

INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH PORTFOLIO
Additional Estimates 2007-08 (February 2008)

Written Questions on Notice

Q No	Senator	Agency	Question	Date answered	Date sent to Senator	Additional Information
<i>Appointments; Grants; Requests to the Department of Finance; Election Commitments</i>						
<u>AI-1</u>	Minchin	IISR	<p>In preparation for the Senate Estimates Hearings which commence on Monday, February 18th 2008, it would be appreciated if each Department could provide information along the following lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All appointments which have been made by the Government (through Executive Council, Cabinet and Ministers) to Statutory Authorities, Executive Agencies and Advisory Boards, with a brief outline of the respective appointee's credentials. ▪ A list of all vacancies which remain to be filled by Ministerial (including Cabinet and Executive Council) appointments. ▪ All grants which have been approved by Ministers from within their portfolio. ▪ Requests to the Department of Finance to move funds within each portfolio. <p>Could you please ensure that all Ministers are notified of these requests so that Senate Committees are in a position to consider the information provided during Estimates.</p> <p>In future I propose that, Departments, as a matter of course, should supply this information before each round of Senate Estimates.</p> <p>In addition, I request that the Government provide me with a complete list of election promises made during the campaign and which Department is responsible for the administration of each of these commitments.</p> <p>The Opposition would like to have this information on hand by the close of business on Wednesday 13 February 2008.</p> <p>I have copied this letter to the secretaries of the Senate Legislative and General Purpose Standing Committees.</p>	22/04/2008	23/04/2008	

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<u>AI-2 to AI-20</u> see oral questions on notice below						
<i>Gunns Limited pulp mill</i>						
<u>AI-21</u>	Abetz	Chief Scientist	Could the Chief Scientist please advise what the acceptable or safe level of dioxins is for drinking water in the United States of America?	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Gunns Limited pulp mill</i>						
<u>AI-22</u>	Abetz	Chief Scientist	At a discharge of dioxins of 2.0pg TEQ/L how much would that equate to in grams per annum as discharge from the proposed Tasmanian pulp mill?	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Gunns Limited pulp mill</i>						
<u>AI-23</u>	Abetz	Chief Scientist	Is your recommendation of the dioxin trigger for the Tasmanian pulp mill 6 times more stringent than recommended by the RPDC?	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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Oral Questions on Notice

Q No.	Senator	Agency	Hearing date	Question	Proof Hansard Page	Date answered	Date sent to Senator	Additional Information
<i>Election commitments</i>								
<u>AI-2</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—Are you able to table for us a list of all the plans, reviews, plans to review, election promises, et cetera made by the government in the lead-up to the election on 24 November in this portfolio?</p> <p>Senator Carr—Yes, we can do that. It is a public document.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—You can take that on notice.</p>	E16	23/04/2008	23/04/2008	
<i>Staffing reductions due to the efficiency dividend</i>								
<u>AI-3</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—I would like to go back to the two per cent dividend, Mr Paterson. You indicated that part of that would be achieved by not pursuing certain staff appointments. Are you able to provide us with the classifications and areas where those staff positions might not be filled? I would assume that you would not necessarily have that with you, so you could take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—As I said earlier in response to the question, it is a combination of activity. We have a recruitment pause. Have I maintained a list of all of the vacant positions that we have had over that period of time that we have not filled? No, I have not. If you think that it is worth the effort of us going back over that time to try to articulate what those vacancies will be, we can examine it, but it is a combination of things.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Of course it is.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—I have indicated that we have restructured the department and that we have reduced the number of divisions within the department. I have reduced the number of deputy secretaries within the department and the attendance support</p>	E22-E23	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				<p>mechanisms. All of these things are a combination of activities which will result in me being able to meet my obligations in terms of the efficiency dividend.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—No argument.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—And they have not yet had full effect. Any answer that I give you will be a partial answer because I need to meet an obligation this financial year. So at these estimates, even on notice with the period of notice that is required that the chair referred to earlier, that requires us to file responses at a time before I will be able to fully answer the question.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—That is all understood. All I would like to know is whether the recruitment pause is right across the board—</p> <p>Mr Paterson—Yes, it is.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—or is it for example being visited more heavily on Industry as opposed to Innovation or Science or Research?</p> <p>Mr Paterson—It applies across the board to all the areas that I have responsibility for and where there are key specialist appointments that need to be made under that recruitment pause, then we make those appointments.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—They still go ahead.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—That is why I have described it as a recruitment pause and not a freeze. What we are doing is sensibly and prudently managing our outlays to be able to meet the obligation.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—I would not expect you to say anything else but to be sensible and prudent, but all I wanted to know was whereabouts the recruitment pause was being exercised. That was all I was wanting to know. I would appreciate if you could take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—I am hesitant to take it on notice because it is a very difficult question to respond to precisely. You have indicated that the nature of the question is to get a sense of understanding whether it is applying to one area of the department more than another.</p>				

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				<p>Senator ABETZ—That is right.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—I said the answer to that is no. I cannot dictate turnover. I cannot dictate who leaves, who goes on maternity leave, who joins another department or who takes employment in the private sector. What we can do is to manage the ins and outs within a complex portfolio and deliver the outcome at the end of the day.</p> <p>CHAIR—The committee would appreciate if you could provide as full an answer as you can on notice.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—I am happy to do that.</p>				
<i>Media clipping service</i>								
<u>AI-4</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—How much does it cost per contact point of the 250?</p> <p>Ms Butler—I would have to check that.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—If you can take that on notice.</p>	E28-E29	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Automotive industry review</i>								
<u>AI-5</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—It is pretty clear. You said that the AMWU did not have any involvement, to the best of your recollection. If you can give that further consideration. I then followed up by asking: did any AMWU official either in a personal or official capacity have any input into the terms of reference?</p> <p>Senator Carr—It is not my recollection, but I would like to take that on notice just to make sure that I am correct in every respect.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Did any industry representative in a private, personal or representative role have input into the terms of reference?</p> <p>Senator Carr—I give the same answer. What we did state as far back as January 2006 is that we would have a broad-ranging inquiry into all aspects affecting the competitiveness of the industry.</p>	E36	30/04/2008	30/04/2008	

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<i>Automotive industry review</i>								
<u>AI-6</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—Were any emails sent to him prior to the formal announcement?</p> <p>Senator Carr—I have to check that. I am not aware of any.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Or indeed any facsimile transmissions? Take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator Carr—Yes, I will take it on notice. Can I say this to you? I think—</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Wait a minute. Is this in answer to a question?</p> <p>Senator Carr—I am trying to assist you here. You have sought to impugn Mr Bracks’s character by suggesting—</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—No, I have not.</p> <p>Senator Carr—that the issue of remuneration was a matter of concern to him or that we discussed those questions—</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—No.</p> <p>Senator Carr—The point is Mr Bracks will be paid under the normal Remuneration Tribunal arrangements. And he has never shown any interest in the remuneration issue.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—This is non-responsive to the question. This is non-responsive and it is wasting the time of the estimates. Was there a letter—sorry, we know there was not a letter. Was there a facsimile or email transmission to him indicating to him the terms under which he might be engaged prior to 13 February?</p> <p>Senator Carr—I will check, but I do not believe there was.</p>	E40-E41	30/04/2008	30/04/2008	
<i>Ford grant</i>								
<u>AI-7</u>	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—Was any legal advice sought as to whether that agreement or that arrangement could broken?</p> <p>Mr Paterson—I am not sure. We do not respond to questions in relation to advice that may have been provided or the nature of the</p>	E50	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				<p>advice.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—I do not want to know what the advice was or the nature of the advice other than whether such advice was sought as to whether or not these agreements that had been entered into with the previous government could be broken, in particular in relation to the Ford announcement or agreement that we referred to before the lunch break, the \$52.5 million amount.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—Your question is precise in its terms and I will take it on notice to respond to it.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—All right. Thank you very much.</p>				
Funding of NICTA								
AI-8	Abetz	IISR	21/02/2008	<p>Senator ABETZ—Because there is persistent talk or speculation of razor gangs and funding cuts and there has been concern that that this might impact on NICTA. I was just wondering which minister would be responsible to seek to ensure that no cuts were inflicted on NICTA, whether that would be Senator Conroy or Senator Carr, or in a wonderful marriage they might both advocate the same thing for a change to cabinet. But I just wanted to know who would be responsible for advocating for NICTA in the cabinet room in the face of potential budget cuts.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—We clearly do not make any comments in relation to the budget process and this is a contract between NICTA, the ARC and the Department of Broadband.</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—So there are contractual obligations on the Commonwealth to continue the funding stream as is?</p> <p>Mr Paterson—There is a contract on foot, as I understand it. If you want further detail—</p> <p>Senator ABETZ—Yes. Does that contract require the Commonwealth, or the taxpayer, to keep on with the funding stream as is so that, in other words, there cannot be cuts.</p> <p>Mr Paterson—You are now stepping into an area where I cannot</p>	E52	22/04/2008	23/04/2008	

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				respond. That is a matter that the ARC would need to comment on. Senator ABETZ —All right. If we can take that on notice on the <i>Hansard</i> and, as I said before, if we get into that depth then we will put it on notice.				
<i>Funds allocated to other bodies</i>								
<u>AI-9</u>	Abetz	CSIRO	21/02/2008	Senator ABETZ —Does CSIRO use the funds allocated to it to fund other bodies, other institutions or other research projects not under its direct control? Mr Whelan —Yes, the organisation does provide funding from its appropriation to other bodies. Senator ABETZ —Is a list readily available as to who the recipients of those funds are and for what purposes those funds are made available? Mr Whelan —We do not have that information with us. Senator ABETZ —I did not expect you to. Mr Whelan —But it is readily compilable. Senator ABETZ —My next question was: could you direct me somewhere on that website for that information but take that on notice as well. So if you can provide me with a list and then for future, if there is a website where I can look it up, that would make that easier.	E54	22/04/2008	23/04/2008	
<i>Aqua-ammonia process</i>								
<u>AI-10</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	Senator MILNE —What happened to the aqua-ammonia process? Dr Ronalds —I do not know the detail of that. The post-combustion plants can use either an amine or an ammonia process, but I am not across the detail of our progress to date on particular processes. Senator MILNE —On notice, how much has been spent on that process, where it is up to now, has it been abandoned or is work still going on on that particular part of it?	E61	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				Dr Ronalds —Okay.				
<i>Size of carbon capture pilot plant</i>								
<u>AI-11</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	<p>Senator MILNE—In terms of the carbon capture and the storage aspect, what work are you doing in terms of sequestration?</p> <p>Dr Ronalds—Our program of sequestration happens through the CO2 CRC and, again, there is a pilot plant there that I believe the CRC expects to start operating in late March as well.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Where will that be?</p> <p>Dr Ronalds—In the Otway area in Victoria.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—What is the scale of that?</p> <p>Dr Ronalds—I had better take that on notice. I am not sure of the exact size.</p>	E61	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Commercial partners in pilot programs</i>								
<u>AI-12</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	<p>Senator MILNE—Also on notice, who are the commercial partners in each of those particular pilot programs? I presume there are commercial partners in relation to them.</p> <p>Dr Garrett—In terms of the normal way in which the CRC operates in this area, there is a number of partners, and we will put that in our answer on notice. I might add with reference to your question around post-combustion capture and pilot plants, as I think Beverley intimated we are also working with the Huaneng power group in China in terms of retrofit to one of their power stations in Beijing, a 3,000 tonnes per annum plant.</p>	E61	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Solar energy</i>								
<u>AI-13</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	Senator MILNE —Moving to solar thermal as a comparison, what can you tell me about the progress on the multitower solar array and the conclusions about the viability of solar thermal as a commercial application now?	E62	22/04/2008	23/04/2008	

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				<p>Dr Ronalds—I cannot give much detail on that. I am not as familiar with that program. Certainly we have our solar centre at Newcastle that is performing well. Again, there is some early planning around some additional facilities. I cannot go into more detail on that right now. I just do not know more detail.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—With the permission of the minister, I would be interested in an update from somebody working in that area.</p> <p>Dr Garrett—We will certainly do that, Senator, and perhaps we can invite you to come and see what is happening in Newcastle. I recently had the opportunity to spend some time with colleagues in the US in the energy field, and they are significantly impressed with the work that we are doing in solar thermal. I think in their country they believe they are underinvesting so far in this domain, and as we indicate, we are very enthusiastic about the progress being made here. We would be happy to (a) provide that on notice and (b) invite you.</p>				
<i>Spending on solar thermal compared to spending on carbon capture and storage</i>								
<u>AI-14</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	<p>Senator MILNE—Specifically I would like to know what you are spending on solar thermal compared with what you are spending on carbon capture and storage.</p> <p>Dr Garrett—We will get you that data.</p> <p>Senator MILNE—Thank you. If you can just give me a breakdown of that; in fact I would be keen to see a breakdown on the renewables generally.</p>	E62	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
<i>Research on lignocellulose as an alternative fuel</i>								
<u>AI-15</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	<p>Senator MILNE—Thank you. If you can just give me a breakdown of that; in fact I would be keen to see a breakdown on the renewables generally. 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.</p>	E62 & E63-E64	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				<p>Could you update me with that and tell me how much you are spending on that in this year?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator MILNE—I was going to get some answers on lignocellulose work. Do you have it yet?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Dr Garrett—Thank you, we will do that.</p>				
<i>Non-market recreational values</i>								
<u>AI-16</u>	Milne	CSIRO	21/02/2008	<p>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</p>	E63	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				<p>intangibles in a sense as well, why are we not looking at the biodiversity values of these places?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Dr Johnson—Sure. I am happy to do that.</p>				
Consultancies								
<u>AI-17</u>	Eggleston	AIATSIS	21/02/2008	<p>Senator EGGLESTON—I notice that in your report you state that you spent \$207,971 on consultancies. Can you give us some idea what these consultancies were about?</p> <p>Mr Larkin—Yes.</p> <p>Mr Hobson—I will take that on notice to address that specifically.</p> <p>Senator EGGLESTON—Okay, that is quite acceptable.</p>	E72	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
Budget variance								
<u>AI-18</u>	Joyce	AIATSIS	21/02/2008	<p>Senator JOYCE—I draw your attention to page 64 of the budget departmental balance sheet. My first inquiry is: in the heritage and cultural assets, your actual of \$6,569,000 becomes \$6,459,000 in the revised budget, then reverts back to \$6,569,000 as a continuum. What is the reason for that \$100,000 difference?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—That would be acquisition or proposed acquisitions, and then of course there will be disposals or revaluation and</p>	E73	22/04/2008	23/04/2008	

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				<p>changes in valuations.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Why is there a \$100,000 difference—a \$100,000 depreciation of your heritage and cultural assets?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—Heritage and cultural assets also include our library collection, manuscripts and journals et cetera, and at times their values are adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Why is it adjusted down by \$100,000 and then straight back up to its original number?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—That is in the subsequent year?</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Yes.</p> <p>Mr Hobson—That could be estimates based on possible acquisitions or additions to that.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—It just seems peculiar that you have such a perfect number and you have gone down by \$100,000 and then back up to its original number as it was right at the start. Are you proposing in your revised budget to sell exactly \$100,000 worth of heritage and cultural assets and then buy back again that exact number?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—No.</p> <p>Mr Larkin—It is an area in which prices can fluctuate because it is quite difficult at times to place a lasting cost on some of these things. They do change. They are not actually always costed according to market values. There is also a lot of cultural value to it, but I suggest we take that on notice and provide an answer back.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—I think that would be good. It just seems peculiar. If you adjust them down, you would keep them down. Why would you adjust them back up again?</p>				
<i>Sale of assets</i>								
<u>AI-19</u>	Joyce	AIATSI	21/02/2008	Senator JOYCE —I refer you to page 65 and the \$106,000, which represents proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment.	E73	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	

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				<p>Does that relate also to the \$2,000 gain in the income and expense schedule? In your statement of cash flows, is the \$106,000 cash received pertinent to the \$2,000 gain?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—It would be related. For detail and clarification, I would take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—In taking it on notice, I want to know what was involved with that. I imagine that \$2,000 gain is against the written down value, which would mean it was sold extremely close to cost. I want to know where that money went, to whom it was sold and what was going on there.</p> <p>Mr Hobson—Yes.</p>				
Budgeting								
AI-20	Joyce	AIATSSIS	21/02/2008	<p>Senator JOYCE—Again referring to page 65, your investing activities and cash received, you refer to '\$70,000 from the proceeds of sales of property, plant and equipment'. That is the equivalent of a \$70,000 gain in your income and expense schedule. If, by the same nature, these things are based on written-down values, that would mean their written-down value is zero. I want you to confirm exactly what is going on between those two figures. Why are they exactly the same? If the previous figure of \$106,000 in sales only equals a \$2,000 gain, why in every subsequent year does \$70,000 of sales equal a \$70,000 gain?</p> <p>Mr Hobson—I will address that at the same time, if that is all right.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Thank you. I want those answers to come back.</p>	E74	18/04/2008	21/04/2008	
AI-21 to AI-23 see written questions on notice above								