

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2015-16
22 October 2015

AGENCY: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: RV *Investigator* – Chevron contract

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 22 October 2015, page 51-52)

QUESTION No.: SI-11

Senator WHISH-WILSON: I have some questions on RV *Investigator* and the use of that boat by Chevron. Could you tell the committee what price Chevron is paying for the use of RV *Investigator* and how that is worked out?

Dr Marshall: I would have to refer details on the price to Dr David Williams, who is responsible for the Marine National Facility.

Dr D Williams: Can I just clarify: you asked for details on the process of allocation?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could tell us what they are paying for the use of the boat; is it a lease fee of some sort?

Dr D Williams: Which work are you talking about in particular?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Chevron going to the Great Australian Bight.

Dr D Williams: The Chevron work is a package of research that Chevron and CSIRO have agreed to undertake in the Great Bight. That work is around the deep ocean, the lower ocean and substrata, and to do that work they are required to use the *Investigator*. So the *Investigator* is part of the scientific package.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: I understand that, but are they leasing it on commercial terms?

Dr D Williams: No, they are not leasing it. They have placed a contract with CSIRO to undertake the research work, and, within CSIRO, we are using the vessel and paying for the vessel to be used, in terms of its running costs.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could you tell us what those costs are? How long the project is going to go for? I only have the media release from the minister here. It provides some detail.

Dr D Williams: The Chevron work is 39 days at sea. We cost the running cost of the vessel, per day, at \$68,000, and that is just the actual consumable cost of being at sea.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: So Chevron are not financially contributing to that cost?

Dr D Williams: They are through the contract for the research. There is a contract with CSIRO to undertake research, and part of that research is to use the vessel. There is not a separate contract for the vessel.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could you tell us the dimensions around that contract?

Dr D Williams: Can I take that on notice? We will have to talk to Chevron about releasing commercial data about the value of that contract.

ANSWER

The Great Australian Bight Deepwater Marine Program is fully funded by Chevron Australia Pty Ltd and will be conducted in two stages.

The Stage 1 program commenced in early 2015 and the estimated cost of the first stage is \$15 million. This covers use of the Research Vessel for 39 days, science data collection and detailed analysis. The value and program of the second stage, which is anticipated for 2016, will be developed in the light of the knowledge gained in Stage 1. The program is expected to run for 2 ½ years, concluding in 2017.

The private/public collaboration will be managed by CSIRO and involves a number of Australia's leading academic and government research institutions with Chevron as the industry partner.