

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
31 May 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Current housing and sea level rise survey

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 31 May 2010, E22)

QUESTION No.: BI-10

Senator COLBECK—Who instigated the current housing and sea level rise survey being conducted?

Dr Clark—As part of our climate adaptation flagship we are looking at public attitudes to that.

Senator COLBECK—Who has instigated it? How was it instigated? What was the process for that?

Dr Clark—Our CSIRO flagship.

Senator COLBECK—What is the staffing allocation to it.

Dr Clark—I will have to take that on notice. I am happy to provide it.

Senator COLBECK—When is the final document—the project—due for completion?

Dr Clark—I will take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK—What can you tell us about the project? You cannot tell us how many staff, how much it is going to cost or when it is going to be completed. What are the terms of reference for it?

Dr Johnson—The project is part of a portfolio of research that is undertaken in our climate adaptation national research flagship. I apologise we cannot give you the details. As you can imagine, there are literally hundreds of projects going on in CSIRO but, as Dr Clark indicated, we will take the specifics on notice.

Senator COLBECK—Do you know who the partners in the project are?

Dr Johnson—I know who the project leader is. I do not have the specific details that you are after for the particular project. As I have indicated, there are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of projects going on inside the environment portfolio at any one time. I am happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

The project ‘An Adaptable Coastline for the 21st Century’ was instigated after discussions with the National Sea Change Taskforce and local governments in Queensland and New South Wales about the difficulties they face in planning for sea level rise.

Because of this need to understand the complex tradeoffs between coastal development, sea level rise, and the protective, habitat and recreational values of beaches and wetlands, CSIRO researchers developed a project, supported for funding by the leadership of CSIRO’s Wealth from Oceans Flagship, to gain greater clarity about this problem. This work is currently focusing on lower-lying sites that have not yet been developed, but are likely to be under current policies.

In 2009-10, \$1.1million has been invested in the project which involves 2.8 Full Time Equivalent staff. A national online survey on housing and sea level rise is one part of this project and includes questions on house-buyers' attitudes to risks, responsibilities of owners and governments, compensation, fairness, and willingness to buy a house if the right to remain in it in the future is conditional on sea level. Responses are currently being analysed and resulting publications are likely to be publicly available in the second half of 2010.