

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

Question No: 140
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.5
Programme: Environment Assessment and Compliance Division
Topic: Victorian Western Highway Duplication – Stage 2
Hansard Page:
Question Date:
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

In relation to EPBC 2010/5741 (Stage 2 of the duplication):

1. In relation to the ecological communities known as GEVVP and NTGVVP, does the Department have good evidence to support the offset sites chosen for the project?
2. Does the Dept know of any other similar habitat which might be preserved as an offset for Stage 3?
3. Is there any evidence to suggest that the proponent is not meeting their obligations to secure offsets under Stage 2?
4. Are there any plans beneath the main approval which have been approved by the Minister or a delegate since the Minister gave approval for this project? Have they all been published?
5. Has the Department visited the offset sites? Please detail which sites were visited, and when.

Answer:

1. The Darlington Offset Management Plan and the Dunkeld Offset Management Plan detail the offset sites chosen for the project in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) Environmental Offset Policy. Information on the offset sites was provided to the Department to inform consideration of the project under the EPBC Act.
2. The identification of appropriate offset sites is the responsibility of the person proposing to take the action. The Department evaluates the suitability of an offset once the person proposing to take the action provides information on the proposed offset.
3. The Department is not aware of any evidence to suggest that the proponent is not meeting their obligations to secure offsets under Stage 2.
4. On 17 April 2015 a delegate for the Minister approved the Darlington Offset Management Plan and the Dunkeld Offset Management Plan. The Department is working with the approval holder to ensure publication requirements are being met.
5. On 22 October 2014, the Department undertook a compliance monitoring inspection of the project site. As the Offset Management Plans had not been approved at the time, the offset sites were not within the scope of the inspection.