

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

Question No: 33
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)
Topic: National Reserve System
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 23 February 2015
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

In relation to QON 19 where the Department states that Australia has already met its target of 17% of terrestrial land and inland water protected by 2020. Can you run us through how the 17% that has been achieved is being protected, as opposed to just made a part of the NRS?

Answer:

The National Reserve System includes more than 10,000 protected areas covering 17.88 per cent of the country and more than 137 million hectares. It is made up of a range of properties, including Commonwealth, state and territory reserves, Indigenous lands and protected areas run by non-profit conservation organisations, through to ecosystems protected by farmers on their private working properties.

By size, states and territories are primarily responsible for reserve establishment and management in Australia.

The Australian Government has responsibility for managing six Commonwealth terrestrial national parks and a network of marine reserves in Commonwealth waters. National environmental law provides protection for these parks and reserves from unacceptable impacts.

The Australian Government is continuing to work with its conservation partners to improve management approaches and position the National Reserve System as an even more important ecological asset for the future. For example, the Commonwealth Director of National Parks regularly engages with her State and Territory counterparts, including through the Head of Park Agencies forum.