

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates
20 October 2016

AGENCY: COMMONWEALTH SCIENCE AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Phase 2 of the fugitive study

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 20 October 2016, page 81)

QUESTION No.: SI-10

Senator WATERS: I am not disputing their passion. I agree. Can I move now in the brief time that is left to me to phase 2 of the fugitive study. I am not talking about the Surat Basin fluxes report phase 2, although I am interested in that, but there is no time, unfortunately, to go through that. I am talking about the environment department funded CSIRO research into fugitives from CSG which is meant to help assess the true climate impacts of the leaks that happen with coal seam gas and other unconventional gas. When is the **phase 2 report** scheduled to be complete?

Dr Wonhas: We have completed the scientific work and have submitted the report to the Department of the Environment and Energy.

Senator WATERS: When did you submit that?

Dr Wonhas: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator WATERS: Can you give me a rough indication?

Dr Wonhas: I honestly do not know, but I will certainly provide that to you.

Senator WATERS: That is with the minister now, as far as you know?

Dr Wonhas: With the department. That is correct.

Senator WATERS: Have you discussed with the department whether there will be funding for phase 3 of that research?

Dr Wonhas: Yes, as far as I am aware, we will be doing phase 3. In fact, phase 3 work has already started, which is some of the more longer term measurement of background methane emissions.

Senator WATERS: Can you outline for me specifically what the scope of phase 3 will cover and also how much funding is associated with it?

Dr Wonhas: Again, I would have to take those questions on notice.

Senator WATERS: You said it was about long-term background ambient emissions?

Dr Wonhas: Yes, that is right.

Senator WATERS: How does that interact with the Surat Basin fluxes report, which I understand is comparing ambient methane with whether it is natural or incurred? Is there any interaction between those two studies?

Dr Wonhas: We would certainly try to maximise the synergies between those two pieces of work, in an environment where there is ultimately limited funding to achieve the maximum benefit. I am very happy to take on notice the specifics of how those two pieces integrated.

ANSWER

The work that CSIRO has undertaken for the Department of the Environment and Energy, commonly referred to as the fugitive emissions study, consisted of a first phase (examining methane emissions from well heads) and a second phase (examining methane emissions from well completions and water infrastructure). There is no third phase to this work planned. A revised version of the Phase 2 report was submitted to the Department of the Environment and Energy on 24 November 2016.

CSIRO apologises for the incorrect evidence provided in this regard during the hearing.