

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio  
2016 - 2017 Additional Estimates  
2 March 2017

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**DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

**TOPIC:** Construction of the Northern Australia CRC

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 2 March 2017, page 135-136)

**QUESTION No.:** AI-60

Senator KETTER: Ms Beauchamp, has the department played a role in engaging with any potential land holders for the site of the construction of the CRC?

Ms Beauchamp: I would have to take that on notice from people from the CRC program.

Senator Canavan: We should add, I suppose, just to help Senator Ketter: I know that it is a little confusing but the cooperative research centre and the administration for it is in a different part of the department. The Office of Northern Australia oversee a variety of CRCs around the country. Obviously, I have an interest in the northern CRC but the officials will probably—

Ms Beauchamp: I just have not got the details—

Senator KETTER: So, Mr Coffey, did you have an involvement or have you been discussing any potential locations with landholders?

Mr Coffey: No.

Senator Canavan: As I indicated, Senator Ketter, various parties have approached me about different options. As I say, I think it is most appropriate for the board to consider that. They have been charged with meeting their objectives and would be best placed to make that decision.

Senator KETTER: The program was first announced in the 2013 election; I understand it was a commitment in 2013.

Senator Canavan: That is a bit before my time. I am not sure that is quite correct.

Ms Beauchamp: At the time of the northern Australian white paper—

Senator Canavan: It definitely was an announcement from the northern Australian white paper—I can say that. I might just have to take on notice. I cannot recall it being a 2013 election commitment. That is going back a fair way, but it was a commitment under the white paper. It is also the case that, before the announcement of the white paper, there was a group called originally AgNorth—and then growNORTH—a group separate to government but they were certainly formed and interested in establishing a CRC in the north. So there had been ongoing and some public commentary about the potential for a northern CRC prior to the white paper and, in anticipation of the government's agenda for northern Australia, but I do not think the government exactly committed to the funding and the CRC specifically, until that white paper. I will take that on notice and correct any of that—

**ANSWER**

No. The department has not engaged with any potential land holders for the site of the construction of the CRC for Developing Northern Australia. The CRC Programme Guidelines do not allow for CRC Programme funds to be used to purchase or pay for the construction of facilities such as buildings.

Responsibility for oversight of the CRC Programme in the department rests with AusIndustry – Business Services Division.

The Coalition's *2030 Vision for Developing Northern Australia* statement released in June 2013 included a commitment to consider establishing a CRC for Developing Northern Australia. The Government committed funding to establish the CRC as part of the *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* released in June 2015.