

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

Question No: 114
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest
Hansard Page: 130
Question Date: 17 October 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters, Larissa asked:

Senator WATERS: I understand that that particular mine is relying on mine rehabilitation to fulfil a good 56 per cent of their offset requirements for the critically endangered Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest. I am a bit rusty on the offsets policy, but that does seem like quite a large amount to rely upon mining rehab as an offset.

Mr Cahill: I might have to take that one on notice and look at the detail of the degree of offset in that proposal.

Senator WATERS: Okay, and whether that is an unusually large amount.

Mr Cahill: Yes, I will.

Answer:

The draft Environmental Impact Statement for the United and Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (EPBC 2015/7600) proposes a biodiversity offset package for the recently listed Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland ecological community. An impact of 223.5 hectares is proposed to be offset by 1,246.9 hectares, which includes 878 hectares of mine rehabilitation using the species comprising the threatened ecological community.

The project is currently being assessed under the bilateral agreement with the New South Wales Government. The adequacy of the proposed offset package is being considered as part of this process. It should be noted that each project, and any associated offset proposal, is assessed on its merits based on the particular circumstances and therefore generalisations regarding the constituent elements of particular offset proposals cannot be made.