

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BRS 01

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: BRS Research Contracts

Hansard page: 116 (23/05/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Can someone let us know details of any new contracts BRS has entered into since the additional estimates in February?

Dr Grant—We have a number of contracts. I would have to take it on notice as to the quantum of them.

Senator Abetz—What sorts of contracts? Rental properties?

Senator O'BRIEN—I mean contracts for the performance of research work and the like.

Dr Grant—We have a number of partnerships with a number of organisations. Sometimes we subcontract some of our work through them to be done on our behalf. I can answer that question in detail by taking it on notice, but we would have quite a number. We have about 120 projects running concurrently. A good number of those would have partner involvement in which there is exchange of finances and information.

Senator O'BRIEN—I would appreciate it if you took it on notice.

Answer:

BRS has entered into 11 expenditure contracts for research for the period 14 February 2007 to 1 July 2007.

Contracting Party	Description of Services	Starting Date
State Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy	Part of the Inter Aquifer report	27/02/2007
NSW, Vic, SA State Authorities	funding for provision of data for land use mapping	1/03/2007
NSW Department of Primary Industries	Collation of commercial catch and recreational charter fishery data	1/05/2007
Australian National University	Analysis of samples for water programme	15/05/2007
Mallee Catchment Management Authority	River Murray Corridor(RMC) AEM acquisition phase community notification and communications strategy	21/05/2007
Queensland Murray Darling Committe Inc.	Land Management Application of Lower Balonne AEM Project Outcomes	24/05/2007
Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water	Input into a national hydrological distributed database network	1/06/2007
CSIRO	Provision of scientific research for the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna - Scientific Research Program.	15/06/2007
CSIRO (CMIS)	Mathematical downscaling of General Circulation Models and to perturb climate data.	15/06/2007

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IMJ Consultants Pty Limited	Improve the hydrology component of the GrowEst model for enhancements to model different pasture/climate scenarios.	19/06/2007
Impax Group	Drilling services for Community Stream Sampling and Salinity Mapping project	19/06/2007

Table 1: Expenditure contracts where BRS has engaged third parties to perform/collaborate in research activities to achieve portfolio outcomes for the period 14 Feb 2007 to 30 June 2007.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BRS 02

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Web based tools to predict rainfall reliability.

Hansard page: 119 (23/05/07)

Senator Heffernan asked:

CHAIR—Your information is handy for the farmer to know whether he wants to put 50 or 100 kilograms of DAP on. In other words, what is the prediction of the reliability of the rainfall to get the maximum yield or to scale your crop back for a lower yield?

Dr Grant—Essentially, yes. Of the two tools we have that will help them now, one is not yet available but we are testing it and the other one has not been available for some time. The one that has been available for some time is the MLA rainfall to pasture tool. We can give you the web details of that and you can go into it and look at it.

Answer:

The Bureau of Rural Sciences Rainfall Reliability Wizard has been in production for a number of years and is available on the Web (www.BRS.gov.au/rainfall). It shows long term rainfall reliability in Australia. Users define a season and a rainfall amount of interest and the Wizard calculates reliability from 100 plus years of rainfall records. The results are shown as coloured national maps. An example of a query of reliability might be “What is the chance of receiving at least 25 mm of rainfall in each and every month from May to September?”. Another example might be “How many years in 10 can I expect to receive at least half the average rainfall in the growing season?”. The analyses are based on grids (cf. points) of rainfall data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology.

The MLA Rainfall to Pasture Growth Outlook Tool (www.mla.com.au/growthoutlooktool) is a point-based tool which shows seasonal variability in rainfall, soil moisture and growth at over 3,000 sites across Australia. It also has the capacity to predict conditions 13 weeks into the future based on broad descriptions of current sea temperatures in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and how seasons progressed in the past given similar ocean temperature conditions.

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Question no: BRS 03

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Fish Stock Classifications

Hansard page: 20 (23/05/07)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—I want to come back to that. I cannot make it add up. You have got 15 plus three plus two; to me that makes 20.

Dr Bygrave—I can take this on notice but that is because of the splitting of those stocks.

Senator SIEWERT—Yes. Can I go back to the issue that we touched on just then, of the four separate stocks. So you split two. You did not split one into four. You split two into two, didn't you?

Dr Bygrave—Two into four.

Answer:

Between the 2004 and 2005 Fishery Status Reports, there was a splitting of 2 previously classified 'stocks' into 4 separate stocks.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BRS 04

Division/Agency: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Topic: Fish Stock Classifications

Hansard page: 121 (23/05/07)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—What were the two originally called?

Dr Bygrave—I would have to take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT—Could you tell me what those two were and then what they were split into, because here it just says ‘orange roughy’ and ‘small pelagics’.

Dr Bygrave—Yes. I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The 2 stocks that were split were orange roughy in the Commonwealth trawl sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark fishery (SESSF) and “various species” from the Small Pelagics Fishery.