

## **Funding and Resourcing for the CSIRO - Economics References Committee**

### **Submission from Dr Trevor H. Booth**

#### **Introduction**

I make this submission in view of the upcoming 50th anniversary of my joining CSIRO In February 1976 as a research scientist, and my imminent departure at the end of February 2026. The purpose of this submission is to identify both a problem relevant to CSIRO's treatment of Honorary Fellows and a possible solution for the Senate Inquiry. It is primarily relevant to ToR (a) the nature of recent and proposed job and program cuts in the CSIRO.

#### **Problem**

Part of the 2025 round of 350 job losses included many Honorary Fellows. These unpaid positions can be offered to retired staff members who have key skills and wish to continue important research. I believe the decision to limit the future tenure of Honorary Fellows to "short-term retention" of a couple of years, as indicated by the 2025 cull, was an unfortunate decision based on misleading information.

#### **Cost**

I understand the CSIRO Executive were advised that the cost to CSIRO of each Honorary Fellow was about \$100,000 per year. Since COVID I have worked almost entirely from home. I have no CSIRO office or desk. Accordingly, I estimate my actual cost to CSIRO as much nearer to \$10,000 p.a. than \$100,000. This includes costs for a laptop, some IT support, and a very small amount of supervision (including associated on-costs of my supervisors for the brief time they spend on me).

#### **Benefit**

In 2025 in competition mainly with university professors I was rated at number 25 in the world in my area of expertise (species distribution). The number one professor in this area leads a team of 17 researchers. Apart from one former Honorary Fellow (Mike Austin), who left CSIRO several years ago, there are no other CSIRO staff in the top 50 of this 'Top Scholar' ranking (<https://scholargps.com/top-scholars?specialty=species+distribution&p=2.>)

#### **Recommendation**

A possible solution would be to create 'Adjunct Honorary Fellow' positions that require working mainly from home but are provided with a laptop and admittance to CSIRO's open access publishing arrangements. These positions could continue for more than a couple of years subject to annual review and substantial outputs.

#### **Summary**

In ending almost all current Honorary Fellow positions and restricting future arrangements to "short-term retention" of a couple of years CSIRO has lost and will lose worldclass expertise while making very small savings.

#### **Note**

I do not seek any further extension to my Honorary Fellow arrangement. I am happy with the 12 years I have had, during which I have produced more than 25 publications. These include a BIOCLIM review paper that has been cited more than 1000 times and the BIOCLIM entry for the CSIROpedia (<https://csiropedia.csiro.au/biocl原因/>).