

Senate Environment and Communications Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Inquiry into the impact of seismic testing on fisheries and the marine environment
18 March 2021

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES

TOPIC: Further Questions regarding NOPTA Consultation

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Written, Senator Urquhart, 22 March 2021)

QUESTION No.: 9

1. Does the Department consult specifically with industry prior to an annual acreage release?
2. What weight is given to these various views?
3. Could you outline the “comprehensive, staged process” engaged in by the Department when it comes to consultations on acreage release?
4. Why is local government not included in that process?

ANSWER

The Department of Industry Science Energy Resources (the department) publicly consults on areas proposed for release prior to a decision on the final release areas.

Anyone who has an interest in a specific area/s has the opportunity to provide information relevant to exploration in that area or areas via the department’s Consultation Hub. This includes:

- other government agencies (including federal, state and local);
- the public;
- industry; and
- other marine users, like the fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries.

The department advertises the public consultation opportunity via a newsletter as well as on the department’s website. Additionally, the department asks the relevant State and Territory Governments to promote the public consultation with other stakeholders that may have an interest in the acreage release process.

Public consultation generally runs over a six week period. The department considers all submissions in its advice to the relevant Joint Authority (composed of the relevant state/territory and Commonwealth Ministers or their delegates) to inform decisions on areas to include in an upcoming acreage release.

Pages 17-18 of the department’s November 2019 submission, published on the webpage for the Inquiry into the impact of seismic testing on fisheries and the marine environment, describes the acreage release process.