

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

Question No: 108
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 2.1
Programme: Emissions Reduction Fund
Topic: Greenhouse Gas Emissions - Estimates
Hansard Page: 81-82
Question Date: 19 October 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Back asked:

Senator BACK: One last question, unrelated to the question that I have just been asking, and going back to bushfires: does the department try to make some estimate of the greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the major bushfires that we encounter? I am not speaking now of the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement scheme; I am familiar with that—but just areas burnt, biomass that has been destroyed, fire intensity, et cetera. Do you try to assess or establish some sort of even a guesstimate through a fire season of the greenhouse gases that are emitted as a result of our major bushfires?

Mr Sturgiss: The answer is yes, we do. We publish these estimates in the submission we prepare for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which we publish each April. The methods are quite similar to the estimates on land clearing; we use satellite imagery to track fire scars. We combine with expert assessment of the fuel loads in place.

Senator BACK: They are available on your website, are they?

Mr Sturgiss: The emission estimates are included in our report that we publish on the website.

Senator BACK: They are easily identified in these reports?

Mr Sturgiss: They are easily identified. Maybe we could assist in that.

Senator BACK: If you could assist, I would be appreciative.

Answer:

Details of the methods used to estimate emissions from wildfires in Australia's forests are provided in the National Inventory Report 2013 Volume 2 (refer to section 6.5.3.1 p 28).

Emissions estimates are provided in table 6.25 on page 33 of the National Inventory Report 2013 Volume 2.

The National Inventory Report 2013 can be accessed at
<https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/publications/national-inventory-report-2013>