

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

Question No: 96
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.5
Programme: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: EPBC Offsets Policy
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Question Date: 19 October 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: Okay. The timing for delivery of the offsets for the black-throated finch under the old condition was two years after the first impact on the site and that condition has been retained in the second and current approval and yet the EPBC offsets policy says that it is preferable to have the offsets secured before the impact occurs. How can you describe two years after as Minister Hunt's strictest environmental condition?

Ms Callister: I would have to check through the conditions in detail but it is not uncommon for us to require the offsets to be identified and the plan to be presented in advance of the impact, but then allowing some additional time for that to be secured in law under covenant. That is quite a standard approach and that often just reflects that it can take some time to get that through the relevant state government processes to secure those offsets in law, but we do require the offsets strategies and the offsets to be identified up front in advance of the impact.

Answer:

Adani is required to secure and manage at least 31,000 hectares to compensate for impacts on the southern subspecies of the black-throated finch.

At least three months prior to the commencement of mining, Adani must submit a Biodiversity Offset Strategy that clearly identifies the offsets they will secure and manage for the finch.

This Biodiversity Offset Strategy must be approved by the Minister or his delegate and provides an additional safeguard to ensure adequate offsets are provided and properly managed.

Within two years of commencement of mining, Adani must secure the agreed offset areas. The two year timeframe allows the proponent to fulfil administrative and legal requirements associated with securing long-term protection for the offset areas.

Additionally, the impacts on the areas to be offset will occur in a staged manner over a period of years.