

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001465

OUTCOME: 7 - Health Infrastructure, Regulation, Safety and Quality

Topic: The National Assessment of Chemicals Associated with Coal Seam Gas Extraction

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Waters, Larissa

Question:

Further to SQ14-000625 of Budget Estimates 2014:

- a) Please advise what is involved in a “preliminary” assessment of environmental risks of contaminants that may be mobilised by CSG activity, and what more would be involved in a more comprehensive assessment.
- b) Will the final assessment report advise for which contaminants there was sufficient available data to undertake a preliminary environmental risk assessment, and for which contaminants insufficient data was available to support such an assessment?

Answer:

- a) The “preliminary” assessment of environmental risks of contaminants that may be mobilised by coal seam gas activity will assess whether the information available on these contaminants is sufficient to allow a robust risk assessment.

In a comprehensive assessment, the measured concentrations of the contaminants in the flowback/produced waters will be compared with the concentrations known to produce environmental effects to determine the likelihood of any adverse environmental effects actually occurring.

- b) These issues will be addressed as the report is finalised and made public.