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Senator David Bushby  
Chair  
Senate Economics Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

On reviewing the Proof Hansard of the testimony that CSIRO provided to the Senate Estimates hearing of 27 February 2014 I have determined that some information provided to the Committee would benefit from clarification.

In discussion with Senator Carr regarding international travel of postdoctoral fellows, the following exchange occurred (page 15 of the Proof Hansard):

**Senator KIM CARR:** Do you regard international conference participation as part of the training and development process for your postdocs?

**Dr Clark:** Yes, we do. We also have programs that specifically provide travel costs for that purpose.

While training and development plans are required for postdoctoral fellows as a condition of appointment to CSIRO and agreement to the plans commits CSIRO to provide that training and development, it is not a requirement of the plans that they include international travel (although it is reasonable to expect they will). As these plans are not centrally administered (they are the responsibility of the individual postdoctoral fellow-supervisor level to manage), to characterise these plans as 'a program' to pay for postdoctoral travel was overreach on my behalf. CSIRO also has a number of awards designed to support the professional development of CSIRO staff. One of these programs, the Payne-Scott Award, is open to postdoctoral fellows, and specifically those postdoctoral fellows who have taken extended leave to care for a newborn child, allows for international travel as one option that can the award can be used for in order to support re-establishing their research careers.

In further exchange on this matter (also on page 15 of the Proof Hansard) Senator Carr asked me whether funding for postdoctoral travel was being reduced:

**Senator KIM CARR:** Are you reducing the funding for your postdocs' travel?

**Dr Clark:** There are no plans to reduce the funding of our postdocs' travel.

**Senator KIM CARR:** But they are caught up in the general reduction.

**Dr Clark:** No, they are certainly involved in the additional approvals process, but that is no different to our standard approvals and the recommendations of our officers.

The section of my reply "...they are certainly involved in the additional approvals process, but that is no different to our standard approvals and the recommendations of our officers." is correct. The international travel principles and guidelines as applicable from 16 December 2013 apply to all CSIRO staffing including

postdocs. However I realise on reflection that by beginning the sentence with ‘No’ my statement was potentially ambiguous and could be misunderstood to mean that postdoctoral fellows were exempt from the guidelines.

Should there be any concerns expressed by your colleagues in relation to the evidence that was provided by CSIRO to the Committee please do not hesitate to let me know so that I may follow up the issues.

Once again, I’d like to apologise for any inconvenience that this situation may have caused to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Megan Clark