

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2007-08
21 February 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: CSIRO - Research on Lignocellulose as an Alternative Fuel

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 21/2/08, Page E62, E63-64)

QUESTION No. AI -15

E62

Senator MILNE—The other one I wanted to ask you about was the work you are doing in lignocellulose as alternative fuel research. I saw something recently that suggests CSIRO have made some breakthrough in that area and second-generation biofuels. Could you update me with that and tell me how much you are spending on that in this year?

Dr Garrett—I am not sure that we can give you the precise detail, but my colleague Dr Daly, who is involved in that program, might have some additional information.

Dr Daly—We will just have to look up the data for you. It is actually part of the energy transform flagship, so my colleague is looking up the data.

E63-64

Senator MILNE—I was going to get some answers on lignocellulose work. Do you have it yet?

Dr Daly—No, we do not have the financial figures. If you could ask the question again, we will follow it up. You want to know how much we were investing in biofuels, is that right?

Senator MILNE—I want an update on where you are with second generation biofuels, in particular, the work you are doing on lignocellulose and conversion to a biofuel, and the level of investment in that program, since that is one of the most promising areas, it seems, of biofuels. Also, can you tell me anything about how far away from commercial application that might be? I put those questions on notice.

Dr Garrett—Thank you, we will do that.

ANSWER

The Alternative Transport Fuels Program within CSIRO's Energy Transformed Flagship includes research on Australia's potential biofuels options. One promising area that has been identified is the production of fuels from lignocellulosic biomass. CSIRO, in collaboration with Monash University, has made some advances in the processing of lignocellulosic waste materials into an oil product. The development of this process is still at the bench scale, and negotiations are being held with a biofuels developer to move to the next stage in the process development.

In 2007-08 the budgeted spending by the Energy Transformed Flagship on biofuels research and development is:

- Assessment of biomass resource potential for liquid fuels (includes both first and second generation feed stocks) - \$1.48 million; and
- Conversion of lignocellulosic biomass to fuels – \$1.183 million.