

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 201
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Programme: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)
Topic: Third Party Monitoring Networks
Hansard Page: 18-19
Question Date: 08 February 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Canavan asked:

On notice, could you provide what failover and third party networks you would be relying on in Queensland? If other senators want to expand that they are welcome to, but I am interested in Queensland particularly. My final question is: you mentioned that over time you will be looking to consolidate the resources out of Rockhampton and Townsville, I think, as well. Where will those people go—because you are relocating people or offering relocation? That is my understanding.

Answer:

The primary failover for any piece of observing equipment in Queensland is the composite and complementary nature of the observing network. A range of observing technologies, consisting of automatic weather stations, rain gauges, floodwarn networks, cooperative observers, satellites, radars, wind profilers, upper air weather balloons and aircraft observations are supported by advanced computer modelling and Bureau forecasts. As a total network, this means that the Bureau is not reliant on any single technology or piece of infrastructure to deliver its services.

In addition to Bureau-owned and operated observing networks, the Bureau ingests data from third parties, where the systems and observations meet Bureau quality criteria. By doing so, the Bureau is able to utilise a broader distribution and density of observations. The primary third party observations in Queensland are in relation to river height and rain gauges, of which there are over 1,300 of each.

In relation to Townsville and Rockhampton the Bureau is installing new technology to improve services. As a result, this will change the distribution of observing staff who will be given the opportunity to nominate their preferred location from the capital cities plus Cairns from 2018. There will be no changes to forecasting staff in Townsville