

Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Inquiry into Australia's Future in Research and Innovation
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Public Hearing, Canberra
3 March 2016

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: CSIRO

TOPIC: Urban system program

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Written)

QUESTION:

During the Senate Estimates hearing, Dr Wonhas said that one of the areas within the Land and Water Division where job cuts are planned is the "urban system program" (p. 73). Is this the program described on the website as "Resilient Cities of the 21st Century", or a subset of that?

- a) Which parts of the so-called "business unit" will lose staff and why?
- b) Is one of the objectives of this business unit to help Australian cities adapt to climate change?
- c) How does cutting this program fit with the objective of focusing on adaptation when it comes to climate change research in CSIRO?
- d) CSIRO has done a lot of work on how much our cities contribute to GDP and productivity in the economy. Isn't improving urban systems and networks critical to our future productivity?
- e) Is the problem for this program that it has no direct industry or government customer at this stage? If so, what effort was made to find partners before the decision was made to cut the program?

ANSWER

Please note that CSIRO Land and Water business unit contains seven research programs, one of which is the "Liveable, Sustainable and Resilient Cities" program (which within CSIRO is sometimes also generally referred to as the "urban systems" program). The CSIRO web page "Resilient Cities of the 21st Century" relates to this research program.

- a) Changes will occur across the entire Land and Water business unit, however, the majority of the redundancies will come from three research programs: Liveable, Sustainable and Resilient Cities, Biodiversity Ecosystems Knowledge and Services, and Adaptive Social and Economic Systems. The extent of impacts on all seven Land and Water research programs are not yet clear as CSIRO is still working through the details of the changes.
- b) Yes.
- c) CSIRO's work on adaptation and climate change is conducted across several business units and is not confined to this one program.
- d) Yes.
- e) CSIRO's "deep dive" strategic planning process took into account a range of factors such as market drivers, maturity of science, areas of emerging science, strategic alignment, financial sustainability, fit with CSIRO's role in the National Innovation System, etc. Information about historical, current and future partnerships and customers was considered as one of a number of inputs to the decision.