

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

Question No: 90
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 3
Programme: Australian Antarctic Division
Topic: ANTARCTIC BASES
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 10 June 2014
Question Type: Written

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

1. How much of the budget is dedicated to servicing our Antarctic bases?
2. Will there be less staff on Antarctic bases?
3. Are their plans being prepared to close any Antarctic bases?
4. What would it cost to decommission a base and which one would be the most likely to be considered for closure?

Answer:

1. The Department's Australian Antarctic Division spends approximately \$90.0 million a year on servicing Australia's Antarctic stations, including logistics support and capital.
2. Staffing levels on the stations for the 2014-15 year are still to be finalised, and typically staffing levels on stations vary from year to year due to different projects and maintenance priorities, and the length of the summer research season.
3. There are no plans being prepared to close any Antarctic stations.
4. Decommissioning a station would require significant expenditure over a 3-5 year period. The Department recognises a make good liability (restoration obligation) in its financial statements, encompassing all four stations, which as 30 June 2013 was \$355 million.