

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

Question No: 127
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Environment Assessment and Compliance Division
Topic: OFFSETS - DUE DILIGENCE
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

What approach does the department usually take in relation to accepting the rehabilitation of large coal mines as an offset for an approval under the EPBC Act?

Answer:

Mine rehabilitation can contribute in a limited way to conservation outcomes in large coal mines. While open coal mine pits have limited capacity for rehabilitation, land cleared for other infrastructure associated with large coal mines can be rehabilitated, particularly at mine decommissioning. Under the *EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy* and *Offsets Assessment Guide*, the conservation gain of proposed mine rehabilitation is limited by: the uncertainty of rehabilitation success, particularly on land that is highly degraded; and the time to ecological benefit, given the time lapse between land clearing and rehabilitation.