

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio  
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates  
31 May – 1 June 2017

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** CSIRO

**TOPIC:** Chevron funded research conducted by the CSIRO in the Great Australian Bight

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Kakoschke-Moore

**QUESTION No.:** BI-142

Q – Regarding Chevron’s funding of research in the Bight, as conducted by CSIRO, given that Chevron have a lease in the Bight how is independence ensured?

Q - When is this research expected to be completed?

Q - Will all of the results and analysis be made public?

Q - Will the research, data, studies etc. that are collected be the property of Chevron?

Q - Is the research conducted for any purpose other than in relation to oil and gas exploration in the Bight?

**ANSWER**

Q – Regarding Chevron’s funding of research in the Bight, as conducted by CSIRO, given that Chevron have a lease in the Bight how is independence ensured?

A – As context for this answer, the research being conducted in the Bight funded by Chevron is conducting an integrated field research program targeting unexplored deepwater regions of the Great Australian Bight (GAB). The research seeks to:

- increase the knowledge of the sedimentary evolution of the Bight Basin;
- undertake characterisation of the seamounts, canyons and hydrocarbon seeps; and
- perform environmental and biological assessment of the benthic biota.

The GAB research program is a fundamental science program designed by CSIRO to fill knowledge gaps related to the geology and benthic ecology of the GAB. The program is not an oil and gas exploration program and the research program is led by CSIRO researchers working with other research partners, including the University of Adelaide and others. There are no Chevron staff involved in the research voyages. All data collected during the program will be made publicly available by CSIRO and CSIRO will be producing independently reports for publication in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

CSIRO’s Code of Conduct requires that staff conduct CSIRO’s activities ethically and with integrity; to maintain high standards of scientific, professional and business practice; subject CSIRO’s science to robust peer review and be open about areas of uncertainty and gaps in knowledge; to be an impartial, authoritative and respected source of independent information and advice on science for the community and government; and to be a trusted advisor. Additionally, in relation to commercial interests, CSIRO has a strict conflict of interest policy which prevents researchers having interests or shares in the industry while undertaking work on projects.

Q – When is this research expected to be completed?

A – The 2 ½ year research program is expected to be completed in early 2018.

Q – Will all of the results and analysis be made public?

A – In line with Marine National Facility policy, all data collected will be made publically available within the year of collection for the benefit of academic institutions, environmental groups and the general community. Project analysis data will be made publically available 24 months after collection. As noted above, interpretations of the data, where appropriate, will be submitted for publication in peer reviewed scientific journals.

Q – Will the research, data, studies etc. that are collected be the property of Chevron?

A – No. In line with Marine National Facility policy, all data collected is the property of the CSIRO and will be made publically accessible (see above). Analytical results developed from use of the data will be owned by Chevron, but these results must be made publically available within 24 months after their creation. Derivative results (interpretations) will sit with Chevron. However, the intent of the program is that wherever possible these will be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals as soon as practicable.

Q – Is the research conducted for any purpose other than in relation to oil and gas exploration in the Bight?

A – The research being conducted is not an oil and gas exploration program. This is a fundamental science program designed by CSIRO to build an understanding of the regional geology and benthic ecology of the Great Australian Bight. The data and the scientific insights from this research will have many uses for multiple stakeholders.