

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio  
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates  
31 May – 1 June 2017

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** CSIRO

**TOPIC:** Data 61 project with DHS

**REFERENCE:** Questions on Notice (Hansard, 1 June 2017, page 30)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-25

Senator KIM CARR: There was a research alliance that was established in 2009 between CSIRO and Centrelink. Is it still in force?

Dr Williams: That specific work is no longer in force, but we have redeveloped relationships. We have not done any work in recent years with Centrelink directly.

Senator KIM CARR: So Data61 has not done any work with Human Services?

Dr Williams: No. Since Data61 became Data61, they have done no work with Centrelink.

Senator KIM CARR: So you are not helping them out with their robo-debt arrangements?

Dr Williams: No. That work had been undertaken for the Department of Human Services.

Senator KIM CARR: That is what I said—Human Services.

Dr Williams: Yes, but that is not structurally—

Senator KIM CARR: But Data61 is not doing it—that is the question. What is the involvement of the CSIRO in that project?

Dr Williams: In that role, we are looking at methodologies of assessing which customers should complete online complaints and whether we can offer any analytical advice that will help the department in that process.

Senator KIM CARR: When were you approached about that particular project?

Dr Williams: I do not have the time line on that, but that work is in progress.

Senator KIM CARR: Are you involved in any other projects with DHS?

Dr Williams: At this moment in time, that is the new project we have with DHS in Data61.

Senator KIM CARR: What function do you perform for them exactly?

Dr Williams: We provide scientific capability to help them understand whether data analytics can help them in the policies that they are trying to implement.

Senator KIM CARR: Do you do this for a fee?

Dr Williams: We do it for a fee, yes.

Senator KIM CARR: How much is that?

Dr Williams: On that contract, I do not know the exact figure but I can find it.

**ANSWER**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) approached CSIRO through Data61 on Friday, 27 January 2017 to work with them on their Online Compliance System (OCS). As a result of this, CSIRO has entered into three contracts with DHS as follows:

Contract 1 - A retrospective analysis of the design and implementation of the OCS that was in use at the time by DHS, and suggested possible improvements to the system. This work was undertaken between 30 January 2017 and 2 February 2017 with a contract value of \$46,200 (incl. GST).

Contract 2 - To provide technical advice to DHS as DHS designs and builds a prototype for a possible new approach to selecting customers to enter the Online Compliance System. This includes joint analysis & validation to assist in refining the selection approach through technical advice, and attendance at meetings where necessary. The advice provided by Data61 is addressing how to construct and validate data-driven models and make decisions under uncertainty, and is not involved in deciding the criteria for selection. This work was undertaken between 14 – 31 March 2017 with a contract value of \$55,000 (incl.GST).

Contract 3 - To provide technical advice to DHS as DHS designs and builds a prototype for a possible new approach to selecting customers to enter the Online Compliance System. This includes joint analysis & validation to assist in refining the selection approach through technical advice, and attendance at meetings where necessary. The advice provided by Data61 is addressing how to construct and validate data-driven models and make decisions under uncertainty, and is not involved in deciding the criteria for selection. This contract covered the period 8 May 2017 – 30 June 2017 with a contract value of \$44,000 (incl.GST).

CSIRO is currently not involved in any other projects with DHS.