AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

TOPIC: Pawsey supercomputer

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 17 October 2012, page 18)

QUESTION No.: SI-12

Senator PRATT: What is the timeline for getting the supercomputer up and running and interacting with ASKAP? I note that there is still work to be done in terms of the computing infrastructure on site in the Murchison to filter out some of the noise from the signals that you do not want to receive.

Dr Clark: That is exactly right. I can give you the detailed breakdown, but in terms of the Pawsey supercomputer we have let the contract for the supercomputer to Cray and there will be a building at Kensington for that. Sitting at the Murchison itself we have now completed our control room where we will install computers that will do a first filter. The reason you need to do that is that each of those dishes every second will put down the amount of data that we currently see on the US internet, so there needs to be filtering at the site. When SKA comes along there currently are not computers built that can handle the data that it will send down every second, so it is a logistical issue. I would be happy to provide you with the project schedule, giving details and dates.

Senator PRATT: That would be terrific. ---------

ANSWER

The initial supercomputing requirements for ASKAP commissioning activities are being fulfilled by an interim supercomputer, procured as part of the Pawsey Centre project. This supercomputer is located at Murdoch University in Western Australia and is operated by iVec. This computer will fulfill the most basic ASKAP commissioning requirements until the full-scale Pawsey Centre real-time computer (RTC) is available.

This full-scale RTC system is scheduled to complete acceptance testing by the end of June 2013, at which time it will be formally handed over by the vendor, Cray, to the CSIRO. By September 2013 the system will be integrated into the ASKAP data processing pipeline and be ready to service ASKAP's operational requirements.