

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

**Question No:** 291  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Programme:** Environment Standards Division (ESD)  
**Topic:** Fire related strategic assessment  
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**Question Date:** 04 March 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Rice asked:**

**Senator RICE:** Could you take on notice whether there have been discussions, specifically fire related strategic assessment discussions, with each of the states I mentioned?

**Mr Tregurtha:** Certainly.

**Answer:**

Strategic assessments are one of a number of approaches to manage significant impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) that are protected by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

A strategic assessment of *'fire management policy for lands under the care and control of the South Australian Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation'* has been in place with South Australia since early 2015.

General discussions have been held with all states and territories about potential regulatory streamlining opportunities, including strategic assessments. The current 'Strategic Assessment Prospectus' includes fire management as an example of a policy, program or plan that can be approved following a strategic assessment. It also includes reference to the existing strategic assessment with South Australia on fire management.

Discussions on potential strategic approaches to fire management under the EPBC Act occurred with New South Wales in 2014 and Victoria in 2015. Neither jurisdiction is actively pursuing a strategic assessment of fire management practices at this time.

Broader discussions on prospective strategic assessments with Western Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are ongoing, and may extend to discussions of fire management regimes.

A strategic assessment of a fire management regime is most likely to be considered in jurisdictions with a high confluence of MNES and fire management activities.