

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

Question No: 50
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: EPBC Act Reform
Hansard Page: 87
Question Date: 27 February 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: Has the government been contacted by stakeholders regarding reforming the act?

Mr Tregurtha: As Mr Cahill was just talking about, the department maintains a dialogue with a range of stakeholders—industry, environment and the community more broadly—in relation to a range of matters in relation to the EPBC Act, reform being one of those matters. So we have ongoing discussions about how we can make the act work better and what elements of the act are and how they are working and the perspectives of each of those sectors.

Senator URQUHART: So those stakeholders are industry and—

Mr Tregurtha: Industry, environment groups, civil community. We have a range of discussions.

Senator URQUHART: Are you able to provide a list of who those are?

Mr Tregurtha: I would have to take that on notice in terms of the specifics. As I said, there are a range of different stakeholder groups that we meet with, but I am sure we can provide you with something on notice

Answer:

The Department and the Minister are frequently contacted by government and non-government stakeholders in relation to reforms to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

These stakeholders include industry representative bodies, such as the Minerals Council of Australia and the Business Council of Australia; environmental non-government organisations, such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and Humane Society International; and state and territory governments. Engagement occurs through various channels, including meetings, correspondence, phone conversations and Parliamentary processes, such as Committee Inquiries and Productivity Commission reviews.

Since the previous Senate Estimates discussion on this matter on 17 October 2016, the Department has identified one formal meeting where EPBC Act reform was an agenda item. This meeting was held between departmental senior executives and representatives of the National Farmers' Federation, which constitute the Agriculture and Environment Consultative Committee.

The topic of EPBC Act reform may also have arisen in less formal settings or in connection with discussions that were focused on other matters. Due to the informal nature of these interactions, it is possible that EPBC Act reform has been discussed elsewhere, but the topic has not been reflected in meeting agendas, minutes or other records.