

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

Question No: 107

Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates

Outcome: Outcome 7

Programme: Renewables Projections & Governance Division

Topic: Renewable Energy Certificates

Hansard Page: N/A

Question Date: 27 November 2013

Question Type: Written

Senator Rhiannon asked:

Regarding energy generated from native forest wood: What are the greenhouse impacts of using native forest wood to generate electricity when the impacts of the original logging are taken into account?

Answer:

The greenhouse impact of using native forests to generate electricity depends on whether the wood is a waste product from the logging operation or harvested for the purpose of electricity generation.

If the wood is a waste, it is more likely that there would not be a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This advice takes into account that:

- the waste could have otherwise have been burnt in the open or allowed to rot – both of which would result in the release of greenhouse gas emissions;
- electricity produced using this waste could displace coal-fired or gas-fired electricity generation; and
- emissions from the act of harvesting the timber are unlikely to be considered in a full fuel cycle analysis for electricity generation (as only waste is used for electricity generation).