

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

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

**Question No:** 238  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 2  
**Program:** Domestic Emissions Reduction Division (DERD)  
**Topic:** Ocean Pressures  
**Hansard Page:** n/a  
**Question Date:** 01 November 2016  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:**

Is the pressure on our oceans increasing or decreasing? Is ocean acidification a concern? Is climate change a concern?

**Answer:**

The 2011 *State of the Environment Report* identified that the overall condition of Australia's marine environment is good, but that pressures from climate change, ocean acidification, coastal development, pollution, shipping, fishing and mining are generally increasing. The 2016 *State of the Climate Report* indicates that sea level around Australia has risen, and the oceans have warmed and become more acidic. The upcoming State of the Environment report, due for release by the end of 2016, will provide an updated assessment.

Ocean acidification can negatively affect the biology of marine species that produce shells or skeletons, like plankton, coral and shellfish. This can have flow-on effects to marine food chains. Climate change can negatively affect marine ecosystems through increased water temperature and sea-level rise, among other things.

The Government is investing in a number of programs to better understand and respond to these challenges, including the National Environmental Science Program, the Australian Antarctic Division research programs, the Emissions Reduction Fund and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility.