

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding
Question No: IQ24-000074
Hearing Date: 24 April 2024
Division/Agency: Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
Topic: Decadal plan - science outcome statements
Hansard Page: 3
Question Date: 24 April 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

CHAIR: What's been delivered? Has anything been delivered in relation to the decadal plan to the minister? Do you have a copy of it at the moment? Are we talking about now needing to look at it and work out how to operationalise it and fund it? Is there a top-line document available for us to look at?

Ms Campbell: The science council—and Dr Souter might correct me if I'm mistaken with this—wrote to the minister and provided their draft outcome statements. There are six draft outcome statements.

CHAIR: How do the draft outcome statements relate to the decadal plan?

Ms Campbell: The science council's advice is that the science outcome statements are core to the decadal plan.

CHAIR: They're like the backbone of it, are they?

Ms Campbell: Effectively, yes.

CHAIR: Are we calling them draft outcome statements?

Ms Campbell: Yes.

CHAIR: Have they been provided to the minister?

Ms Campbell: Yes.

CHAIR: Are we able to access a copy of those?

Ms Campbell: We can take that on notice. I think that should be fine.

Answer:

Please refer to Dr Souter's testimony on page 5 of Hansard, Senate Environment and Communications References Committee, Australian Antarctic Division Funding, Hobart, Wednesday 24 April 2024.

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Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding
Question No: IQ24-000077
Hearing Date: 24 April 2024
Division/Agency: Finance Division
Topic: Overspend conversation
Hansard Page: 13
Question Date: 24 April 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Duniam asked:

Senator DUNIAM: I want to come back briefly to the overspend. There was a conversation between you, Mr Hanlon, and the minister's office. Can you take on notice what date that was?
Mr Hanlon: Yes, I can.

Answer:

Approximately mid-July 2023. The exact date of the phone call cannot be determined as the phone call log only captures calls from November 2023 onwards.

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Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding
Question No: IQ24-000079
Hearing Date: 24 April 2024
Division/Agency: Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
Topic: Nuyina equipment
Hansard Page: 19
Question Date: 24 April 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Duniam asked:

Senator DUNIAM: Has the Nuyina lost any equipment when in service, like underwater equipment of any nature? Has anything gone missing?

Ms Campbell: Not my awareness. We can take that on notice, but I'm not aware of any.

Mr Boxall: I'm happy to say that any of the deployments from the science support point of view haven't lost anything.

Senator DUNIAM: Nothing's been lost; okay.

Mr Boxall: Have you got a hint for us?

Senator DUNIAM: Along with the myths of anchors, there was a rumour circulating that a certain underwater monitoring device had gone missing—but you're telling me not; that's fine.

Mr Boxall: Not to my knowledge.

Senator DUNIAM: Take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is not aware of any scientific instruments lost from RSV *Nuyina* since it came into service.

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Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding
Question No: IQ24-000081
Hearing Date: 24 April 2024
Division/Agency: Australian Antarctic Division
Topic: Skytraders cost comparison
Hansard Page: 22
Question Date: 24 April 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Duniam asked:

Senator DUNIAM: Is there much of a difference between what's being charged for services after 30 June this year on the new contracts and what had previously been charged?

Ms Bartley: The services that we're engaging from Skytraders and from Kenn Borek are in line with what we've already got. There are some marginal CPI increases, as you would expect, but that's in the same sort of space. We are working with HeliRes on a slight change to our requirements to move towards the use of twin-engine helicopters, and that's in line with current safety standards, particularly when operating over hostile territory. Obviously the Antarctic is a particular region with some particular safety aspects. So we expect that there may be some changes in the overall cost there, but we're still working through that process.

Senator DUNIAM: So you anticipate having the HeliRes one done in a short period of time?

Ms Bartley: That's correct.

Senator DUNIAM: On notice, do you think you could provide, noting commercial sensitivities, the changed costs at all? I don't know whether you can do it on an annualised basis of what it's projected to be. Take it on notice.

Ms Campbell: We can take that on notice—

Ms Bartley: We can see what we can—

Ms Campbell: for Skytraders. HeliRes isn't resolved.

Mr Sullivan: Do you want the last financial year compared to this financial year?

Senator DUNIAM: Perhaps, yes, as a comparison. It would be helpful to have

Answer:

There is a 2 per cent increase in the Skytraders A319 Contract from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

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Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding
Question No: IQ24-000082
Hearing Date: 24 April 2024
Division/Agency: Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
Topic: Air drop costs
Hansard Page: 26
Question Date: 24 April 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

CHAIR: I'll go back to the cranes and Serco. As a matter of interest on an airdrop and providing logistics, if you can do it, would that be on the taxpayer, or would Serco have to cover that, given the opportunity costs of having the cranes?

Ms Campbell: Again, we'd need to work through the issues with Serco on the specifics, but the Department of Defence, under Operation Southern Discovery, has a set number of flights to Antarctica budgeted effectively to support the Antarctic program, so an airdrop would be within that element.

CHAIR: So, if it was the Air Force, it would presumably be covered by the taxpayer, but the Navy's not part of cost recovery—

Ms Campbell: There might be—

CHAIR: It might be.

Mr Sullivan: We'd have to take that under advisement.

CHAIR: If you could.

Mr Sullivan: I'm not sure we'll get to you by—

CHAIR: I'm not sure what that would cost either.

Ms Campbell: We're still working through those issues, so we won't have those for next week.

Answer:

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is in active discussions with both Serco and the Department of Defence, these discussions will continue through May and June 2024.