

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: CSIRO

DEST Question No. E196_04

Senator Carr asked on 4 June 2003.

Question:

Refers to DEST Question No E802_03

In response to E802 you stated that “the Southern Surveyor will operate for 180 days as the National Facility, the same number of days for which Franklin was funded.”

You added that a further 80 days sea time had been committed by CSIRO, GeoScience and the National Oceans Office, making a total of 260 days per annum of research activity.

You also added that the National Facility Steering Committee had recently approved a 2003-04 cruise schedule.

I refer to the Southern Surveyor Research Schedule 2003-04, dated 14 March 2003; that is, dated well after you had told this Committee that the schedule for that year had been approved.

There appear to be a number of discrepancies between this document and your previous advice.

- (a) You have already told the Committee 180 National Facility days had been approved: this schedule shows only 146. Why is that?
- (b) If, as you have said, you had already approved 180 days, how is this 20% reduction explained?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Southern Surveyor – time at sea

- (a) The answer to DEST Question No E802_03 states “Southern Surveyor will operate for 180 days as the National Facility”. This is the basis on which the National Facility Research Vessel has always operated and the reference to 180 days indicates a target, not the exact number of days per year the vessel will be at sea. This is because practical scheduling considerations typically result in operating days ranging between 170 and 190 days per year.

The answer to DEST Question No E802_03 does not say that 180 days of National Facility time had been “approved”. Approval is given by the National Facility Steering Committee on an annual basis, once all practical operating constraints have been considered.

The 2003/2004 schedule does not show "only 146" days at sea. This is the number of National Facility science days at sea. The schedule also shows transit days (13) and interagency research charter days (30). The number of National Facility days in the 2003/2004 schedule is in fact 159 days, and the total number of days at sea will be 189.

(b) There is no reduction.