

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2009-10
10 February 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: SKA Square Kilometre Array

REFERENCE: Written Question –Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: AI-28

In respect to **the Square Kilometre Array Program (SKA):**

- (1) What is the stated purpose of program?
- (2) When did the program commence and when is it scheduled to end?
- (3) How much money has been budgeted for the program for each year of the program?
- (4) How much funds have been spent to-date on the program for each year of the program?
- (5) Is the program on schedule and on budget?
- (6) How are funds appropriated to the program allocated?
- (7) Is spending under the program subject to guidelines and/or ministerial decision?
- (8) If there are no guidelines governing spending how is it governed?
- (9) Have all funds been allocated in accordance with the guidelines?
- (10) Where ministerial approval of payments is required – have any payments or amount of payment been made, or not made, contrary to Departmental recommendations?
- (11) Is the Department aware of any situation where funds have not been spent in accordance with the guidelines or any other requirement regarding the use of the funds?
- (12) Has any situation arisen requiring the recovery by the Government of funds paid by the government?
- (13) What amount has the Department spent in administering the program in each of the years of the programs operation?

ANSWER

- (1) The Australian Government, in collaboration with the governments of Western Australia and New Zealand, is currently bidding to host the international Square Kilometre Array telescope in Australia and New Zealand. The bid strategy involves the establishment of the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory (MRO) and the Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP) telescope in the Mid-West of Western Australia, amongst other things. Commonwealth funding for the MRO and ASKAP is being provided through the CSIRO. The Department is providing administrative support to establish the MRO site, representing Australia in international SKA program processes and working to promote Australia-New Zealand as the preferred site. Further information is available at www.innovation.gov.au/Section/AboutDIISR/FactSheets/Pages/SquareKilometreArrayFactSheet.aspx and www.ska.gov.au

- (2) Commonwealth funding for the SKA bid commenced in 2007-08 and is currently scheduled to finish in 2010-11. This Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (3) The 2007-08 Budget committed \$56.7 million to the SKA bid – \$51.6 million for CSIRO to construct Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) and the Murchison Radio Observatory (MRO) and \$5 million for the Department to coordinate Australia's SKA bid. Departmental funds were allocated in the Budget measure as follows:
- | Year | Amount |
|---------|---------------|
| 2007-08 | \$1.5 million |
| 2008-09 | \$1.1 million |
| 2009-10 | \$1.3 million |
| 2010-11 | \$1.1 million |
- (4) The above funds are part of the overall Departmental appropriation and have been expended in accordance with the purposes of the Budget measure.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Departmental funds associated with the Budget measure are part of the overall Department Budget.
- (7) N/A – the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (8) N/A – the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (9) N/A - the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (10) N/A - the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (11) N/A - the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (12) N/A - the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.
- (13) N/A - the Department does not expend any program (administered) funds in relation to the SKA bid.