

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

Question No: 35
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Biodiversity Conservation Division
Topic: THREATENED SPECIES - LEADBEATERS POSSUM
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Question Date: 30 October 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Rice asked:

Senator RICE: I did ask about the listing process at a previous hearing, so I will not continue, given the limited time, with any more questions regarding that. The only question I would like to last ask is: Minister Hunt, prior to the last hearing a few weeks ago, set out his vision to reverse the decline in Australian species, pledging to end the loss of native mammal species by 2020, and indicated a new initiative to help the endangered Leadbeater's possum; what is the nature of the initiative?

Mr Andrews: Okay. Senator, I am not aware that Minister Hunt has made a specific commitment to the Leadbeater's possum. He gave a speech where he made a commitment to turning around Australia's unacceptable rate of extinction and made some particular commitments in relation to mammals. There are 63 threatened mammals, I believe, and 59 of the trajectories are going down or are flatlining rather than going up, and Minister Hunt made a commitment to turn around at least 20 of those trajectories by 2020. He did not make a specific commitment to the Leadbeater's possum but he mentioned feral cats in his speech and he also made a commitment to hosting a summit—for the Commonwealth government to host a summit on the issue.

Senator RICE: Okay. I was led to believe he had indicated a specific initiative. So no-one knows of any specific initiative?

Senator Birmingham: Do you have a particular quote or comment from the minister, Senator?

Senator RICE: I do not, unfortunately. I was told that he indicated a new initiative to help the endangered Leadbeater's possum.

Senator Birmingham: We will certainly take it on notice to see if there is anything we can add to the information that the Threatened Species Commissioner has already provided.

Senator RICE: Thank you.

Answer:

Minister Hunt set a goal of ending mammal extinctions by 2020 and said he wanted to see improvements in at least 20 mammal trajectories between now and then, however no commitment was made to a new Commonwealth Government initiative that is specifically focussed on Leadbeater's possum.