

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
13 February 2013

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

**TOPIC:** Impact of Research projects

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Mason

**QUESTION No.:** AI-59

According to pages 17-18 of the CSIRO 2011/12 Annual Report, of the independent reviews of CSIRO's Flagships to date, 60% of themes making up the Flagships were within the "acceptable" range for probable impact on end-users (industry and community).

In relation to non-Flagship research capabilities, pages 44-45 of the CSIRO 2011/12 Annual Report indicate that, in the second cycle of the review program which was completed in 2011/12, 68% of these research capabilities were within the "acceptable" range for probable impact on end-users (industry and community).

- a) Page 18 of the CSIRO 2011/12 Annual Report attributes the results of the Flagships review to "the Flagships being a new portfolio or the Flagship activities having less short-term consulting-type work within the portfolio". Does CSIRO expect the results to improve once the Flagships are no longer a "new portfolio" and the benefits of longer-term research are realised?
- b) What specific measures will be implemented to improve results for both the Flagships and non-Flagship research capabilities?

**ANSWER**

The CSIRO National Research Flagships have an impact goal directed towards a national challenge and each of the themes in the Flagship contributes to this overarching impact goal. In this way the Flagships are a new modality for developing socioeconomic impact. Flagships and Divisions are reviewed by international panels comprised of prominent and expert individuals on a three to four year recurring cycle. The ratings of individual themes by the panels are a subsidiary question to their assessment of the overall progress of the Flagship towards its goal.

Divisional themes differ from Flagship themes in being generally directed towards shorter term impact goals and are generally of smaller scale. Given these differences, the results in the Annual Report for Flagships (pages 17-18) are not directly comparable to the results for themes in Divisions (pages 44-45).

The CSIRO anticipates that as the Flagship research progresses, in particular the translation of the research outcomes to profound national impact, there will be increasing confidence to support

impact ratings at “Strong” and “Benchmark” levels. However, the more important issue will be the ratings by the panels as to whether the Flagships are set to achieve their overall goal. In order for Flagships to manage delivery against the goal, the Impact 2020 project that the CSIRO is conducting is being used to manage impact delivery at both Theme and at Flagship levels.