

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

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 88
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Species Referred for Assessment under the Threatened Species Committee
Hansard Page: 105
Question Date: 22 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: What I did in my correspondence, which I referred to at the outset, was propose that the species of subterranean fauna that the state EPA found were subject to risk of extinction be referred to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee for assessment under section 178 of your act before any decision is made. What can you tell us about that suggestion? The minister came back and said you had recommended against it. I do not have the letter in front of me. Why would you do that—or are you being verballled?

Mr Knudson: The question of whether a species is referred for assessment under the threatened species committee is under outcome 1.4.

Senator LUDLAM: Do not do that to us. It is late; not as late as it would have been.

Mr Knudson: Unfortunately, the experts are not in the room to be able to answer that. Again, I am very happy to take that on notice and come back to you on the considerations around this issue.

Answer:

Senator Ludlam asked a related question in the estimates hearing on 17 February 2016 (Question No. 2912). The response to that question explains why the subterranean fauna at the proposed Yeelirrie uranium mine site in WA have not been referred to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee:

“They have not been assessed because they are yet to be formally recognised as species, and sufficient information needs to be available to support a quantitative assessment of their status. Both of these steps need to be undertaken before the species could be considered for inclusion in the priority assessment list, and assessed by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee.

To facilitate consistent protection of threatened species, the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments have recently entered into a memorandum of understanding on a common assessment method for listing threatened species. Under the memorandum, both jurisdictions will apply the same assessment method based on the international best practice standard developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Should either the Commonwealth or Western Australia assess the 15 species of Yeelirrie subterranean fauna in the future, that assessment may be used to support listing changes in both jurisdictions.”