

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry and Science Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2015-16
3 and 4 June 2015

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

TOPIC: Flawed Methane Equipment

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Written)

QUESTION No.: BI-69

1. In a news article that surfaced on early May this year (<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/flawed-methane-monitor-underestimates-leaks-at-us-oil-and-gas-sites-20150506-ggvuj5.html>) about a US study which found potentially very serious flaws in a very commonly used piece of equipment used to measure the level of methane gas emissions from gas wells in the CSG and shale gas industries. The equipment is called a “Bacharach”. Are you aware of that study?
2. Quote from the SMH article in May 2015: “In one instance, the authors found that two separate Bacharach samplers recorded natural gas concentrations in the air of 1 to 6 per cent, when the actual concentrations were between 7 and 73 per cent” – do you know whether that equipment is widely used in Australia?

ANSWER

1. Yes.
2. CSIRO does not use these sensors. To the best of CSIRO’s knowledge they are not used widely in Australia.