

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

Question No: 63
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 7
Programme: International and Land Division
Topic: Galilee Basin - climate impacts
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: I want to ask now about the Galilee Basin coal deposits and the recent approval of mega coalmines there as well as, frankly, coalmines everywhere else. Is your section advising the minister of the climate impacts of coal mining and export of this scale and of the fact that keeping that coal in the ground in the Galilee is a huge opportunity to protect Australia from the impacts of further extreme weather events—bushfires and constraints on agricultural productivity and things that I would think we are all concerned about? Is anybody advising the minister on that?

Dr de Brouwer: We provide a range of advice to the minister. On the specific content, a lot of that would be largely deliberative material, Senator.

Senator WATERS: I do not quite know what you mean by that.

Dr de Brouwer: We do not normally talk about the content of our advice. We provide advice across a wide range of climate change relevant material.

Senator WATERS: Including on that matter?

Dr de Brouwer: That would be going to the specific content of the advice that we would be providing to the minister.

Senator WATERS: Well, I do not think it is going to its existence as opposed to its content.

Dr de Brouwer: We provide advice to the minister around climate change policy. But I do not want to go into the specific content of all the elements of that. That would be going into advice that we provide the government for its deliberative purposes or for deliberation.

Senator Cormann: I will assist you, Senator Waters. We might take that on notice. If Minister Hunt feels that he can add to that answer, we will provide you with an answer.

Answer:

No. It is not possible to assess likely climate change risks or impacts in a way that can be attributed to individual developments.