

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

**Question No:** 65  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 4  
**Programme:** Science  
**Topic:** Independent Expert Scientific Committee - CSG Comprehensive Scientific Baselines  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 21 October 2015  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

1. Is the Government developing comprehensive scientific baselines regarding the two key issues around CSG - namely impacts on the water table and fugitive emissions? When will they be completed? If not, why not?

**Answer:**

1. The Bioregional Assessment Programme is expected to be completed by the end of 2016 and is focused on water resource impacts from coal development activities. The Programme is developing scientific baseline information in up to 13 regions in eastern Australia to assess cumulative impacts on water resources from both coal seam gas and coal mining activities. The information will include current coal and coal seam gas resource developments and likely future coal and coal seam gas resource developments. The information produced by the programme is being made publicly available at <http://www.bioregionalassessments.gov.au/>.

The estimation of fugitive emissions is undertaken separately to this, and reporting is undertaken in accordance with international reporting rules under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The National Greenhouse Energy Reporting Measurement Determinations provides methodologies for companies to use in estimating emissions, and is periodically updated as methods and scientific understanding improves.

Over the past 18 months, the Department of the Environment has undertaken a collaborative project with CSIRO to measure fugitive emissions associated with leakage from coal seam gas facilities and well casings. A report published by CSIRO in 2014, *Field Measurements of Fugitive Emissions from Equipment and Well Casings in Australian Coal Seam Gas Production Facilities*, is available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/publications/csg-fugitive-emissions>.