

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 20-24 October 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Port on Melville Island – environmental impact study

Senator: Senator Nova Peris

Question reference number: 44

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Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator PERIS: You have just said that it is a port and it has international recognition, which brings me to the next question. I would assume that an environmental impact study has been done?

Senator Scullion: That would be something I would have to take on notice. I am with you; I would assume that that is the case.

Senator PERIS: Given the fact that it is a 30 million litre tank and it is 15 per cent of the territory's fuel storage on the Tiwi Islands.

Senator Scullion: I will have to take the answer on notice, but my instinct is that invariably bunkering facilities are actually subject to standards rather than environmental impact statements. Those standards, for example, require in the Northern Territory 100 per cent of bunding facilities—in other words, if something ruptures, it is kept within a bunding wall that will take 100 per cent of the fuel that is stored within those tanks. It is that sort of arrangement that is now done under a standard rather than under a particular EIS or something like that. So they would have to meet the standards that are set down for the storage of fuel, as they would elsewhere in Australia.

Answer:

Commonwealth approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is only required if an action is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance.

The Department of the Environment is currently working with the proponent of the port development on Melville Island to determine whether the action requires assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.