and Communications References Committee is currently an inquiry into the effectiveness of the use of environmental offsets in federal environmental approvals in Australia and as an environmental professional with many years of experience dealing with EPBC approval decisions, I ask that the Committee consider the following questions:

- If proponents of projects are to appropriately consider, with advice from environmental consultants and government officials, what land areas of water bodies in Australia are available for an offset, why doesn't the Department of the Environment through the online [interactive map tool](#) indicate to proponents what sites across Australia have already been used for an offset under decisions made under the EPBC?
- How does the Department of the Environment prevent multiple offset decisions being made for the same land area or water body given that state and territory planning departments, the National Capital Authority and local government authorities also make decisions thereby approving offset arrangements for developments and yet much of this is unmapped and not publically available?
- Is the Committee aware that the ACT Government has attempted to make available details of offset sites that are associated with developments via its online [interactive mapping service](#)?
- Why doesn't the Department of the Environment use Certified Environmental Practitioners to independently check (audit) that management (maintenance and monitoring) requirements for offset decisions approved under EPBC decisions are being implemented?
- What assurance can the Department of the Environment provide in relation to its enforcement of compliance of all EPBC offset decisions made in relation to Commonwealth related actions? For example, provided below are effectiveness questions that could be asked following the 2012 EPBC decision concerning the Defence Training Facilities at the Greenbank Training Area in Queensland:
 - Was the required Offset Strategy for this development ever submitted to and subsequently approved by the Environment Minister in accordance with the EPBC approval decision?
 - Has 350 hectares of remnant vegetation been rehabilitated and protected as part of the offset decision for this new Defence Training Facilities?
 - Are ongoing vertebrate surveys being conducted at the Greenbank Training Area as part of the offset decision for this new Defence Training Facility?
 - Have remediation actions to halt soil erosion been undertaken within the Greenbank Training Area as part of the offset decision for this new Defence Training Facility?

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