

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2014-15
2-3 June 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Investment in the Climate Science Renewable Energy Field

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 3.06.2014, page 30-31)

QUESTION No: BI-60

Senator RUSTON: Just following on from the comments from the senator, how many other agencies are currently undertaking work in the climate science renewable energy field including government and Commonwealth agencies?

Mr Hoffman: I might have to get a full answer for that on notice. Certainly the ARENA and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation have been mentioned. The department itself, through AusIndustry and other areas within the department, is also a significant investor and funder of this sort of activity. CSIRO has a significant program in energy. One of its flagship programs is Energy Transformed. You would point to Geoscience Australia and its work, including in characterisation of the geotechnical research and the deep-earth heating that we were just speaking about with Senator Xenophon. They are probably the main ones that come to mind. Obviously the universities, particularly ANU here in Canberra, receive significant government funding, and many of them—including UNSW, in photovoltaic research—have significant capabilities in this area as well...

Senator RUSTON: It might be really interesting to look at what percentage of the science budget is expended on these clean energy projects. I do not imagine that you have that handy, but it would be an interesting statistic if you could get it.

Mr Hoffman: I think we can take that on notice.

ANSWER

The Department of Industry undertakes significant work in the climate science renewable energy field including:

- Financial assistance by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to projects developing renewable energy technologies.
- The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund provides funding for climate science and renewable activities.
- AusIndustry also provide multi-sector programs which have, over the life of the program, assisted renewable energy projects. These programs are: Clean Technology Innovation Program, Commercialisation Australia, Cooperative Research Centres Program and R&D Tax Incentive.

Geoscience Australia operates the Australian Solar Energy Information System (ASEIS). ASEIS lowers the risk and cost of energy infrastructure development by providing precompetitive information on solar radiation energy and the location of existing energy assets in the Australian market. This information is used by the renewable energy industry to optimise the location of new solar energy power plants.

ANSTO's Energy Project is focused on providing clean energy solutions to support Australian industry. Using neutrons sourced from the OPAL research reactor, ANSTO scientists are developing and investigating new materials for batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, and improving carbon capture and storage technologies.

CSIRO is also working on a range of projects investigating low emissions technologies.

Determining the percentage of science expenditure that is represented by this activity cannot be provided.