

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: Northern Australia CRC Bid Team

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Carr

QUESTION No.: BI-88

Please describe CSIRO's role in the Northern Australia (agNorth) CRC Bid Team and provide an update on the status of the CRC bid and CSIRO's position in relation to it.

ANSWER

CSIRO joined the agNorth (precursor to growNorth) CRC Steering Committee as a founding member in mid 2013, along with the Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory governments, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Charles Darwin University, James Cook University and the University of Queensland, with a view to submitting a bid into the Round 17 CRC process. Each Steering Committee member contributed funding for the development of the CRC bid to cover salary for an interim CEO, travel for the interim CEO and the interim Chair, and other bid development activities. CSIRO's contribution to this was \$66,000.

In May 2014, the Round 17 CRC process was deferred pending the Miles Review of the CRC Programme. At that time the growNorth proposal had not been formally endorsed by the Steering Committee members. Between July 2014 and February 2015 the Steering Committee partners focused their efforts on securing industry engagement in R&D for northern development to further develop the bid in light of the growing industry innovation and northern Australia agendas.

In February 2015, a revised CRC proposal was presented to the Steering Committee. CSIRO expressed a number of significant concerns regarding the proposal, particularly regarding the ability to achieve the aspirations proposed and whether the resources (public and private sector) outlined in the proposal would be available.

A meeting of the members of the Steering Committee and the interim Chair took place on 24 June 2015 following the release of the Northern Australia White Paper. CSIRO has reiterated its willingness to remain engaged in processes intended to align research in northern Australia with the needs of the CRC as articulated in the White Paper. CSIRO will be working with research and government partners over coming months to inform the CRC design and strengthen industry participation and links to the Industry Growth Centres.