

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

18 October 2012

**Question:** SR9  
**Topic:** Bremer Basin  
**Proof Hansard Page:** 19

**Senator Siewert asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** ..I am interested in the Bremer Basin off the coast of Western Australia. Did Geoscience Australia nominate that particular area for acreage release?

**Dr Pigram:** I will just consult with my colleague. We may have that knowledge here.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Okay. Thanks.

**Dr Pigram:** Yes, we did.

**Senator SIEWERT:** How long ago did you nominate it? I know it was a while ago, but when did you first nominate it?

**Dr Pigram:** We might take it on notice for you. We think it was 2006, but we will verify that for you. [*Answered later on in the hearing - page 21 - no need to respond*]

**Senator SIEWERT:** At the time, were you aware the ecological values or potential ecological and marine values of that particular area?

**Dr Pigram:** In what way, Senator?

**Senator SIEWERT:** As I understand it, there are some pretty unique canyons there that have some unique ecosystems associated with them and, in particular, an association with whales and particular sperm whales as well. Were you aware of that information at the time?

**Dr Pigram:** We were certainly aware of the canyons, because we used them as part of the geological investigation. We can take on notice whether we had information in relation to the ecological significance of the canyons.

**Senator SIEWERT:** If you could take on board if you knew about it, what you knew about it and where you found out about it.

**Dr Pigram:** Sure. We can do that.

**Answer:**

Geoscience Australia has not received any ecological information on the canyons from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC).

As part of the acreage release process Geoscience Australia nominates areas based on the perceived petroleum prospectivity. As part of the usual process the ecological significance of an area being nominated is considered subsequently during a consultation phase which is managed by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET). This includes consultation with SEWPaC.