

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

Question No: 52
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division
Topic: HERITAGE STRATEGY
Hansard Page: 101
Question Date: 20 October 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Singh asked:

Senator SINGH: But I am asking about these submissions, not old submissions. I am asking about these submissions that were made in that eight-week period, the 117 submissions. Why are they not publicly available now? Why do we have to wait until the minister has ticked off the draft strategy to have access to the public submissions?

Mr Oxley: I may need to be corrected or come back and correct myself, but my understanding was that when we kicked off the consultation process I think we may have neglected to indicate that the submissions would be made public and, therefore, we would need to go back to each of the submitters to seek their okay. I am just seeking some guidance from Mr Routh as to whether my recollection is right or whether I have just—

Mr Routh: We will need to double-check, but I think we did ask them on the submitting form to indicate that.

Senator SINGH: That is the usual process, that you ask them on the submitting form whether they want their submission to remain private, or not. Obviously it is you, as the department, who decide when you are going to release the submissions publicly, usually on your website—just like we do as a Senate committee. I am asking: why have you chosen not to release these submissions?

Mr Oxley: We will take that on notice. I cannot give you a considered answer now.

Senator SINGH: Okay, we will take it on notice.

Answer:

One hundred and twenty four separate submissions have been registered.

The Department is currently in the process of checking through each submission to ensure that all confidential and personal information is removed, and that submissions not for public release are identified and treated accordingly.

The process of checking submissions is expected to be completed in November 2014. The submissions will then be published on the Department's website.