

Question on Notice

No. 1253

Asked on Thursday, 12 October 2023

MR P WEIR ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to gas operators in Queensland being required to provide offsets to both State and Federal Governments for impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) and Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES)—

Will the Minister advise (a) the total amount of actual disturbance to MNES and MSES values, (b) the total amount of offset areas provided in Queensland to mitigate disturbance impacts and (c) whether the industry has delivered a net gain through the provision of offsets?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

- (a) Since the commencement of the Queensland environmental offsets framework in 2014, the Department of Environment and Science has required the petroleum and gas sector, through environmental authority conditions, to provide an environmental offset where there is a significant residual impact to Matters of State Environmental Significance.

Between 1 July 2014 and 14 February 2023, offset conditions have been imposed for approximately 700 hectares of significant residual impact on Matters of State Environmental Significance from petroleum and gas operations. Of the 700 hectares of significant residual impact authorised, petroleum and gas operators have submitted notices to the department confirming impacts to 404 hectares to date.

The total amount of disturbance to Matters of State Environmental Significance, including disturbance that is not considered a significant residual impact from the petroleum and gas sector, is not recorded.

The total amount of disturbance to Matters of State Environmental Significance is limited through individual environmental authorities and monitored through compliance activities undertaken by the department.

Queensland does not record offset decisions for Matters of National Environmental Significance as these are matters for the Australian Government.

- (b) Where it has been determined that an environmental offset is required for an impacted matter, the Queensland environmental offsets framework provides flexibility in how the offset can be delivered.

A proponent may elect to deliver either a proponent-driven land-based offset, a financial settlement offset (a payment made into the Offsets Account held by the department), or a combination of both.

Between 1 July 2014 and 30 September 2023, petroleum and gas proponents have submitted a Notice of Election for 404 hectares of impact and of this, 69% of the impact (280 hectares) has been addressed via financial settlement offset payments made to the department totalling about \$5.6 million. The remaining impact (approximately 124 hectares) has been addressed via land based offsets.

The Department of Environment and Science is developing a new public register to improve availability of information. The new register is anticipated for release in early 2024.

- (c) Under the Queensland Environmental Offsets Policy, an environmental offset is designed to provide a no net loss outcome for impacted values, rather than a net gain.