

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 - Non-market Recreational Values

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

QUESTION No. AI-16

Senator MILNE—The other question is in relation to the Murray-Darling and the work you have been doing for the National Water Initiative as part of that. I note that some of the work you have been doing is on measuring the non-market recreational values, in particular at the Barmah Forest and the Coorong. Are you measuring biodiversity values and putting a price on those, or is this just recreational or tourism values? If not, and since they are intangibles in a sense as well, why are we not looking at the biodiversity values of these places?

Dr Johnson—I cannot give you a straight answer because it is a level of detail that I am not on top of. I can take that on notice and find that out. Having done some of that work in a former life, I do know that it would encompass the full spectrum of values that you have identified. That would be routine methodology. But I am not on top of the level of detail of that part of the project. If it is something you would like me to follow up, I would be happy to do that.

Senator MILNE—Yes. I am very keen to know how the biodiversity values were quantified, your methodology in putting a price on them, and the price in the context of this report, particularly of the biodiversity values?

Dr Johnson—Sure. I am happy to do that.

ANSWER

CSIRO has conducted research on the recreational use of Barmah Forest and the Coorong along the River Murray, as reported in: Dyack B, Rolfe J, Harvey J, O'Connell D, Abel N. 2007. *Valuing recreation in the Murray: An assessment of the non-market recreational values at Barmah Forest and the Coorong* (available at: <http://www.csiro.au/resources/recreationreport.html>). The research focused on recreation values and did not estimate non-market values associated with biodiversity.

CSIRO has commenced research that will estimate the non-market values associated with the biodiversity and health of the floodplain, red gums and black box forest in the lower connected Murray system, including the Barmah Forest. CSIRO researchers are using a valuation technique known as a *stated preference technique* which is designed to find money values for measurable but unpriced impacts. It is expected that this research will be completed in December 2008.