

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 09

05 September 2025

Question No. 607

Thomas Emerson MLA: To ask the Minister for Climate Change, Environment Energy and Water

1. Can the Minister explain why it is the case that under certain lease conditions, rural lease holders cannot grow crops on their land.
2. Does the Government monitor the ecological quality of offset land prior to and after claiming, given that landholders have highlighted that once leased land was claimed under the Government's offset policy, it significantly degraded in quality; if not, is the Government considering doing so.
3. Can the Government provide an overview of whether its environmental offsets register is comprehensive, including the incorporation of all required projects, annual reports, and the respective offset areas.
4. If the Government has identified "additional sites that are managed for environmental offsets", can the Minister provide a list of these sites, along with their tenure and ownership.

SUZANNE ORR MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. All rural leases require a land management agreement (LMA) between the lessee and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. The LMA may contain detail about how the land is to be managed to maintain environmental values. This could potentially include conditions in relation to the growth of crops.

Under certain LMAs there may be a requirement to maintain state, territory or national environmental values- such as Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), which are listed under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC). Growing crops, which may include cultivation, or other intensive land uses can severely degrade, fragment or remove MNES, endangered ecological communities, threatened flora or fauna populations or habitat.

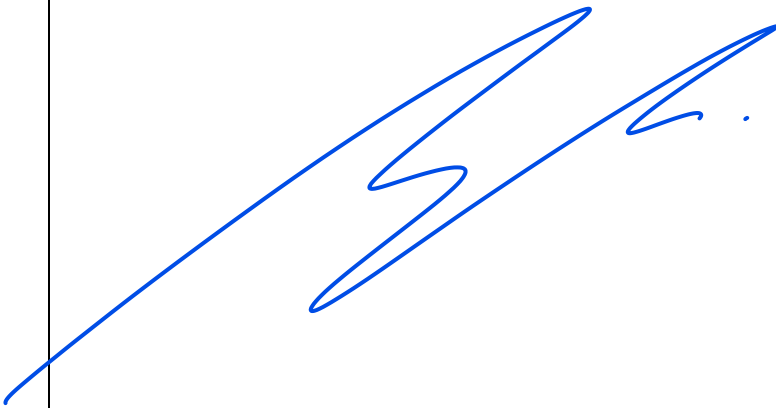
2. The ACT Government does not generally monitor the ecological condition of land prior to it becoming an offset. Condition assessment and monitoring generally begins for sites as they are identified as an offset for development impacts. Monitoring of sites that are approved or endorsed as offsets will then continue to meet the specific conditions set under EPBC Act and Planning Act decisions for each development.

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3. The environmental offsets register is comprehensive and contemporary noting that the 2024-25 annual reports to the Federal Government for individual offsets compliance are being finalised (new deadline for publication, 30 October 2025). Previous compliance reports, ecological survey reports and offset management plans are on the register and up to date.
4. Locations in the ACT that may be appropriate as a future offset are likely to subject to future Government decision making or statutory processes. It is therefore not appropriate to identify these locations.

If these sites become approved or endorsed offset sites for development impacts, they will be included in the offsets register.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Suzanne Orr MLA
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

Date: 02/10/25

This response required 5 hrs 50 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$548.94