

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

Question No: 97
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Tasmanian Kelp Forests – Action Plan
Hansard Page: n/a
Question Date: 24 October 2016
Question Type: Written

Senator Whish-Wilson, Peter asked:

What action (mitigation, conservation) is being taken to save Australia's last kelp forest communities? Have the measures outlined in the 2012 conservation advice been carried out?

Answer:

The Giant Kelp Marine Forests of South East Australia ecological community is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act. The purpose of the national listing of threatened ecological communities is to identify, protect and restore the most threatened ecosystems in Australia. Ecological communities that are listed as either Endangered or Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act are considered to be matters of national environmental significance and are afforded protection through the significant impact provisions of the EPBC Act. Major new developments occurring in the marine environment must take into account potential impacts on listed ecological communities. Any development that may impact on an Endangered or Critically Endangered ecological community must be referred to the Minister for the Environment and Energy.

The Conservation Advice sets out the actions required to arrest the decline and to address the threats that have been identified in the listing of a species/ecological community. It provides guidance to state agencies, community groups and grant programs. A formal review of the implementation of the actions contained within the Conservation Advice has not been undertaken.

However, the Giant Kelp Marine Forests of South East Australia ecological community is a key ecological feature of consideration in the development and review of the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserve Network. Further, both Tasmania and Victoria have declared Marine Nature Reserves, Marine National Parks and/or Marine Sanctuaries that include areas of the ecological community.