

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2011-12
19 October 2011

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: WIND FARMS

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 19 October 2011, page 12)

QUESTION No.: SI-12

Senator MADIGAN: My question is in relation to wind farms. Have you got anybody who has any background on that?

Mr Whelan: We have here the head of our Energy Group, Professor Beverley Ronalds. She might be able to help you.

Senator MADIGAN: My question relates to the report, released earlier this year, of the inquiry by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee into the social and economic impact of rural wind farms. One of the recommendations of the committee was that:

... the Commonwealth Government initiate as a matter of priority thorough, adequately resourced epidemiological and laboratory studies of the possible effects of wind farms on human health. This research must engage across industry and community, and include an advisory process representing the range of interests and concerns.

As the pre-eminent scientific organisation in this country, has CSIRO been approached in the past to do work, is it currently doing work or is it going to do work on the alleged health effects of wind farms on communities across Australia?

Prof Ronalds: We believe that our future energy mix is dependent on a number of factors, and community opinion is one of those. I am not aware of any approach to us to do work, particularly, in the area of wind farms, although we do have broad capability and we are looking at community engagement and community opinion on a number of forms of energy. I could take on notice the particular details, but I am not aware of it.

Senator MADIGAN: Thank you

ANSWER

CSIRO was approached to conduct research in the area of alleged health effects of wind farms on communities, but declined as this is not an area in which CSIRO has expertise. CSIRO has undertaken a small research project into the social impacts of wind farms on communities.