

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

Question No: 23
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division
Topic: REEF TRUST
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 29 October 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Singh asked:

How will the Government mitigate the risk that its decisions to approve developments will not be influenced by the cash it could demand and then use to hide its unwillingness to provide adequate funding to protect the Great Barrier Reef?

Answer:

Funding from environmental offsets will not replace government funding of activities to conserve the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef Trust's financial governance arrangements will be open and transparent and in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Decisions to approve development proposals are made under the legislative provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act). In particular, section 134 (3A) of the EPBC Act requires the consent of the approval holder in relation to setting conditions specifying a financial contribution. The principles that are applied in determining suitable offsets are outlined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 Environment Offset Policy (2012)*.