

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** CSIRO  
**Output Group:** CSIRO

#### **DEST Question No. E500\_05**

Senator Carr asked on 16 February 2005, EWRE Hansard page 32.

#### **Question:**

Senator Carr - "If the minister has asked you to undertake a study in his own electorate, I am wondering whether or not program moneys from CSIRO would normally be used to fund such a special request."

Dr Garrett - "We will obviously have to respond with full background, which we can give you."

#### **Answer:**

CSIRO has provided the following response.

#### *Latrobe Aquifer Study*

CSIRO undertook this study in response to calls for further investigation of this issue from a stakeholder meeting held on 19 September 2003 and following an internal assessment of the merits of such a study and its alignment with CSIRO's strategic research program (see answer E574\_05). This matter was not viewed by CSIRO as a special request. Rather it was seen as an instance where relevant expertise within CSIRO could be utilised in following up on previous work.

In exploring the background to this question, CSIRO has been advised by DEST that the Minister for Science became involved in this issue in August 2003 as a consequence of the acting Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources' referral of representations from the President of the Victorian Farmers Federation, Mr Paul Weller. The Minister subsequently jointly convened the stakeholder meeting referred to above with the Victorian Farmers Federation.

Mr Weller also made similar representations to the Victorian Government. The Deputy Premier, in correspondence to the Minister for Science of 5 March 2004, indicated that the Victorian Government would "be keen to participate in the review".

CSIRO's work follows up on work previously undertaken by a Technical Working Group set up by the Victorian Government some years previously. Furthermore, CSIRO involvement was consistent with prior involvement of other expert Australian Government agencies in this issue; the Bureau of Rural Sciences having chaired the Technical Working Group and Geoscience Australia having provided scientific advice to the Victorian Government on a range of issues associated with the aquifer.