

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

Question No: 106
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.4
Programme: Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division
Topic: Christmas Island Biodiversity Plan - rejection of draft plan
Hansard Page:
Question Date:
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

According to QON48 from Additional Estimates, the community of Christmas Island essentially rejected the draft Christmas Island Biodiversity plan en masse due to concerns about the economic and social impacts of the plan. Does the Department feel those concerns are valid and reasonable? What are the expected economic and social impacts in question? Did the Department take those concerns into account when preparing a revised draft plan for the Threatened Species Scientific Committee?

Answer:

In developing a recovery plan under the EPBC Act, regard must be had to minimising any significant adverse social and economic impacts.

Several concerns raised are considered valid and the plan is proposed to be changed accordingly. A major proposed change is having the plan cover only the 17 EPBC listed species, instead of also including other ecologically significant species. Concerns such as abandoning the plan or having the plan apply to the national park only are not considered valid, given the number of threatened species and because key threats like invasive species impact across tenures.

A revised plan has yet to be taken to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee for their consideration.