

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 146
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: International Climate Change and Energy Innovation Division (ICCEID)
Topic: Land clearing in the Barrier Reef catchment area
Hansard Page: 89
Question Date: 22 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Chisholm asked:

Senator CHISHOLM: Do you have any data about how much land has been cleared in the Barrier Reef catchment area?

Mr Cahill: I do not definitively. We have what has been subject to referral or anything that we have been looking at. But definitively and more broadly, I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Department of Environment and Energy estimates of net forest loss in the Great Barrier Reef catchment area are provided in the table and chart below. These estimates are derived from satellite imagery used in the preparation of Australia's National Greenhouse Accounts and are accounted for within the State Inventory estimates for Queensland.

Table 1: Area of forest clearing in the Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area

Year ending June	Primary forest clearing *	Secondary forest re-clearing	Secondary forest re-growth	Net area of forest loss [#]
1990	128,983 ha	65,046 ha	105,917 ha	88,113 ha
1991	77,857 ha	60,002 ha	46,621 ha	91,238 ha
1992	79,868 ha	65,964 ha	50,462 ha	95,371 ha
1993	51,400 ha	62,279 ha	50,296 ha	63,383 ha
1994	51,617 ha	62,619 ha	50,333 ha	63,903 ha
1995	33,675 ha	37,333 ha	31,930 ha	39,078 ha
1996	38,722 ha	43,046 ha	36,956 ha	44,812 ha
1997	37,158 ha	41,492 ha	34,913 ha	43,737 ha
1998	34,547 ha	50,331 ha	37,513 ha	47,365 ha
1999	35,374 ha	51,319 ha	38,224 ha	48,469 ha
2000	60,469 ha	55,377 ha	25,945 ha	89,901 ha
2001	70,788 ha	64,788 ha	29,933 ha	105,644 ha
2002	60,963 ha	55,841 ha	32,673 ha	84,131 ha
2003	34,317 ha	48,616 ha	30,576 ha	52,358 ha
2004	40,069 ha	63,005 ha	24,609 ha	78,465 ha
2005	57,110 ha	90,926 ha	42,756 ha	105,280 ha
2006	39,384 ha	62,932 ha	53,559 ha	48,757 ha
2007	29,814 ha	56,970 ha	62,183 ha	24,601 ha
2008	21,051 ha	55,872 ha	91,051 ha	-14,128 ha
2009	13,266 ha	39,012 ha	109,241 ha	-56,963 ha
2010	8,990 ha	36,748 ha	64,530 ha	-18,792 ha

2011	7,153 ha	36,381 ha	64,374 ha	-20,840 ha
2012	6,071 ha	48,148 ha	80,065 ha	-25,846 ha
2013	7,638 ha	65,890 ha	70,625 ha	2,903 ha
2014	7,630 ha	51,909 ha	121,830 ha	-62,291 ha
2015	8,777 ha	65,759 ha	100,127 ha	-25,592 ha
2016	8,205 ha	54,076 ha	111,018 ha	-48,737 ha

A negative net loss represents a gain in forest cover.

* Primary forests are those which have been forest since satellite imagery records began in 1972 until the moment of clearing activity.

Secondary forest re-clearing is clearing activity on low biomass, regrowth forests that are not primary forest either because the land has been observed to have been cleared previously or was grassland in 1972.

The Great Barrier Reef catchment area is defined as the terrestrial domain comprising the Burnett Mary, Fitzroy, Mackay Whitsunday, Burdekin and Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management Regions, plus the component of Cape York that is inside the North East Coast region of the Australian Drainage Divisions.

