

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

Question No: 07
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)
Topic: Green Army Program - Audits
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Chisholm, Anthony asked:

Senator CHISHOLM: Moving on to the Green Army program, can the department outline the number of audits that have been undertaken looking at the environmental benefits delivered by the program—and the 20 Million Trees program as well?

Mr Dadswell: I cannot give you a specific number. I will have to take that on notice. The department takes on a number of audits for Green Army projects. The department audits 10 per cent of all Green Army projects that have been undertaken. In that audit we assess whether the environmental outcomes were achieved or are being achieved for that project. Departmental officers will visit the project and they will inspect the works that are being undertaken. They will also do a post-audit check of the final report on that project to confirm that the environmental outcomes were undertaken. To date we have done well over 50 audits. To date 627 projects have been completed. It is around 10 per cent of those, so it would be a bit more than that. The department also audits 20 per cent of projects for their work health and safety compliance. There the department engaged EY to undertake those audits. There is an exceptionally high compliance rate for Green Army projects on work health and safety matters.

Answer:

To date, 98 Green Army site visits projects have been completed as part of the Department's audit program. This represents more than 10 per cent of all projects commenced. Site visits consider progress against activity targets. All site visits aim to ensure the activities that support environmental and/or heritage conservation outcomes are undertaken in accordance with Project Orders. Outcomes are recorded in the Department's online Monitoring, Evaluation Reporting and Improvement Tool.

The Department's Green Army site visits are separate to the Work Health and Safety audits undertaken on 20 percent of projects by the Department's external work health and safety advisers, Ernst and Young.

The 20 Million Trees Programme does not have a formal site audit program. Grant recipients and service providers are required to report on progress against outcomes of their revegetation projects every six months. As part of this assurance process grant recipients and service providers also provide photos to demonstrate progress. Site visits are undertaken where possible to enable the Department to gain feedback from communities working on the ground on opportunities for continuous improvement with the program.