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

Question No:	102
Hearing:	Additional Estimates
Outcome:	Outcome 2
Program:	International Climate Change and Energy Innovation Division (ICCEID)
Topic:	Land sector emissions
Hansard Page:	-
Question Date:	14 March 2017
Question Type:	Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

Is it correct that 'land clearing' or 'deforestation' data in government accounts only includes clearing of 'forests' with a crown cover of over 20%?
a. If so, this means that clearing of vegetation with less than 20% crown cover is not properly accounted for. Is that correct?
b. If so, what are the impacts for our emission projections? How will these impacts be managed with respect to our emission reduction targets?

Answer:

Yes. Emissions from the clearing of forest cover, which include woody vegetation that has 20% or more canopy coverage, are reported under the classifications 'forest conversion to other land uses' (for the inventory submitted under the UNFCCC).

a. No, emissions from the loss of woody vegetation in sub-forest areas, which include woody vegetation that has less than 20% canopy coverage, are reported under the classification 'Grasslands'.

This is described, for example, in the National Inventory Report Vol. 2 pages 3, 6, 15, 60, 68, 73 http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/cab3140e-5adb-479f-9af4-a7c605d762dc/files/national-inventory-report-2014-revised-vol-2.pdf.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, these net emission impacts are reported under the classification 'Grazing Management'. The decision to account for these impacts under the Kyoto Protocol through the classification 'Grazing Management' was announced in early 2013.

b. The emission projections include an assessment of the trends in sub-forest woody vegetation which are projected to be broadly carbon neutral over the longer term. This category of net emissions are open to management though Emission Reduction Fund projects. For example, one method that is concerned with these emissions are the ERF projects on savanna burning since these projects often tend to straddle lands that are classified as forest and lands that contain woody vegetation that are classified under the Grasslands classification.