

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: SKA

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Colbeck

QUESTION No.: SI-98

What are the implications of the result of Australia's SKA bid for future funding of the Pawsey Centre? Would success in the bid require greater funding of the Centre? And, conversely, would an unsuccessful bid mean that funding would be reduced?

ANSWER

EIF program funding for the Pawsey High Performance Computing Centre is not contingent on the SKA site decision. The Pawsey Centre will be funded, built and used as planned, regardless of the SKA site outcome, to support science in a range of disciplines in Western Australia. This will include the processing of data from the Australian SKA Pathfinder telescope and supporting the work of SKA/radio astronomy oriented research groups at the University of Western Australia and Curtin University.

The floor space available at the Pawsey Centre is sufficient to potentially accommodate the data flow and processing requirements for Phase 1 of the SKA (a 10 per cent proof of concept instrument). The Centre has been designed so that the 'machine room' can be readily expanded. With expansion, the Pawsey Centre could potentially also accommodate the data flow and processing requirements for SKA Phase 2 (the full low and mid frequency SKA instrument). The costs associated with utilising the Pawsey Centre for SKA Phase 1 and 2 would be covered by the international SKA project partners as part of the project budget.