

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

Question No: 24
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)
Topic: Australian Biodiversity Strategy
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 21 October 2015
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

1. What is the progress of the update of the Australian Biodiversity Strategy?
2. What is in the strategy?
3. What areas will it be focusing on and why?
4. Is it still on target for the 31 December 2015?
5. Has the public been given the opportunity to have input?
6. How comprehensive have these consultations been?

Answer:

1. Question asked and answered during the hearing – refer to page 102 of the Hansard transcript.
2. Development of a revised strategy will be informed by the findings of the review of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (Strategy).
3. The review is examining the operation and implementation of the Strategy, alignment with Australia's international obligations such as those under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and opportunities to improve and streamline the Strategy.
4. Question asked and answered during the hearing – refer to page 102 of the Hansard transcript.
5. Question asked and answered during the hearing – refer to page 102 of the Hansard transcript.
6. On 16 July 2015, Environment Ministers opened public consultation seeking input to the review on implementation challenges, emerging issues, and opportunities to improve the Strategy. Information on the consultation process was made available on the Australian Government Department of the Environment's website.

Consultation was open for eight weeks until 11 September 2015, however responses were received as late as 25 September. 28 standalone public submissions were received.

In addition, the Department conducted a web survey to consult with key stakeholder groups. The Department provided the survey to over 250 business and industry associations, environment and community non-government organisations, local governments, scientific, heritage and academic bodies, and Indigenous peoples. To

ensure accessibility, hard copies of the survey were mailed by post to stakeholders with difficulty accessing the internet. Broader distribution may have occurred where recipients circulated the survey link amongst their members or to associated groups. Members of the Biodiversity Working Group, which comprises representatives from each State and Territory Government and the Australian Local Government Association, were also provided the survey for distribution amongst their jurisdictional stakeholders.

The survey was open for five weeks, from the 21 August to 25 September 2015, during which 39 survey responses were received.

The views provided through the public consultation process and the web survey are being considered in the review of Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.