

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 51
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Clearing of EPBC listed land
Hansard Page: 88
Question Date: 27 February 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: So how many hectares of EPBC listed threatened ecological communities have been allowed to be cleared by the federal government in the last five years? And what were the offsets?

Mr Cahill: I will have to take that on notice. There are some elements that we may not be able to get a full picture on, because we would go through a lot of records. But I will take that on notice and see what we can do within reasonable limits.

Answer:

The Department does not hold aggregated data concerning the extent of clearing of threatened ecological communities.

There are 80 threatened ecological communities listed as protected under the EPBC Act. These represent a diverse range of ecosystems, including grasslands, woodlands and forests.

Since January 2012, the Minister has made 365 decisions under Parts 7 or 9 of the EPBC Act relating to actions where EPBC-listed ecological communities were a consideration. These decisions are publicly available on the Department's website at

<http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/referralslist/>

The *EPBC Act Environmental Offset Policy* and *Offset Assessment Guide* requires that any residual significant impact to an ecological community must be compensated through the establishment of an equivalent offset.