

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14
21 November 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Department of Industry.

TOPIC: Australian SKA Office

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice – Senator Carr.

QUESTION No.: SI-129

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Australian SKA Office in the Department of Industry?
2. How many FTE position are allocated to Australian SKA Office? Has this changed since 7 September 2013?
3. As at 18 September 2013 when the new Government was sworn in, provide a breakdown of actual headcounts, and provide the number of staff on non-ongoing employment arrangements. Also please provide an up to date organisational structure for this division.
4. What programs is the Australian SKA Office in the Department of Industry responsible for?

ANSWER:

1. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will be the world's largest next generation radio telescope and will be co-hosted by Australia and South Africa.

The Australian SKA Office coordinates and advises on Australia's interests in the SKA project, engages with the international SKA Organisation and the wider international SKA community, and develops frameworks for Australian participation in all phases of the SKA project. In addition, the Office undertakes extensive communication activities to promote awareness of the project both domestically and internationally.

The Australian SKA Office works collaboratively with the Western Australian and New Zealand governments and other key stakeholders, such as CSIRO and the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, to meet the Australian Government's obligations to the international project.

2. The allocated FTE for the Australian SKA Office as at 30 November 2013 is 12.18. This figure has not changed since 7 September 2013.
3. As at 18 September 2013 the actual headcount for the Australian SKA Office was 14.98. There were no non-ongoing employees. The Australian SKA Office has been structured into three distinct but related work areas, each with a particular focus: Strategy and Pre-construction; Communications and Planning; and Hosting and Site Establishment. The Australian SKA Project Director, supported by a General Manager, oversees these work areas.
4. The programmes are listed in the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio Budget Statements 2013-14.