

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10
01 June 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Biochar Research

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 1 June 2009, E25)

QUESTION No.: BI-40

Dr Keating—The recently announced program is a three-year program.

Senator ABETZ—How many scientists will be involved?

Dr Keating—In total, the scale of the effort would be of the order of—I am just doing some mental arithmetic here. Perhaps it would be better if I take that on notice.

ANSWER

The exact number of staff is currently under negotiation between the CSIRO and the potential partners in the project. The original proposal, as submitted by CSIRO, was limited to CSIRO staff. However, the expert panel from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry recommended that the project be expanded to a national initiative and involve partners from other organisation. As a result CSIRO is currently assembling a team of the most recognized and qualified biochar researchers within Australia including staff from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, the University of Western Australia, the University of Sydney and the University of New England. The combined research team will in total comprise between seven to nine researchers and senior technicians.

CSIRO will contribute three scientists and two technicians to the research team. These CSIRO project staff are expected to each devote between 10-50% of their time to biochar projects and the balance to other soil and plant related research.