



THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Rowan Ramsay MP
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear  Mr Ramsay

In June 2013, the former House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry released a report on an Inquiry into the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Annual Report 2011-12. The Committee report had a single recommendation *"that the Australian Government publicly respond to the Independent Review of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research."*

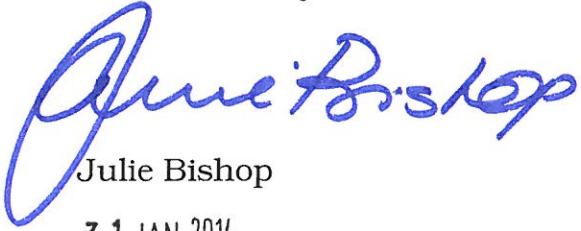
The Independent Review of ACIAR, conducted by an eminent panel chaired by Mr Bill Farmer AO, was completed in February 2013, and the previous Minister for Foreign Affairs accepted the 27 recommendations in the review on behalf of the former Australian Government. This was acknowledged in a Ministerial press release on 22 May 2013 in which the former Minister noted that agricultural research delivered by ACIAR has demonstrated strong returns, and the work of ACIAR is vital to Australia's contribution to increasing global food security. As the incumbent Minister, I share this observation and also endorse the recommendations of the review.

The previous Government had not publicly responded to the review as recommended by the Standing Committee Inquiry before Parliament was prorogued in August 2013.

The Coalition Government supports the Standing Committee's recommendation. At my request, and under the guidance of the Commission for International Agricultural Research, ACIAR has developed a five-year strategy that articulates the Government's response to the Independent Review and gives effect to the Review's recommendations.

When Parliament reconvenes, it is my intention to table in the House of Representatives the attached response, including the ACIAR Strategic Plan 2014-18. The Prime Minister has endorsed the response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Bishop

31 JAN 2014



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Resources, Fishery and Forestry:

Inquiry into the
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
Annual Report 2011-12

JANUARY 2014

Introduction

On Thursday 29 November 2012, the then House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry (now Agriculture and Industry) resolved to inquire into ACIAR's 2011-12 annual report. The Standing Committee tabled its report Monday 24 June 2013. The report made one recommendation, viz: "*the Committee recommends that the Australian Government publicly respond to the Independent Review of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research*".

The Committee's recommendation referred to the Independent Review undertaken by an expert panel comprising Mr Bill Farmer AO (Chair), Professor Ron Duncan, Mr Terry Enright and Dr Wendy Jarvie. The Independent Review report, submitted to the then Foreign Minister on 28 February 2013, made 27 recommendations, intended to ensure ACIAR's ongoing appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness.

Government Response

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government publicly respond to the Independent Review of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

Response

The Government supports this recommendation.

The Independent Review of ACIAR found that "*ACIAR is an institution of which Australians can be proud*". The report made a number of recommendations to further strengthen the organisation's operations.

The Government has properly considered and accepts the review's findings, and intends to act upon all of the review's recommendations.

Under the guidance of the Commission for International Agricultural Research, ACIAR has developed a five-year plan that gives effect to the recommendations of the review.

The ACIAR Strategic Plan 2014-18 constitutes Government's response to the independent review. A copy of the Strategic Plan is attached. It provides a transparent and complete public response to the independent review. It enables the public and scientific community to see the manner in which Government plans to act on the review's recommendations, and gives particular emphasis to whole-of-government coordination; and to ensuring ongoing evaluation is conducted.

The Strategic Plan is focused on sustainable economic growth. It responds to urgent global challenges, and sets out ACIAR's distinct contribution to the global research effort. It appropriately recognises the important role that women play in agriculture. The Strategic Plan also introduces rigorous benchmarking and strengthens performance measures, which are vital underpinnings of a strong performance culture, ensuring that the research makes a much greater impact on policy and practice in our partner countries and internationally.