

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

Question No: 115
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)
Topic: BOM - Capital Program Budget
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator McAllister, Jenny asked:

1. Besides those main pieces of equipment, where are we relative to other countries that offer a service such as yours?

Answer:

In comparing the Bureau of Meteorology with other national meteorological agencies, it is important to note Australia's large geographical area and relatively small population. The agency most often compared to the Bureau, in terms of infrastructure is the Canadian Meteorological Service.

European countries such as the United Kingdom or France do not provide a good comparison as they cover a much smaller area and thus require less observing infrastructure. Larger countries, such as the United States or China, are also not a good comparison as their meteorological services have greater access to human and financial resources.

Measured by equipment operated, the following table provides a comparison between Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, the UK and the United States.

Overall, the Bureau's infrastructure numbers sit in the middle to upper part of the range among comparable national meteorological agencies.

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International comparison of meteorological equipment (ordered by number of Automatic Weather Stations):

	New Zealand	Germany	United Kingdom	Brazil	France	Australia	Canada	United States
Automatic Weather Stations	~148	164	~ 270	490	502	685	782	~1500
Radars	9	16	16	44	27	63	31	220
Wind Profilers	0	4	8	0	3	15	0	33
Upper Air (balloon) Sites	8	15	4	42	7	43	31	102

Sources: National Meteorological Agencies and the World Meteorological Organisation.