

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Additional Budget Senate Estimates

23 February 2011

Question: AR13

Topic: Scallop Industry – Consultations with GA

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Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator Colbeck - You have not had any meetings or discussions with the scallop industry since the seismic testing or since the completion of the study?

Mr Squire - I have not had any discussions with the Tasmanian scallop industry on this issue.

Senator Colbeck - And you are not aware of anyone in Geoscience Australia that has?

Dr Pigram - Geoscience Australia is not having those discussions.

Senator Colbeck - You have not had any claims or correspondence or anything of that nature in relation to this to get a sense of what the effects might be?

Dr Pigram - Not that I am aware of, but I am happy to take it on notice and check for you.

Senator Colbeck - If you would, please. Perhaps you are about to - I don't know.

Answer:

Geoscience Australia had no meetings or discussions with the Tasmanian Scallop Industry prior to, or since, the seismic survey that was conducted in the eastern Bass Strait between February and April 2010.

Geoscience Australia's communications in regard to the Bass Strait seismic survey are as follows. Before the survey, the agency:

1. provided information to GeoScience Victoria (GSV) on how to plan a survey including stakeholder management; and
2. had a discussion with Mr John Hughes (seismic survey contractor) regarding seismic source and target depth.

During the survey, Geoscience Australia communicated with GSV and the survey contractor.

After the survey, in November and December 2010, emails from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) were sent, *inter alia*, to Geoscience Australia, the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and the Tasmanian Government. These emails provided information on the DPI response to claims by scallop fishers that the seismic survey killed scallops, and included a link on The Australian Fisheries Management Authority's website for the report on the short term effects of seismic survey on scallops in the Bass Strait. The report can be found at:
www.afma.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Assessing-the-short-term-impact-of-seismic-surveys-on-adult-commercial-scallops-in-Bass-Strait.pdf