

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
31 May 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Acacia Tree Research

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: BI-52

Has there been research into the acacia tree, as discussed in the *Canberra Times* on 20/3/2010?
(*Canberra Times* on 20/3/2010)

ANSWER

The article in the *Canberra Times* relates to *Faidherbia albida*, which is closely related to acacias and was formerly classified as *Acacia albida*. *Faidherbia albida* is widely distributed across much of subhumid tropical Africa and parts of the Middle East where it is a very important species in agroforestry systems. This species has been the subject of extensive worldwide research (in which CSIRO has had only peripheral involvement). A comprehensive 288 page review of this research can be found in Oxford Forestry Institute Tropical Forestry Papers No. 41 - see: www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/users/millsr/isbes/ODLF/TFP41.pdf

Seed of *Faidherbia albida* has come into Australia in the past under strict quarantine control with a very small amount held by CSIRO. At the time of writing CSIRO has not been able to find any evidence of *Faidherbia albida* having been grown under field conditions. Importation of *Faidherbia albida* into Australia is currently prohibited by AQIS because of the high risk of it becoming a weed.

However, CSIRO is currently working with the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry to plan further targeted research on *Faidherbia albida* and its agroforestry potential in Africa, where it is not a weed.