



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Proof Committee Hansard

## SENATE

ECONOMICS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

**Estimates**

(Public)

THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2026

CANBERRA

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## **ECONOMICS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 12 February 2026**

**Members in attendance:** Senators Bragg, Canavan, Colbeck, Darmanin, Hodgins-May, Hume, McDonald, McKim, O'Neill, Payman, Barbara Pocock, David Pocock, Roberts, Sharma, Walker and Whitten

emissions reduction and net zero transformation initiatives in Australia'—a bit of a mouthful. How much private sector investment have you facilitated to date?

**Mr Shankey:** As you may be aware, the NZEA does not directly have funds itself. Its role is to make sure that it is working in our priority regions, which I'm sure we've talked to you about before, which is Gladstone, Latrobe, Collie and the Hunter, Upper Spencer Gulf and the Pilbara. Our role is to ensure that, when there are projects emerging in those areas, they are getting appropriate engagement and introductions to the large amount of special investment vehicles, which you are familiar with. I wouldn't discount the benefit that it has in raising the profile of those regions and the amount of access that our special investment vehicles now give to companies coming in from those regions. I think the Alpha one is a good example of that.

**Senator CANAVAN:** But can you point to something you have helped facilitate?

**Mr Shankey:** I would say that the NZEA is part of a team of entities within the industry portfolio that are looking to facilitate projects in these regions. So I'm not going to either claim responsibility for a project or say that we are the only ones delivering.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Quickly, on the Torrens Energy job plan, how many dependent employers are within the scope of that plan?

**Mr Shankey:** The only employer that was specified in that project was the AGL itself. That is the Torrens facility.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Just that facility? And how many employees does that cover?

**Mr Shankey:** 100.

**Senator CANAVAN:** How did you determine that? Was there any economic analysis done or just a desktop assessment?

**Mr Shankey:** We did assess individually the supply chain of the Torrens facilities. I believe there were about seven or eight different businesses in that particular supply chain. The assessment of whether they would be included included issues such as the local labour market, the ability of those individuals in the supply chain to find other work, training that was available, their existing qualifications, the number of them and so forth. That's for the people in the supply chain.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Are you helping find work for those 100 people?

**Mr Shankey:** The status of that particular closure, if you like, is that it had a two-year extension. So it is in 2028—sorry, a three-year extension. So the obligation on the employer now is to come to an agreement with the industrial organisations and their staff as to what training and opportunities they will have during this period before the facility closes. Our efforts are to make sure that those people in Torrens, currently working there, will have the very best opportunity finding new roles in the Adelaide market. It's a labour market. There is, as you know, a growing Defence industry, and there are opportunities for people with high skills. We think there are good options there.

**Senator Ayres:** It's the first of these projects, but it's in no way a typical project, because it's a small gas facility in a capital city. So the authority is doing its work, and there is work there to do, and lessons will be learnt in terms of the approach. But it's not a typical facility.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Are there any other jobs planned?

**Mr Shankey:** At the moment we have assessments going on for Eraring, in New South Wales, and we have also commenced our assessment in Yallourn, in Victoria. We expect to be making a decision on Eraring and their supply chain within this quarter and on Yallourn this year as well. As you'll be aware, there are changing dates for the coal-fired power stations; some are being pushed back. But there are quite a number scheduled prior to 2030.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Thank you. I'll leave it there.

**CHAIR:** That concludes our session with the Net Zero Economy Authority. Thank you very much. You are released.

### Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

[20:26]

**CHAIR:** We now welcome representatives from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Dr Hilton:** Chair, if it's okay with you, I'd like to make a statement about the passing of Emma Johnston. It's not a formal opening statement. For us in the science community and obviously for Emma's family and friends, it's been an incredibly sad time with her passing just before the New Year. On behalf of Ming Long, our board

chair, and all of our staff, I'd like just to say a few words about the difference Emma has made to Australia and to Australia's national science agency, CSIRO.

I knew Emma for more than 20 years, and anybody working in Australian science, even in very different fields from hers, knew Emma. She was a wonderful advocate for Australian science, for the environment, for universities and for national and international collaboration. She carried the torch for all of us. Emma brought amazing passion and clarity of thought and purpose, warmth and kindness, and the ability to encourage her peers and those making their way in the world. And those qualities have inspired us all. She inspired us to work harder; she inspired us to work smarter; she inspired us to work together; and she inspired us to make a difference in the world. She challenged us to be bold and to think strategically about CSIRO's role in the country. She was an exemplary board member and she's irreplaceable. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Dr Hilton. Senator Canavan.

**Senator CANAVAN:** I'll go to the draft of *GenCost*, which was released in December. First of all, I'll ask a catch-all question. I believe you've totally changed the methodology. What's happened and why?

**Dr Mayfield:** I think you're talking about the SEM and the system LCOE.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Yes.

**Dr Mayfield:** They were introduced as part of the consultation that takes place each cycle with *GenCost*. The stakeholder feedback was that they wanted some tools so they could look at the whole system as well as be able to do some of the work themselves, for those with a bit more advanced skills. They've been developed to meet that requirement. They're consistent with the previous methodologies but they're an evolution of them.

**Senator CANAVAN:** This system costs that you're doing—the levelised system cost of energy; is that what you've got?

**Dr Mayfield:** The simple energy model is one of them.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Is that the new one you've got?

**Dr Mayfield:** It's a tool where it's more accessible to use the existing engine that we're using. But it's not for someone who doesn't have modelling expertise. For a user group that has a bit more expertise and some licensing of various software, they can do scenarios.

**Senator CANAVAN:** I had a quick look at it when it came out, but I haven't got back to it. I thought you were switching to a system cost of energy, a SLCOE; is that right or not?

**Dr Mayfield:** The SLCOE is trying to make sure you can incorporate all the systems costs in doing a LCOE, as opposed to using the basic one we have used.

**Senator CANAVAN:** And then you added on a firmed—with the old one, you had a levelised cost of energy and you'd add on a firmed—

**Dr Mayfield:** The cost of various—

**Senator CANAVAN:** But, with this one, you integrate the so-called firming into the calculation.

**Dr Mayfield:** Yes. So whether it's transmission or gas—

**Senator CANAVAN:** So you have moved to that.

**Dr Mayfield:** That's what that tool does, and it's been made available for the stakeholders.

**Senator CANAVAN:** For those estimates of the system levelised cost of energy, are you including the costs of the upgrades to transmission that we're at the moment investing in Snowy Hydro, HumeLink and Central West Orana?

**Dr Mayfield:** I'd have to take the specific detail on notice for Mr Graham. The intent is to have transmission costs in there—so, I think, in principle, yes.

**Senator CANAVAN:** It says here, under 'Existing capacity':

The 2050 model and MIP 2050 include existing and committed transmission, hydro and pumped hydro as (exogenously) existing capacity in 2050. This means that existing or committed capacity of transmission and hydro in 2025 is cost-free in the sense that it can be used in 2050 without any new investment cost.

So you're not including those costs, are you, if they're exogenous to the model.

**Dr Mayfield:** That's an ongoing discussion around a sunk cost versus what is included. We've made adjustments in various reports given that the sunk cost moves along with time. The costs going forward—from that point in time, the work's been done.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Does the number that you report for the level-of-system cost include the multibillion dollars we are currently spending on transmission?

**Dr Mayfield:** It will include things out to 2030 and then out to 2050. There will be a list. In terms of where it starts, I would have to take that on notice, just to get you the—

**Senator CANAVAN:** It's crucial.

**Dr Mayfield:** The detail is there. I didn't do the work, so I don't have that detail.

**Senator CANAVAN:** If you could take that on notice. Origin has been reported today as saying that electricity prices are set to go up anyway regardless of where wholesale power costs are because we're starting to see the transmission cost investments flow through to electricity prices. This is a crucial question to determine what people actually pay.

**Dr Mayfield:** The intent is to try and capture those.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Alright; take it on notice. In this report, on page 95, you say:

After June 2022, AEMO has no longer published new build coal prices. This reflects the bipartisan policies of net zero emissions by 2050 ...

The Liberal-National coalition dropped support for net zero in November. This was published in December. Why did you write that it was bipartisan?

**Dr Mayfield:** I would have to take that on notice.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Now that it's no longer bipartisan, are you going to publish new-build coal prices?

**Dr Mayfield:** I'd have to take it on notice to look at the specific issue you're raising.

**Senator CANAVAN:** That was the reason it's no longer bipartisan. The excuse has been taken away. Alright, I might leave it there, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Senator Pocock.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** I'm just looking at the \$233 million in MYEFO to maintain research capability and undertake property consolidation planning. Prior to those funds being provided, we understood that there were 350 jobs to be cut. I'm interested to know how many of those jobs will no longer be cut as a result of the additional funding through MYEFO?

**Dr Hilton:** As part of our research portfolio review that we conducted last year, we identified between 300 to 350 potentially impacted staff members. Those changes will go ahead irrespective of the funding that we receive through MYEFO. This is part of our commitment to ensure that the workforce that we have and the programs that we're working on deliver the greatest possible impact for the country by focusing on priority areas.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Is there not a way that, given you've got this extra money, some of those researchers or staff could be reskilled and continue employment for the CSIRO?

**Dr Hilton:** The funds we receive through MYEFO are to enable us to begin to get on the pathway to sustainability. That's a problem that has really confronted the organisation. Going back decades, into the 70s, the chief executive at the time discussed the challenges around ageing property and infrastructure. They're issues that are long in making, and, as good stewards of the agency, we're committed to ensuring that we get on top of our repair and maintenance backlog, that we use depreciation funding to ensure the safety of our facilities and that we tackle things like cyber security. They're really things that we're doing now for the long-term good of the agency to, fundamentally, protect staff safety and ensure we continue to provide safe facilities. To me, those things are non-negotiable.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** It sounds like the \$233 million is essentially to work out how to fund a whole lot of things out of your existing budget—big expenses, like capital improvements, out of a declining budget, as we've covered in estimates before. When you take into account inflation, the cost of cyber and the cost of research, your budget is declining. This money is essentially to try and help you deal with a declining budget. Is that it?

**Senator Ayres:** No. As I indicated to you in previous estimates and in discussions that have been held publicly and privately, the process that Professor Hilton and the CSIRO undertook is in relation to the first research prioritisation exercise that has been undertaken for 15 years. There has been no reduction in funding to the CSIRO.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** In real terms, there has been.

**Senator Ayres:** There's around about \$1 billion every year of Commonwealth expenditure provided to the CSIRO. In addition, this year, to sustain the CSIRO and continue that work on future sustainability, which is, as

Professor Hilton has indicated, a very substantial nation-building piece of work, I think \$233 million—if I've got my memory right—has been allocated in MYEFO. It's a substantial amount more, I think, than was predicted around the place. It's a very substantial commitment from government to the CSIRO, along with an annual billion-dollar allocation.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Professor Hilton, the continued funding model which, as the minister says, is a billion dollars a year is clearly not at CPI. Have you done any projections as to the point in time in which you have to make more cuts? The pattern so far has been that you restructure and then, at some point, it catches up with you again, and you have to restructure. Have you done some of that work?

**Dr Hilton:** For us to be sustainable over the next 10 years—which is the commitment the board and the senior management have made and communicated to staff—we need, each year, to find approximately \$80 million to \$135 million per annum over that period. That allows us to ensure that the depreciation backlog does not continue to increase, we can get on top of repairs and maintenance, and we can provide a safe, fit-for-purpose working environment for our staff.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Do you have an estimated annual science inflation rate? What are your costs, and by how much is the cost of research going up per year?

**Dr Hilton:** It depends on different elements. I'll hand to Mr Munyard for that—

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Maybe in aggregate.

**Mr Munyard:** I don't necessarily have it in aggregate, because our cost base does shift from year to year, but there are examples—our IT costs have increased by 35 per cent over five years. We've seen that our site operating costs have increased by 23 per cent over the last five years as well, from \$49.6 million to \$61.2 million. There are some challenges that we're facing across the organisation, and that's one of the reasons why we're very grateful for the MYEFO funding, as it's enabled us to start that process towards long-term sustainability. For example, the 45 sites we have across the organisation are very expensive to run, and being able to start that long-term sustainability work is very important to us to try and reduce that overhead.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Minister, I really appreciate your government's commitment in MYEFO, but when you're hearing about 35 per cent increases over five years, the one per cent increase in funding per year is not going to cut it. Is there a plan to actually get CSIRO to the point where it can both invest in old infrastructure and do the science that we need to be doing?

**Senator Ayres:** I realise I promoted Dr Hilton earlier—

**Dr Hilton:** I appreciated that.

**Senator Ayres:** and then I transmitted that to you, Senator Pocock, so I apologise. Dr Hilton and the board do have an enormous job to do, and the government will support them in that work. That difficult work—very broad based, deep work—that has been undertaken, and we were working with staff across the organisation and working with the government's national science priorities to make sure that the work that the CSIRO does is in the right priority areas. There's a difficult but necessary step there. I know that the board, the chair, Dr Hilton and the senior staff are working through all of those issues, including with the department and with government more broadly. There is a mountain of work to do to make sure that the CSIRO is in the condition it needs to be in with the capabilities and infrastructure that it needs to have for the long-term future.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** Again, a one-off injection is a welcome decision, but do you accept that there's a need to have a sustained increase in the appropriation, at least in line with inflation?

**Senator Ayres:** It is a very substantial amount that the government allocates to the CSIRO. It's \$1 billion—

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** I understand that you said that, but I'm saying that if it's not keeping up with inflation, that 'substantial investment', every year, is becoming less and less and less.

**Senator Ayres:** I'm not sure that inflation is the right—

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** It was 35 per cent over five years.

**Senator Ayres:** Paying careful, disciplined attention—in the process that Dr Hilton has been leading and will lead—to making sure that facilities are exactly how they need to be, we'll work very carefully, and future decisions will be made in the normal budget context.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** I have a few questions about rabbit biocontrol. Thank you very much for the work you and your team, who are truly world-class, are doing—I've seen the amazing work you're doing at Black Mountain. Thank you for the answers to questions on notice from the last estimates. You said it would take about \$3 million over 10 years to have the next biocontrol virus good to go. I've been running around asking questions

of DCCEEW and DAFF, and while there's a lot of finger-pointing as to who is actually in charge of this, I've been told there has been \$1 million recently awarded, and you also referenced that in response to my QoN. Is that sufficient to be \$1 million of the \$3 million, or is this a separate thing?

**Dr Hilton:** I might pass that question to Dr Taylor for the specifics, but I'm happy to talk afterwards to make some general comments about CSIRO's commitment to invasive species and biosecurity.

**Dr Taylor:** We're quite committed to rabbit biocontrol, and the work has been ongoing for some years. As to the specific funding that you're talking about, there has been some awarded that, I understand, will allow the work to continue until September 2026. That continuity is quite important for us, so we're very grateful for that. In the meantime, we're having a range of conversations. As you know, CSIRO is publicly funded to undertake these works and tackle national challenges like rabbit biocontrol, so we have been able to continue that work. We've also had support from MLA over past years.

The work you're talking about, over the next three years, is quite important work to change the way in which we identify agents that can help us biocontrol rabbits. It helps design a platform that will put us in much greater stead as these biocontrol agents lose their efficacy over time. That \$3 million will provide a step change for us. We've been talking very actively to DAFF and DCCEEW, with their support, about how we use that. That will get us, in three years, to a go/no-go point where we understand whether that new technology will work or not. If so, that will be quite a good outcome because it's a platform technology that we can apply again.

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** I had a bit of a go at DAFF the other night. I kept asking, 'Why are we in this situation?' We know rabbits are a huge problem. We've had two very effective viruses, and now we're saying we're 10 years away from the next one when we've got rabbits building up, and there's huge resistance. What has gone wrong? Have we had research and we just haven't been able to find the next virus? Why are we in this situation with no virus?

**Dr Taylor:** That's correct; there has been work ongoing. There was a study funded between CSIRO and MLA to find the next biocontrol agent—

**Senator DAVID POCOCK:** When was that?

**CHAIR:** Senator, we need to rotate the call.

**Dr Taylor:** That concluded recently. We wait for these viruses to naturally emerge, and there just has not been the natural emergence of a virus. That's what this new platform will do; it will accelerate that natural emergence and give us a platform where, rather than wait opportunistically for a virus to appear somewhere around the world, we start to generate them ourselves.

**Senator ROBERTS:** In the October estimates you took on notice this question: 'How many times has CSIRO used animals for testing over the last five years and how frequently was the subject destroyed afterwards?' This is question on notice SI-173. Your response was detailed and came in good time, so thank you very much, it was very prompt. Your answer was as follows: 'In the 2024 calendar year there were 248 animal experiments involving 1,077,455 animals, and 752,757 were humanely killed afterward. Of these, 645,464 were fish—' so this leaves 98,293 animals that were not fish— 'which were killed in animal experimentation by CSIRO in a single year.' Do you have data on what those animals were and what the experimentation was that justified this level of kill?

**Dr Hilton:** I'll pass that question to Dr Taylor.

**Dr Taylor:** We do use animals in our research. Obviously, we adhere to very strict regulations and guidelines, and we're a signatory to the transparency of use of animals in research, so—

**Senator ROBERTS:** Excuse me—is that international or national?

**Dr Taylor:** National. The type of work within that research ranges from observational studies, such as the videocapture of cattle and those sorts of things, all the way through to areas where, as you say, animals are humanely killed. We use animals in our biocontainment facility at the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness. They're, obviously, very important experiments that we undertake, where we do that for the national benefit and the protection of our borders from biosecurity threats, for the support of our export markets and also for preparedness for any threats to human health.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Did this experimentation occur at the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness, formerly the Australian Animal Health Laboratory?

**Dr Taylor:** Some of it does but certainly not all of it. That facility is a highly specialised facility for distinct purposes. Where that work does require that level of biocontainment, then, yes, it does.

**Senator ROBERTS:** It seems that CSIRO are running a substantial animal experimentation operation at what was the Australian Animal Health Laboratory. Does it comply with the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*, which CSIRO co-wrote?

**Dr Taylor:** Yes, it does, and that facility complies with that. It also complies with a dedicated animal ethics committee that is made up of members independent of CSIRO and that undergoes external review on a very regular basis.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Is there any independent audit of the procedures?

**Dr Taylor:** There is regularly, through the ethics committee that undertakes that, yes. Those reviews are available and are part of our obligations with the experimental use of animals.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Is that independent or just within CSIRO?

**Dr Taylor:** It's independent. It's conducted by a body independent of CSIRO.

**Senator ROBERTS:** The international trend in animal testing is to replace and reduce animal use. On notice, can you provide the figure for the number of animal experiments and the number of animals which were not fish that have been euthanised after research over the last five years.

**Dr Taylor:** I'm happy to take that on notice.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Thank you. Does the facility have chimneys, and are they still in use? If so, for what purpose? We're looking at pictures of the facility.

**Dr Taylor:** Can you define what you mean by 'chimneys'? It does have towers, I guess. Maybe what you're asking is how the waste from the facility is dealt with. Is that what you're asking?

**Senator ROBERTS:** I'd like to know whether you burn things onsite and whether the exhaust gases and products go out the chimney.

**Dr Taylor:** The Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness is quite a unique facility in that all of the material that is used is treated thoroughly before it leaves the site. What actually happens is an autoclave process, where all material is heated to an internationally recognised temperature that kills everything in it before it is released. So there are no fumes that leave the facility. Everything that leaves that facility has been treated, with multiple redundancies in place.

**Senator ROBERTS:** I appreciate what you said in your answer. I'm not after the environmental compliance or the production of carbon dioxide; I'm after knowledge—

**Dr Taylor:** This is security compliance, in fact—

**Senator ROBERTS:** Yes, that's right. It's biosecurity.

**Dr Taylor:** and it's part of what makes the facility unique.

**Senator ROBERTS:** That's what I've worked out. Does it include the disposal of euthanised animals?

**Dr Taylor:** Yes.

**Senator ROBERTS:** I've tabled an aerial shot of the photo of the Geelong facility. Can you explain what those two large green areas are?

**Dr Taylor:** Yes; they are bodies of water.

**Senator ROBERTS:** That's what we guessed. What is the purpose of these ponds?

**Dr Taylor:** There is no purpose.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Why have they got what look to be pipes going through the creeks, in drainage channels on each side, and both of them ending out in Stingree Bay?

**Dr Taylor:** I'm not a hydrological engineer, so I am happy to take that on notice. But they are not for the purpose of handling waste from the facility.

**Dr Hilton:** They are entirely separate from the containment facility. There is no connection between the effluent and the creeks. We'll take on notice and perhaps provide you with a report about the drainage from those bodies of water, but they would be treated like run-off from lots of other areas around the facility.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Thank you, Dr Hilton. I'm concerned about the colour, the bluey-green colour—it's typical of cyanobacteria. I would like to know what is in the ponds, what they are used for and how they are treated when they discharge, because they would discharge.

**Dr Hilton:** Happy to take that on notice.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Thank you. I can't see a water-processing plant anywhere, so I'd like to know why the ponds have what appear to be pipes connected to the drainage lines, and then to the bay.

**Dr Taylor:** The way the facility is constructed, all water processing happens within the facility and within full biosecurity containment.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Could you answer on notice what sort of processing and where is the plan?

**Dr Taylor:** Yes; I'm happy to do that.

**Senator ROBERTS:** And can you assure me that no cyanobacteria or other bacteria or toxins have been released into Stingeree Bay?

**Dr Hilton:** We'll take that question on notice.

**Senator ROBERTS:** Thank you. And thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Senator. I think that concludes—

**Senator CANAVAN:** If I can, Chair, I just quickly want to check something. I read out that part of the *GenCost* report that claimed that there is bipartisan support for net zero. I wonder if you could have a look at that because I've realise it's printed and maybe it went to the printers before the LNP had made its decision. It is clearly a factually incorrect statement now, and there could easily be an erratum put out in response. Could you consider that?

**Dr Hilton:** I think it's the draft report that has gone out for consultation—is that right?

**Unidentified speaker:** It's the draft; it's not the final report.

**Senator CANAVAN:** But it's still up.

**Dr Hilton:** We'd be happy to put that—

**Unidentified speaker:** I'm not familiar with the specific reference, that's all.

**Senator CANAVAN:** Thanks very much. Thanks, Chair.

**Senator Ayres:** We'll make sure that message gets out there.

**Senator CANAVAN:** I'd love it! With the stroke of a pen you can tell them to do it.

**Senator Ayres:** They operate independently, don't you worry—far and wide.

**CHAIR:** That concludes our questions for the CSIRO. Thank you very much for coming, and apologies for the delay.

#### **Proceedings suspended from 20:58 to 21:15**

#### **Department of Industry, Science and Resources**

**CHAIR:** The committee welcomes representatives from the Department of Industry, Science and Resources for program 1.3, Supporting a strong resources sector. The topics for this session are minerals and resources, and oil and gas. Senator McDonald.

**Senator McDONALD:** Good evening. Finally we're onto the interesting part of the program. Has the department modelled or been provided modelling that totals the economic cost to Australia of phasing out commodities like gas, coal and crude petroleum?

**Ms Quinn:** No.

**Senator McDONALD:** One of President Bowen's first actions as the COP31 President of Negotiations was to sign Australia up to the Belem declaration on the just transition away from fossil fuels. Was the resources minister or her office consulted prior to Australia signing up?

**Ms Quinn:** I believe this was asked last estimates and we were consulted as we usually are ahead of government declarations.

**Mr Jeremenko:** As the secretary said, at the last estimates we were asked this and I confirmed that we, as the department, were consulted before that was signed.

**Senator McDONALD:** What was the nature of that consultation?

**Mr Jeremenko:** I wasn't personally involved in it, so, to get you an exact answer, I'd have to take that on notice.

**Ms Quinn:** When the government's engaging internationally, there's a process for getting positions across government, and usually that's done through different mechanisms. Sometimes it's through interdepartmental committees, other times it's through correspondence and other times it's through ministers having discussions. I