

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

Question No: 61
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 4
Programme: Science
Topic: Independent Expert Scientific Committee - Projects
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 21 October 2015
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

1. What projects are currently being considered by the committee?
2. What is the ratio of projects the committee has advised should not go ahead compared to how many should go ahead?
3. Are information sessions or forums held in the areas where projects are being proposed?

Answer:

1. The Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (the IESC) has one current request for advice. The request relates to the Bylong Coal Project in New South Wales and is a joint request from the New South Wales and Australian Government regulators. The request will be considered by the IESC at its November meeting held on 12 and 13 November 2015. Consistent with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000, the IESC's advice will be published on its website within 10 business days of the advice being provided to the regulators.
2. The IESC is not a decision making body and does not make recommendations as to whether or not a particular project should proceed. The IESC provides expert scientific advice on the potential water-related impacts of coal seam gas or large coal mining proposals referred to it by Australian Government and state government regulators. This advice is provided to the regulators to enable the regulatory decisions on coal seam gas and large coal mining developments to be informed by the best available science.
3. The IESC does not hold information sessions or forums where projects are proposed. Community engagement is managed by Australian Government and state government regulators during the assessment process.