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

Question No:	107
Hearing:	Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome:	Outcome 1
Programme:	Environment Assessment and Compliance Division
Topic:	HANDOVER OF COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL POWERS
Hansard Page:	N/A
Question Date:	29 October 2014
Question Type:	Written

Senator Waters asked:

In August this year, the Minerals Council of Australia put out a report with some rather outrageous claims for what the government's proposal to hand over Federal environmental approval powers to the States might achieve, including a claim about GDP being cumulatively $160 billion higher by 2025 and that 69,000 extra jobs would be created. That staggering saving was based on a reduction in average delay for approvals by one year, or two years.
1.   Do you expect to achieve an average one year or two year reduction in delay by handing over approval powers to the States?
2.   The report claims to "quantify the gains" from the Government's proposal to hand over environmental approval powers. Does it do that accurately according to the Department's best assessment?

Answer:

1. The Department calculated delays for 52 projects where the Commonwealth approval came after a state or territory approval by analysing real project data from internal Departmental databases. The unweighted average delay experienced by these 52 projects was 188 days from a state or territory approval date.

2. The Department used different factors to those used in the Minerals Council of Australia's report, *The economic gains from streamlining the process of resource projects approval*. The Minerals Council of Australia modelled economy wide impacts, including the potential impact on Australia's Gross Domestic Product. The Department's method is consistent with the Australian Government's Regulatory Burden Measurement Framework, and considers only direct savings to business from reduced compliance costs and delays.