

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
17 October 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Chief Scientist – expert panel

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Colbeck

**QUESTION No.:** SI-64

1. Is input from the Chief Scientist ever sought with regard to the composition or membership of expert panels?
2. Under what conditions would input from the Chief Scientist be sought on such matters?
3. What would the advice of the Chief Scientist be regarding the make up of an expert panel investigating the environmental impacts of the FV Abel Tasman, particularly :
  - a) the skills needed
  - b) how many people should be on the panel
  - c) the selection process?
4. Under what conditions would an expert panel of one be appropriate for investigating a biological system?
5. Has the Chief Scientist been consulted regarding the Terms of Reference for the expert panel?
6. What advice would the Chief Scientist provide regarding the manner in which the expert panel could carry out the assessment of the environmental impact of the FV Abel Tasman?
7. Does the Chief Scientist believe that the “uncertainty” of environmental impact can be properly addressed through a literature review?
8. If additional research is required to address the “uncertainty”, what particular areas should be researched and over what timeframe?
9. If additional research is required, how would this be designed to give a CERTAIN picture of the impact of this vessel in this fishery?

**ANSWER**

1. Please see response to question 4 of SI-61.
2. Please see response to question 1.
3. Please see response to question 1.
4. Please see response to question 1.
5. No.
6. Please see response to question 1.
7. A literature review would certainly provide information on the level of uncertainty of environmental impact at the time. Judging whether the information was comprehensive enough would be the role of experts.

8. Additional research to address uncertainties in any environmental question would best be addressed by experts in the relevant discipline areas. Research will add evidence to the picture of the environmental impacts. There will always be uncertainties in science.
9. Please see response to question 8.