

Environment and Communications
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

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Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 2
Division/Agency: Nature Positive Taskforce
Topic: Staffing for the EPA
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Duniam asked:

Senator DUNIAM: Just going off the organisational structure—

Mr Tregurtha: Not all of these will be able to be cut out from the organisational chart because some of the regulatory functions are currently embedded with the policy and other administrative functions and we would just take the regulatory component out. A great example of that would be in relation to the permitting aspects for wildlife trade or the permitting aspects for recycling and waste going overseas. So those regulatory functions currently are co-located with the policy and other administrative functions the government undertakes, including participation in international agreements, all of which would stay, rightly, with the department. So there would be regulatory components of those areas that relate to the permitting and licensing functions that will go into the EPA.

Senator DUNIAM: Okay. So, can you give me, on notice, a rough idea of what number of staff from existing branches and divisions—

Mr Tregurtha: I am happy to take it on notice but I should also caution that one of the other things that will happen on the creation of the EPA is that there will have to be a machinery of government process in relation to the department's corporate functions. Without knowing the full scope and scale of the EPA—which will only really be known once we have finished the legislative and policy development process—it would be very hard for us to estimate, and I would be very reluctant to hypothesise where the machinery of government process would land. So, as I said, I am happy to take it on notice and see what we can provide, but there might be some limitations in terms of what we can give you at this point in time.

Answer:

The staffing profile of EPA will comprise existing Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) staff undertaking regulatory functions that include:

- environmental assessments;
- wildlife, waste and environmental permitting;
- compliance and enforcement; and
- EPBC regulatory support functions.

In addition to existing department staff transferring to EPA, new staff will undertake critical enabling and corporate functions to support the new entity.

The final staffing profile and size of EPA, including the number and scope of existing staff transferring from the department, will be informed by the final scope of the legislation.