

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 117  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Environment Standards Division (ESD)  
**Topic:** BP Bight's drilling  
**Hansard Page:** 4  
**Question Date:** 19 October 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Waters, Larissa asked:**

Senator WATERS: ... Was the department ever provided information about the Bight's drilling program assessment by NOPSEMA?

Mr Cahill: I will have Mr Gaddes answer that.

Mr Gaddes: I am moving between roles at the moment. I was formerly with compliance and enforcement. NOPSEMA, as you are aware, is covered by a strategic assessment under the act, so they are accredited to undertake our assessment process.

Senator WATERS: Yes.

Mr Gaddes: We did not get updates from them on the details of the assessment, but we did seek regular updates on the process that they were going through and where it was up to.

Senator WATERS: Can you say that again? You did not get assistance but you sought—

Mr Gaddes: We did not ask for the technical details of the assessment, but we asked for status updates from NOPSEMA on where the process was up to. We would seek updates around when they had sought more information from BP, or when they had not approved a plan we would get updates of that nature, but we did not involve ourselves in the details of the assessment.

Senator WATERS: Are you able to provide the correspondence where you sought the update and any response that you received?

Mr Gaddes: We could. Sometimes that was over the phone because they were responses to requests—

Senator WATERS: Do you have file notes, perhaps?

Mr Gaddes: Yes, we could see what we can find.

**Answer:**

The Department of the Environment and Energy received verbal updates from NOPSEMA on the progress of their assessment of BP's proposal in the Great Australian Bight.