

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

Question No: 47
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Western Sydney Airport - Noise impacts on the wildlife in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area
Hansard Page: 131
Question Date: 08 March 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Cameron asked:

Senator CAMERON: Do you know if there was a review of noise impacts on the wildlife in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area?

Mr Knudson: When the decision was made that this was a controlled action, back in December of 2014, one of the provisions that was required for assessment was potential significant impacts on the World Heritage values associated with a declared World Heritage property, and also listed threatened species and ecological communities. So to the extent that those are impacted by noise, pollution and whatever, that will be required to be assessed.

Senator CAMERON: It will required to be assessed? It has not been assessed, but there is draft EIS?

Mr Knudson: I did not say that.

Senator CAMERON: I am asking. I have a question mark behind that.

Mr Knudson: Understood. I also have not read the draft EIS. It would be our staff—mine and Mr Tregurtha's—who would be looking at the details of the individual assessment.

Senator CAMERON: Who is dealing with that?

Mr Roberts: I will have to take your specific question on notice. I know the team that looked at this looked at a range of noise related factors. Your specific question about noise impacts on wildlife I will have to take on notice.

Senator CAMERON: Do you know if there were any ambient noise measures from a representative sample of locations?

Mr Roberts: I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The draft Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statement includes dedicated chapters on aircraft noise (Chapter 10) and ground based noise (Chapter 11). Noise impacts are also discussed in relation to human health (Chapter 13), wildlife (Chapter 16), social values (Chapter 23) and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (Chapter 26).

Appendix E2 to the draft Environmental Impact Statement explains how ambient noise measurements, taken from ten locations in accordance with the relevant Australian standard, are used to inform the assessment of ground based noise.

The assessment of the Western Sydney Airport is ongoing. Until the Environmental Impact Statement is finalised, the Department cannot reach any conclusions on the impacts of the Airport or make any recommendations to the Minister as to whether and under what conditions it should proceed.