

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

Question No: 368
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Corporate
Programme: Policy Analysis and Implementation
Topic: REGISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS - INVESTIGATIONS
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Question Date: 20 October 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Canavan asked:

Senator CANAVAN: On notice, how many investigations you have done in the last 12 months to do with, in broad terms, the compliance of organisations on the register?

Ms Jensen: We can provide that information, subject to the normal privacy aspects.

Senator CANAVAN: Of course, that is why I am asking just for the number and not necessarily the details. Can I specifically ask whether the department has—

Senator Birmingham: Just to be clear, Senator, you are not looking for general compliance measures that are undertaken, but whether actual investigations into more detailed—

Senator CANAVAN: Non-compliance, yes. Not just any standard reporting requirements.

Answer:

The Department takes a range of compliance actions, which vary based on the circumstances. Compliance action can include informal actions that aim to assist organisations to fully comply with the law or, in the more serious cases, formal actions to remove the organisation from the Register. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, the removal process generally involves two compliance warnings. Organisations are given three months to respond to the warning. In 2013–14, approximately 40 compliance warnings were issued. In 2014–15, to date approximately 10 compliance warnings have been issued. The Department considers the organisation's response to the compliance warning, and takes further action where appropriate.