

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

19 October 2011

Question: SR20
Topic: Isobath Line along WA Coast
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Senator Siewert asked:

1. Can you please outline the latest work to establish the 200m isobath line along the WA Coast?
2. When was this work undertaken?
3. When was this work supplied to AFMA?
4. What role has Geoscience Australia played in renegotiating the Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) with the WA Government since 1995?
5. Is Geoscience Australia aware that all reference to the 200m isobath line were removed in the 1998 OCS with WA?
6. Was this reference removed on the advice of Geoscience?

Answer:

1. Geoscience Australia maintains a database of bathymetry information collected within and adjacent to the Australian jurisdiction. This includes data collected by Geoscience Australia, foreign research vessels, the Australian Hydrographic Service and the petroleum and fisheries industries. Geoscience Australia actively pursues this data to ensure it is as comprehensive as practicable. Much of the third party data is held in-confidence. Based on this information, Geoscience Australia produces a national gridded bathymetry model at 250m resolution. Isobath lines can be determined from this grid/model. Advice on the location of the 200m isobath for any area around the coastline of Australia is derived from this national gridded bathymetry model.
2. The last comprehensive bathymetry model of the Australian Maritime Jurisdiction adjacent to the Australian continent was completed in June 2009.
3. No request has been received for this data from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).
4. Geoscience Australia has been providing technical advice to AFMA regarding the depiction of the 200m isobath off Western Australia and the drafting of various maps and documents related to the North West Shelf Trawl Fishery since July 2007. Geoscience Australia is not a party to the renegotiation of the *Arrangement Between the Commonwealth and State of Western Australia in Relation to the Fishery for Fish and Other Aquatic Biological Resources in Waters Relevant to Western Australia*.

5. Geoscience Australia is aware that all reference to the 200m isobath line were removed in the 1998 OCS with WA.
6. Geoscience Australia has no record of providing formal advice on this particular case; however, it is possible that it was discussed at some time. The change is consistent with Geoscience Australia's long standing advice, established before the 1998 agreement, on the best practice of defining maritime limits for efficient administration of the maritime jurisdiction.