

6 ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Human resource management

6.1.1 Supervising Scientist

The Supervising Scientist is a statutory position established under the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978*. Section 8 of the Act requires that the Supervising Scientist be engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Mr Alan Hughes was appointed to the position in December 2005.

6.1.2 Structure

The Supervising Scientist Division consists of two branches, the Office of the Supervising Scientist and the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist.

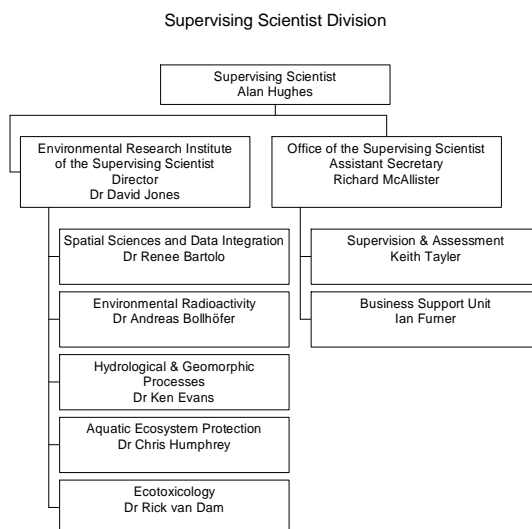


Figure 6.1 Organisational structure of the Supervising Scientist Division (as at 30 June 2010)

The Office of the Supervising Scientist (**oss**) is responsible for supervision, assessment, policy, information management and corporate support activities. Mr Richard McAllister, Assistant Secretary, is the **oss** Branch Head.

The Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (**eriss**), managed by Dr David Jones, is responsible for scientific research and monitoring activities.

Staffing numbers as at 30 June 2009 and 30 June 2010 are given in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1 STAFFING NUMBERS ⁽¹⁾ AND LOCATIONS

	2008–2009	2009–2010
Darwin	44	43.0
Jabiru	6	7.5
Total	50	50.5

(1) Average full time equivalent from 1 July to 30 June

6.1.3 Investors in People

The Supervising Scientist Division (SSD) has actively supported and promoted Investors in People initiatives through embedding the framework within strategies, policies and procedures implemented in the workplace. In February 2010 the Department was audited against the Investors in People (IiP) standard and was successful in achieving reaccreditation.

The SSD IiP program is led through a representative Action Group with participation from management and staff from each work program. The group meets regularly to discuss human resource issues with the aim of developing and promoting new initiatives and strategies that contribute to improved performance and workforce capability.

Facilitation of continuous improvement is achieved through the implementation of periodic staff surveys enabling the Department and each Division within the portfolio to gain insight into staff perceptions on the Department's performance against indicators within the IiP framework. SSD has addressed staff concerns through development and implementation of a Divisional Improvement Plan that incorporated strategies to

- improve communication and respect in the workplace
- promote health, wellbeing and work life balance initiatives
- encourage effective performance management
- recognise staff contribution

Staff have been encouraged and supported by management in the development of skills through training, attendance at conferences and internal opportunities to act in higher level positions. There has also been a significant investment in leadership training and development for all executive level staff. Through the Performance Development Scheme, staff identify training requirements to help deliver their work plan outcomes. SSD staff have access to Canberra-based seminars and information sessions. Locally hosted seminars, in addition to the SSD Internal Seminar Series, provide staff with a range of topics relevant to SSD business activities.

Effective communication has also been an integral part of achieving outcomes set by the organisation. SSD continues to produce a fortnightly staff newsletter, *Newsbrief*, that attracts a wide range of internal contributors and readership. Management and staff participate in regular structured meetings that ensure information flow within the organisation is maintained. Healthy lifestyle and social activities coordinated by IiP representatives and social club members also enable staff to network in an informal manner.

During 2009–10, the health and wellbeing program offered staff access to health screenings, vaccinations for influenza, hepatitis and tetanus, exercise classes and a team pedometer challenge, quiz events, and internal health and wellbeing seminars on back care, work-life balance, heat stress and hydration, and dealing with the ‘challenges of Christmas’.

6.1.4 Occupational Health and Safety

SSD has continued to maintain a strong commitment to occupational health and safety (OH&S) during 2009–10 with a focus on risk management and prevention to reduce workplace hazards. This has been achieved through an education program and encouraging staff to report incidents and near misses not just injuries. As a consequence, there has been an increase in incident reporting with 68% of reports related to a hazard or near miss and 32% related to an injury. Injury reports resulted in three claims being accepted by Comcare.

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) met regularly and was responsible for reviewing and updating a number of OH&S guidelines and procedures related to safety clothing, road travel, risk assessment, incident/hazard reporting, emergency response, emergency evacuation, special vehicle operations and establishment of the Terms of Reference for the Emergency Control Committee (ECC).

All OH&S risks related to SSD operations have been identified and given a risk rating. The risk register has been reviewed by senior management and further controls have been applied to reduce or eliminate high or extreme risks. Road travel and remote field work were identified as specific high level risks for SSD and consequently additional safety measures are being trialled including GPS satellite tracking (with added features of roll over activation and duress alarm) that will allow a vehicle to be located almost immediately in the event of an emergency.

SSD is currently procuring new chemical management software that will enable greater control of the chemicals on site. Chemical audits have been undertaken to ensure compliance with the new *eriss* substance labelling/storage protocols.

In 2009–10 there was an emphasis on safety education for staff with seminars on:

- Heat stress and hydration
- Manual handling and back care
- Health and wellbeing examinations
- Fire extinguisher usage
- Warden training
- Respect and courtesy workshops
- 4WD training
- First aid and remote first aid training

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) issues a license to SSD that permits the holding of certain radioactive and non-ionising radiation sources. These sources and general control, safety and management plans are included in the Radiation Source Control Plan of SSD.

6.2 Finance

The Supervising Scientist Division is part of the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) and full financial statements for the Department are contained in the Department's Annual Report (www.environment.gov.au/about/publications/annual-report/index.html)

A summary of the actual expenses of the Supervising Scientist against the Department's outputs are provided in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2 SUMMARY OF DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES

PBS Outcome 1	2008–2009	2009–2010*
Program 1.2 – Environmental Regulation, Information and Research	Not applicable	\$8 412 344
Output 1.5 – Response to the impacts of human settlements		
Sub-output 1.5.3 – Supervision of uranium mines	No longer reported at sub-output level	Not applicable
Output 1.2 – Conservation of the land and inland waters		
Sub-output 1.2.4 – Tropical wetlands research	No longer reported at sub-output level	Not applicable
Total**	\$8 193 605	\$8 412 344

* PBS reporting structure changed in 2009–10 with Supervising Scientist Division reporting all activity against Program 1.2 instead of Output 1.5 and Output 1.2.

** Excludes departmental corporate overheads of \$3 460 343 in 08–09 and \$4 007 235 in 09–10.

6.3 Facilities

6.3.1 Darwin facility

The majority of the Supervising Scientist Division's staff are situated at the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Darwin facility adjacent to the Darwin International Airport. This facility consists of office accommodation and laboratories. During the year no major works were commissioned, however there are still ongoing problems with air-conditioning and moisture intrusion into the laboratories that are yet to be rectified.

The office space, library and amenities are shared with Parks Australia, which is also part of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

6.3.2 Jabiru Field Station

A Field Station at Jabiru is maintained to support the activities of the Supervising Scientist Division. The staff consists of the monitoring team that carry out the Supervising Scientist's environmental monitoring program, an employee who is responsible for delivering the Supervising Scientist's community liaison program in Jabiru, an employee who undertakes administrative and financial duties, and the Field Station Manager, who has overall responsibility for managing the Field Station as well as supervisory and inspection responsibilities.



Figure 6.2 JFS aquaculture facility after installation of new roof and snail tubs

Following demolition or relocation of unused buildings all underground utilities have been removed or decommissioned and reinstatement of the vacant area has commenced. Works have also been undertaken at the Field Station to repair the administrative building and a project is underway to upgrade the aquaculture facility and equipment that supports the snail breeding program.

6.4 Information management

Information management activities provide support to staff based in Darwin and the Jabiru Field Station through library services and the co-ordination of records management activities.

During this period 289 new files were created and 300 files were destroyed under the *Archives Act 1983* and other relevant legislation. The Division's file titling thesaurus has been updated. Efforts to transfer files to the Australian National Archives have stalled and will be recommenced once a new Records Disposal Authority has been developed and approved.

The library continued to provide services to staff including loans, reference services, reader education, and inter-library loans. Integration of the SSD collection into the Department's catalogue has begun. During the reporting period, 209 new items were added to the collection.

In 2010, SSD successfully transitioned from an Oracle-based to a Microsoft-based platform for its electronic document management system. In addition to these activities, a new data structure is being developed to better organise the documents stored in the system.

6.5 Interpretation of Ranger Environmental Requirements

Section 19.2 of the Environmental Requirements of the Commonwealth of Australia for the Operation of the Ranger Uranium Mine provides for the publication of explanatory material agreed to by the major stakeholders to assist in the interpretation of provisions of the Environmental Requirements. No explanatory material was published during 2009–10.

6.6 Ministerial directions

There were no Ministerial Directions issued to the Supervising Scientist under Section 7 of the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978* during 2009–10.

6.7 Environmental performance

The Supervising Scientist Division contributes to the department's sustainability objectives through a range of measures aimed at continuously improving the environmental performance of our business operations and minimising any associated environmental impacts. The Division reports on its environmental performance in the Department's 2009–10 Annual Report.

6.7.1 Environmental Management System

The Department has committed to extend the scope of its Environmental Management System (EMS) and associated certification to SSD in the future. In the interim, SSD's operations are conducted in a manner consistent with the Department's aim to minimise the ecological footprint on the environment. This involves a range of strategies including complying with legal and other agreements, actively promoting sustainable work practices, preventing pollution as result of work practices, focus on continuous improvement, public reporting of environmental performance as part of the Department's Annual Report and procurement and use of sustainable goods and services.

6.8 Animal experimentation ethics approvals

eriss seeks the approval of Charles Darwin University's Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) to undertake scientific experiments involving vertebrate animals. Additionally, the Animal Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Government grants the *eriss* premises a licence to

use animals for research purposes. This licence includes the laboratories in Darwin and Jabiru, as well as field work conducted in the Alligator Rivers Region.

A final report for the project ‘Larval fish for toxicity tests at *eriss*’ (ref no 97016) was submitted to the CDU AEC and approved on 18 June 2010. An application for renewal of this project was approved until June 2012. No fish were collected for the project ‘Monitoring mining impact using the structure of fish communities in shallow billabongs’ (ref no A09001) as this survey is conducted bi-annually. This project is due for renewal in February 2011.

The number of fish used in toxicity tests at *eriss* was reported in July 2010 to the Northern Territory Government, as part of our licence requirements granted by them permitting the use of animals for research purposes.

Table 6.3 provides information on new applications, renewals of approvals and approval expiries for projects during 2008–09.

TABLE 6.3 ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION ETHICS APPROVALS

Project title	Ref no	Initial submission	Approval/latest renewal	Expiry
Larval fish toxicity testing at <i>eriss</i>	97016	26 May 1997	18 June 2010	18 June 2012
Monitoring mining impact using the structure of fish communities in shallow billabongs	A00028/ A09001	25 Sep 2000	8 Mar 2009	27 Feb 2011