

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Alzheimer's Research

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: BI-53

Can you outline what steps can be taken to advance your research into Alzheimer's? (*Canberra Times* on 27/3/2010)

ANSWER

Alzheimer's disease is a slowly evolving disease. Amyloid plaques in the brain associated with the disease can appear 10-15 years before dementia symptoms can be detected. This makes diagnosis and development of interventions through either lifestyle or therapies extremely difficult.

Research to combat such a complex disease of this type requires bringing together the best teams of sufficient size, diverse capabilities and scientific and clinical depth in the areas of brain imaging, cognitive and lifestyle measures, and molecular biology.

CSIRO has taken this on as a major challenge as part of its Preventative Health Flagship and has established the Australian Imaging Biomarkers and Lifestyle Study of Ageing through the Collaboration Cluster Fund, which is one of the largest and most powerful clinical studies of Alzheimer's disease ever conducted.

More than 1000 participants have been examined and many have been imaged over the last three years. This is starting to yield novel insights of the disease mechanisms, which were reported in the *Canberra Times*.

One of the key ways forward is to

1. Continue the national approach to tackling this disease by continuing to bring together the best in the country around a focused national challenge.
2. Build further Collaboration Clusters to address national challenges of this type.