

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 314
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Melbourne Strategic Assessment
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 11 March 2016
Question Type: Written

Senator Rice asked:

1. How many alterations to conservation areas have been approved by the Commonwealth Department to date via the implementation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (associated with the Melbourne Strategic Assessment)?
2. Of these, how many referrals for decisions around conservation areas under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment have been made to the Commonwealth Environment Minister in association with Conditions 2 and 3 of the Approval?
3. In these cases, what does the Environment Minister require in the way of information to inform their decision?
4. Does the commonwealth consult with the community or other stake holders ?
5. What does the commonwealth do to ensure that the state has done the appropriate checks and verification of information ?

Answer:

1. Four adjustments to conservation area boundaries associated with the Melbourne Strategic Assessment have been approved by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment or his delegate.
2. All approved adjustments to conservation area boundaries are in association with condition 3 of the *Final Approval for Urban Development in Three Growth Corridors Under the Melbourne Urban Growth Program Strategic Assessment*.
3. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, or his delegate, must be satisfied that the request to alter a conservation area, is fulsome and in accordance with the *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors, February 2015*, as agreed between the Commonwealth Environment Department and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning DELWP in May 2015.
4. Consultation on the alterations of conservation boundaries is undertaken by the Victorian Government. In circumstances where concerns over boundaries were raised directly with the Minister, the Department engaged with those landowners to ensure they understood the process required to alter the boundaries.
5. The Commonwealth Environment Department continues to work closely with the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to refine guidance documentation which supports the ongoing implementation of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment. The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning are bound by such documents as the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework* to ensure that all information is

appropriately checked and verified. There is also the *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors, February 2015*. Further information regarding the *Guidance Note* can be found below.

http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/300693/Guidance-Note-Feb-2015.pdf.