

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2014

Agriculture

Question: 139

Division/Agency: Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

Topic: Small Pelagic Fisheries Management

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Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. The issue of small pelagic fish has regained some significance since it gained public attention in 2012. Did members of the FRDC attend the *Small Pelagic Fisheries Technical Workshop and Stakeholder Forum* held in Adelaide in July this year?
2. What was the contribution of the FRDC in this event?
3. I note that representatives from many countries were in attendance, how does our fisheries management compare to those countries?
4. Has there been any progression in the development of the proposed Australian Standard for fisheries science?
5. What is the current status of the small pelagic fish stocks in the Southern Ocean? Are they being sustainably fished currently?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funded the *Small Pelagic Fisheries Technical Workshop and Stakeholder Forum* as part of FRDC Project 2013/063: *Benchmarking Australia's small pelagic fisheries science against world's best practice*. FRDC investment was \$75 000.
3. The meeting was designed to share information about process and approaches used around the world and benchmark the approach Australia takes to assess and manage small pelagic fisheries. There were a number of scientific protocols identified and used by a majority of countries attending for assessment of these fisheries. Australia's approach is consistent with the methods and approaches being used internationally.

Question: 139 (continued)

4. Yes - FRDC has funded the development of a National Science Standard as part of FRDC Project 2014/009: *Development of guidelines for quality assurance of Australian fisheries research and science information*. The Principal Investigator was Andrew Penney (Pisces Australis Pty Ltd). FRDC investment was \$100 800. The first project workshop of the Steering Committee was held in October 2014.

5. The Status of Key Australian Fish Stock Reports cover 68 species across 238 stock, this includes Australian Sardine which is classically deemed a small pelagic species. For the full report visit www.fish.gov.au. For information on the Australian Sardine Fishery visit: www.fish.gov.au/Sardine.aspx

This ABARES Commonwealth Fishery Status Reports 2013-14 assess the biological status of 93 fish stocks across 21 fisheries, including the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery. The reports provides an independent evaluation of the biological, economic and environmental status of fish stocks managed solely or jointly by the Australian Government.

The full report is available from:

www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/publications/display?url=http://143.188.17.20/anrdl/DAFFService/display.php?fid=pb_fsr14d9abm_20141023_11a.xml

The chapter that deals with the Commonwealth Small Pelagic fishery is at:

www.data.daff.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aam/fsrXXd9abm_/fsr13d9abm_20141023/07_FishStatus2014SmallPelagic_1.0.0.pdf