

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates 25-26 February 2009

**Question: aet 1**

**Topic: Economic Stimulus Package – Ecological Assessments**

**Hansard Page: Written**

**Senator Bob BROWN asked:**

1. In his presentation to the Senate Inquiry on the stimulus package, the Treasury Secretary Ken Henry stated that, although he would like to, his department was unable to undertake ecological assessments of large scale economic policies due to lack of appropriate resources. What kind of resources may be required? How much would it cost? What kinds of advice would this allow you to give government?
2. Does the Department of Environment, Heritage and the Arts not have these resources? If not, should it?

**Answer:**

Achieving a credible and comprehensive ecological assessment of large scale economic policies does not currently seem to be feasible. This is due to the difficulties inherent in credibly predicting both the range of human responses to large scale economic policies, and the myriad ecological effects that could arise from such human responses.

It is worth noting in this regard that the key to addressing environmental issues is to do so directly through well designed environmental policies.