

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

Question No: 99
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.6
Programme: Science Division
Topic: State of the Environment Report - Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Habitat
Hansard Page: 64
Question Date: 19 October 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: What research is being done for the report on the impact on ecosystems of climate refugee species or species that are migrating into new regions as they follow the changing weather trends caused by climate change?

Mr Thompson: Certainly some work has been undertaken by the CSIRO on the potential impacts of climate change on habitat and then the implications of that flowing through for species migration, including where we might find refugium for particular native species and where other species might likely become dominant. So we are drawing on that work. In fact, that was work that was funded through another program area in the department in climate change and we are drawing on that work, for example, in our analysis to underpin 20 million trees and the rollout of large-scale plantings in the 20 million trees program and in other areas such as the national reserve system and the future shape of the national reserve system.

Senator URQUHART: So is it just the CSIRO that are doing that research? Are there any others?

Mr Thompson: That is the only one I am aware of. There may be others through the national climate change adaptation research program.

Senator URQUHART: Are you able to take on notice whether there are any others and provide that later?

Answer:

The State of the Environment 2016 is being developed by leading senior scientists and subject matter experts. Climate change has been identified as a key driver impacting on Australia's environment and will be covered in the report. Authors may draw on research currently being undertaken in this area by the National Climate Change Adaptation Facility (NCCARF), CSIRO, the Australian Climate Change Science Program, and others.

For example, the NCCARF study Climate Change Refugia for Biodiversity identified refuges for biodiversity across Australia in areas with the least expected change, that will retain biodiversity and provide opportunities for added species in the next 75 years. The study Designing Landscapes for Biodiversity under Climate Change investigated how current approaches to landscape design can encourage native flora and fauna and discourage invasive species in adjusting to changing climate futures in New South Wales.