

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

**Question No:** 301  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Agency  
**Program:** Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)  
**Topic:** Tabling of DAFWA Agreement  
**Hansard Page:** 24  
**Question Date:** 17 October 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Lines, Sue asked:**

**Dr Johnson:** The total cost of the project is \$22.6 million.

**Senator LINES:** Is there a split of that cost?

**Dr Johnson:** No. As I said, the Western Australian government is making that contribution to the construction of those radars, and we will provide a service in terms of planning, supply, installation, operation and maintenance of those radars over a 15-year period. That is the nature of the commercial agreement.

**Senator LINES:** I think you have taken on notice to get back to me on the coverage.

**Dr Johnson:** Yes, if that would be helpful.

**Senator LINES:** You said that you had an agreement with DAFWA. Is that agreement able to be tabled?

**Dr Johnson:** I would have to take that on notice. I do not know what the answer to that is.

**Senator LINES:** Take on notice whether it can be tabled.

**Dr Johnson:** I defer to others at this table, but I do not think that as a matter of course the Commonwealth would table commercial arrangements with a supplier, whether it was another government department or a private supplier.

**Senator Birmingham:** I am not sure if you were in the room before, Senator Lines, but certainly in response to questioning from Senator Moore or Senator Urquhart, the extent of own-source revenue that the bureau receives through a range of commercial activities was outlined. Obviously a relationship with a state government is not quite as commercial as other activities. It is something the bureau will look at, and as long as it does not compromise their commercial activities and operations I am sure they can provide further information.....

**Answer:**

1. The Wheatbelt Radars Project will deliver three new digital Doppler radars into the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia by June 2017. The radars will be located at Newdegate (operational since October 2016), South Doodlakine (scheduled for operations by February 2017) and Watheroo (by June 2017). The radars will be owned and fully funded by the Government of Western Australian and maintained and operated by the Bureau of Meteorology. More detailed information can be found at: [www.agric.wa.gov.au/r4r/doppler-radar-investment](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/r4r/doppler-radar-investment).

2. The Agreement between the Bureau and the Western Australia Department of Agriculture and Food contains commercial-in-confidence material which is not in the public interest to table. Tabling the Agreement would damage the commercial interests of the Bureau and its relationships with commercial entities and other stakeholders, including the Government of Western Australia. The Agreement contains detailed costings which, if tabled, may negatively affect future opportunities for the Bureau to provide these kinds of services to other parties as well as the Bureau's ability to procure radar technology at the best value for money.