

The Senate
Select Committee into the Scrutiny of Government Budget Measures
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE
Canberra Public Hearing
27 April 2016

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSIRO

TOPIC: Proposal for Climate Centre

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice

WRITTEN QUESTION 1:

Can CSIRO release the proposal for a new climate centre presented to them by the Chief Scientist (including governance arrangements, funding etc)?

ANSWER

While CSIRO engaged with the Chief Scientist no proposal for a new climate centre was presented by him.

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TOPIC: Proposal Presented to Board

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice

WRITTEN QUESTION 2:

Can CSIRO release the proposal for a new centre presented to the board for approval?

ANSWER

The Board was presented with a proposal to form the new Climate and Adaptation Research Centre on 21 April 2016. The proposal was presented for approval and is provided below.

New CSIRO climate and adaptation research centre in Hobart

Executive Summary: If CSIRO secures ~\$2.0m p.a. of additional funding (or decides to make an additional investment), it could achieve an activity level identified by the Bureau of Meteorology (“BoM”) as the minimum required.

Background: Over the past few weeks, CSIRO has listened to feedback and held discussions with many internal and external stakeholders to explore what options are available to maintain a credible Australian effort in this important area of science but at a lower overall cost, which is better aligned to the new funding environment.

Option: To accommodate stakeholders who seek a greater level of climate research activity in Australia, CSIRO could try to secure new funding of ~\$2.0m p.a. With this additional funding, CSIRO could retain an additional 13 FTE and reach the minimal climate staffing level proposed by the BoM. The additional staff would largely provide an improved climate projection and interpretation capability. If new funding could not be found in the short-term, CSIRO would be able to bridge the gap in funding for 6-12 month by drawing down on the redundancy provisions. With the additional investment, CSIRO could strengthen its base case by:

- **Developing a new national approach to climate science.** CSIRO proposes a new national approach for providing and coordinating vital climate activities through the establishment of a National Climate Science Advisory Committee. Ideally, this would be an advisory committee to the CSIRO Board under the *Science and Industry Research Act 1949* – the same model as we have for astronomy and the research vessel. The committee would ensure that in a constrained funding environment, the nationally most important activities are carried out. The role of the committee would be strategic: Setting national priorities for climate research, liaising with the international community and overseeing the commitment of resources from participating entities. CSIRO hopes that through it other participants in the innovation system will align their resources to the identified national needs.
- **Making a long-term commitment to climate science.** If there is a long-term commitment from government towards maintaining climate science, CSIRO could match this commitment and maintain its investment at least at the post reprioritisation effort.

- **Recruiting a new leader** with a high international reputation to run this centre.
- **Strengthening the existing partnership with the UK Meteorology Office (UKMO)** to increase the benefits Australia receives from the UK's significant ongoing investment in innovations in this area of research. In return, CSIRO would provide its unique southern hemisphere observational data and modelling expertise to this partnership, helping to create an improved global model. This enhanced collaboration would be done in close consultation with the BOM, which also has strong ties to the UKMO.
- **Creating critical mass in Tasmania.** CSIRO is considering to concentrate its climate research in the long-run in a climate services and adaptation centre in Hobart, Tasmania, to retain critical mass in at least one location where many of its key collaborators reside.
- **Strengthening collaboration with key University partners**, e.g. University of Tasmania, University of NSW and other universities identified by the Chief Scientist to better leverage the whole of the innovation system investments and create a virtual "Hadley Down Under Centre" that some stakeholders including the Chief Scientist have suggested.
- The Department of the Environment would need to endorse the necessary changes to NESP ESSCC hub that CSIRO needs to make to deliver it in a reduced funding environment: CSIRO currently has some 50 staff equivalent to 16 FTE working on this contract. CSIRO proposes to maintain the 16 FTE commitment whilst reducing the number of staff to about 30 people. This change will continue to deliver on the scope of the activities but significantly reduce the cost of delivery of the contract to CSIRO by reducing the number of CSIRO staff who are not fully utilised.
- These options still involved redundancies. For [this option] this will involve ~35 redundancies across the climate programs and thus not meet every stakeholders expectation.

Recommendation: Noting that the Board requested a review of the preferred option before it was formally proposed to Government, it is recommended that the Board now consider and, if appropriate, support management's recommendation for [this option]. Any new or final agreement would be approved in the ordinary course consistent with CSIRO's major transaction delegations.

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TOPIC: Briefings for Chairman of the Board

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice

WRITTEN QUESTION 3:

Can CSIRO release details of when Larry Marshall provided briefings for the Chairman of the Board (written or verbal) since the Board meeting in December 2015?

ANSWER

See answers provided to Question No 2 taken on Notice from 8 March 2016 Hearing and to Questions Nos 9 and 10 from 7 April 2016 Hearing.

In addition to the dates cited in those answers, Dr Marshall had meetings and diarised phone conversations with Mr Thodey as follows:

- Meetings on 7 December and 16 December 2015, 1 February, 29 February, 14 March, 29 March, and 2 May 2016.
- Phone calls on 3 February, 15 February, 22 February, 4 March, 31 March, and 19 April 2016.

It should be noted that there will have been, in addition to the contacts listed above, additional phone conversations that were not diarised and so the listed dates do not include all conversations.

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TOPIC: Consultation

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice

WRITTEN QUESTION 4:

Can provide details of what institutions and agencies it consulted in developing the proposal for the new Centre?

ANSWER

CSIRO developed the proposal after discussion about the broader issue of a national science capability between CSIRO and the office of the Chief Scientist, Bureau of Meteorology, Department of Environment, Department of Industry Innovation and Science, Australian Academy of Science, ARC Centre of Excellence in Climate System Science, some Universities and others.

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TOPIC: Climate Staff Numbers

REFERENCE: Written Question on Notice

WRITTEN QUESTION 5:

Can CSIRO provide total numbers of staff working in the climate area for each of the last ten years?

ANSWER

Changes in CSIRO structure and systems over time mean that provision of reliable data over the 10 year period requested is not possible.

As CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere's research programs 1 and 2 were the focus during the hearing they have been used as the basis of the numbers provided below since their formation in June 2014. For the years 2011 to 2013 analogous research programs in the former Division of Marine and Atmospheric Research are represented, recognising that there may have been some minor shifts in capability with the June 2014 restructure.

	30/06/2011	30/06/2012	30/06/2013	30/06/2014	30/06/2015	31/03/2016
Headcount	154	159	152	138	142	141
Full time equivalents	162	167	159	146	149	151