

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

AGENCY: CSIRO

TOPIC: Australia's current emissions factors

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 20 October 2016, page 82)

QUESTION No.: SI-13

Senator WATERS: In relation to Australia's current emissions factors, which I hope will be influenced by the findings of all the phases of the study, does CSIRO normally have any input into the process of reviewing those emissions factors, as a matter of course? If so, has the government already asked you to start turning your mind to that, given, as you say, there seems to be quite a lot of doubt over the accuracy of our current emissions figures about fugitives from CSG?

Dr Wonhas: I can take the detail of that question on notice. We do not have a formal role in this process, but I am certainly aware that in other areas, for example fugitive emissions from open-cut coalmining activities, CSIRO has played a critical role in determining those emissions factors and measurement methods.

Senator WATERS: So why the different approach to coalmines versus CSG?

Dr Wonhas: It is a very different process in which methane emissions get released. In an open-cut coalmine, you effectively dig a big hole and then expose the coal seam and it basically vents into the air.

Senator WATERS: Yes, but why would CSIRO be involved with that and not with the calculation of CSG emissions factors?

Dr Wonhas: I just gave that as an example of where we have been involved. I am aware that there have certainly been informal discussions held, but I would have to take on notice the extent to which we are part of a formal process.

Senator WATERS: If you could provide me with as much detail about those discussions as you can, I would much appreciate it.

Dr Wonhas: I would be delighted to.

ANSWER

The Department of Environment and Energy (DoEE) sets the emissions factors through the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme (NGERS). CSIRO does not have a formal role in the process of reviewing Australia's current emissions factors. However, CSIRO has been asked to provide scientific advice on these factors for more than 15 years. With recent work on fugitive emissions, informal advice through face to face meetings has been provided to DoEE on the outcomes of measurements with respect to emissions factors. CSIRO has also conducted a literature review of emission factors as part of the two phase study funded by the DoEE on measurements of fugitive emissions from CSG activities.