

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

Question No: 63
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)
Topic: National Reserve System
Hansard Page:
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Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

Can you please provide information on how the strategy priorities of protecting core areas for the long term survival of threatened ecosystems and species in each of Australia's bioregions by 2030 and identifying and protecting critical areas for climate change resilience and landscape protection are being identified, and what steps are being taken to ensure this part of the NRS Strategy is met?

I just want to get some clarification because it seems to me that this assertion doesn't meet CAR principles (Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative – like WWF's "Building Nature's Safety Net report). We still have under-represented bio-regions, we still have poorly connected landscapes, which are essential elements of Aichi Target 11 – yet the Department asserts that we have met this target?

If the government doesn't accept WWF's analysis, how does the Government measure the ecological representativeness of the national reserve system and what threshold has it set for the system to be considered ecologically representative?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government considers that Australia has broadly met the Aichi Target 11, with around 17 per cent of terrestrial land protected.
2. The Government is committed to protecting our environment and is investing more than \$2 billion over four years in managing our natural resources. The Government is also working to strengthen its partnerships with the community and business across our protected area network to improve the management, quality and connectivity of the network.
3. Area is one component of effective conservation. The quality of habitat, the connectivity of reserves and the way in which they are managed are also important. The Australian Government is working with reserve partners to explore a range of approaches to improve effective conservation within protected areas.