

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry and Science Portfolio  
Additional Budget Estimates Hearing 2014-15  
26 February 2015

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

**TOPIC:** NCRIS

**REFERENCE:** Written Question - Senator Carr

**QUESTION No.:** AI-60

In relation to NCRIS:

1. How many NCRIS capabilities and facilities is CSIRO involved with?
2. What would be the financial impact on CSIRO if it had to take over support for the NCRIS facilities it hosts or is closely involved with?
3. What would be the financial impact on CSIRO if the NCRIS facilities it is involved with were wound down when the current funding expires at the end of June 2015?
4. How many CSIRO research projects would be disrupted if NCRIS facilities were to close? Please describe the potential impact on CSIRO science.
5. What would the impact be on data continuity for CSIRO's activities in marine, atmospheric and climate science if the relevant NCRIS facilities were to close?
6. If such facilities were to shut down, would Australian researchers retain access to international partner facilities? Would that access come at a cost? If so, what is the estimated cost for CSIRO?
7. What would the impact be on CSIRO's international partnerships if the NCRIS facilities it is associated with were to shut down?

**ANSWER**

1. CSIRO is involved with most NCRIS capabilities and facilities from being a core or lead participant with a financial dependency to being a collaborator. As shown on the NCRIS website CSIRO is involved in 21 of the 34 projects. (<https://education.gov.au/funded-research-infrastructure-projects> (accessed on 2/4/15)).
2. The financial impact on CSIRO to take over support for the NCRIS facilities it hosts or is closely involved with is estimated to be \$15.13m in 2015-16.
3. The major financial impacts on CSIRO would be on salary costs to continue staff supported on NCRIS funds where they are not term employees and/or terminate these staff through redundancy, and the early termination of staff on term appointments. There may also be other project run down costs that have not yet been quantified.
4. The number of CSIRO research projects that would be disrupted if NCRIS facilities were to close is difficult to assess, for example many projects are dependent on the supercomputers at the Pawsey Centre and the National Computational Infrastructure; IMOS is critical for overall marine and atmospheric research, and the Atlas of Living Australia, essential for biodiversity research, is nearly 100 per cent dependant on NCRIS funds.

5. Data continuity would be lost, and not ever recovered retrospectively in CSIRO's land-air carbon and water flux measurements (TERN OzFlux) and ocean observations (IMOS). These include:
  - Weather forecasting (including extreme weather such as Tropical cyclones, drought) and major climate drivers for the Australian region (e.g. ENSO);
  - Ocean forecasting for defence, shipping and community safety (e.g. BlueLink program);
  - Seasonal and longer-term climate predictions.
  - It also will significantly reduce the observations available to manage carbon and water resources. We will also start to lose access to satellite data products as we are not providing in situ cal-val (calibration of satellite data).
6. CSIRO has not engaged with international partners about the issue of retaining access to international partner facilities if NCRIS facilities closed.
7. CSIRO has not engaged with international partners about the impact the closure of NCRIS facilities would have on our partnerships.