

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

Question No: 54

Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates

Outcome: Outcome 5

Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division

Topic: Macquarie Marshes

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Question Date: 27 November 2013

Question Type: Spoken

Senator Rhiannon asked:

Senator RHIANNON: With regard to that, I was interested in how the listings affect the livelihoods of those depending on these rivers and marshes—the graziers, the farmers and the people with vineyards. Has that work been done?

Mr Knudson: I go back to my previous comments. Obviously I will check with my colleagues in the wildlife and heritage marine division and provide any further information, if there is any. But my understanding is that the most significant impact of having a listing of a threatened ecological community is that that further facilitates the taking into account the ecological assets associated with that community when environmental assessments are being undertaken for individual projects. So in that sense it advances our ability to ensure that the ecological integrity of that community is protected and that by inference would support various livelihoods associated with that. But that is not the primary purpose of the environmental assessment. That would be a subsequent impact.

Answer:

The *Wetlands and Inner Floodplains of the Macquarie Marshes* was listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) between 13 August and 11 December 2013. During that time any activity that was likely to have a significant impact on the ecological community required referral to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment for assessment and approval. No referrals were received.