

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: CSIRO

TOPIC: Revenues from Total Wellbeing Diet book

REFERENCE: Questions on Notice (Hansard, 1 June 2017, page 28-29)

QUESTION No.: BI-24

Senator KIM CARR: Can I perhaps go to some other issues regarding external revenues. The CSIRO received \$2.6 million in royalties from the sales of two wellbeing diet books—that is right, isn't it?

Dr Marshall: Off the top of my head—

Ms Bennett: I would not have the precise figure, but it is of that order, I believe.

Senator KIM CARR: I have a question on notice here. I think I have cited that correctly. It is E92307. I asked you how much you made out of each of the two diet books, the Total Wellbeing Diet books—

Ms Bennett: If that was the answer at the time, then it certainly would have been—

Senator KIM CARR: Royalties, including advances against royalties, received 13 February 2007, from sales of the two books amounted to \$2.6 million.

Dr Marshall: Manny Noakes is one of our treasures in CSIRO. She is a wonderful nutrition scientist.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes. You have done pretty well. So what is the update on the royalty? That is 2007. Have you got an update on that?

Ms Bennett: I do not have an update with me.

Senator KIM CARR: Have you entered into any partnerships with any other organisations or firms when publishing the wellbeing diet books?

Ms Bennett: We have a partnership with the company for the Total Wellbeing Diet book. We have other longstanding partners around the nutrition space.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes. So can you indicate to me who they are?

Ms Bennett: The recent publication of the Flexi program is with the company called Probiotec, and that is a company that we have been working with since 2000. We also have done work with another organisation, Baker research, and CSIRO worked with Baker on the CSIRO and Baker IDI Diabetes Diet and Lifestyle Plan.

Senator KIM CARR: What is the nature of the partnership with Probiotec?

Ms Bennett: The nature of the work, through its history, is: we have done projects in the past—for example, there was one on some functional food ingredients from cartilage. In 2009 we conducted a weight loss trial with people who had diabetes; we have done further weight loss trials of different varieties, and in 2016 we conducted the weight loss study using the meal replacement and intermittent fasting protocols.

Senator KIM CARR: So the partnership was entered into in 2016, was it?

Ms Bennett: No, we have been working with the company since the year 2000.

Senator KIM CARR: I mentioned before that the royalties on 13 February 2007 were \$2.6 million. Are you able to get the update on the royalties quickly—is that easily to hand?

Mr Munyard: We will see what we can do.

Senator KIM CARR: How long have you been working with Probiotec on the diet issue—has that been since 2000, as well?

Ms Bennett: As I said, the relationship with Probiotec has been since 2000. I do not have

information on the length of the other relationships.

Senator KIM CARR: Is it the intention of the CSIRO to profit from the sales of the book?

Ms Bennett: It is certainly our intention to work with companies to generate external revenue. I would have to take on notice whether that is in any sense a profit on the sale of the book.

Senator KIM CARR: It is a royalties payment.

Ms Bennett: There is a royalties payment. We, the CSIRO, retain ownership to the background IP and, obviously, we work with the company. Under specific agreements, project by project, we would determine the share of any of the royalties.

Senator KIM CARR: This flexi-plan diet arrangement is sold through chemists and the like, is it not?

Ms Bennett: It is released through pharmacies, yes.

Senator KIM CARR: With their royalties, is it under licence? How does that work?

Ms Bennett: There is a modest royalty from the commercial program.

Senator KIM CARR: When did CSIRO sign off on that agreement?

Ms Bennett: I do not have information to say when we signed off on the agreement. I do know that the research supporting the latest diet was conducted in 2016.

Dr Marshall: On the notion of profit, with any money we generate from any of our external work, CSIRO does not make a profit in the sense that the company makes a profit. But it does give us the ability to re-invest in the area of science.

Senator KIM CARR: I am not arguing the toss on that.

Dr Marshall: The reason I mentioned it is that I am trying quite actively to shift the mindset of many of the companies that we work with to stop thinking of us as a vendor and more as a unique partner. That is, that rather than paying us money they are actually investing in their own future, because any sort of quo profit we make we invest in that area of science, and that ultimately benefits them and the nation. It is a very important mindset shift.

Senator KIM CARR: You have significant facilities in South Australia, don't you, and this is where this nutritional plan was developed. Is that right?

Dr Marshall: Yes. It is also where, I think, if not the world's first then one of the world's first physical models of the human gut was developed by CSIRO scientists. It is quite an amazing achievement.

Senator KIM CARR: It was also, you said, a diabetes plan?

Ms Bennett: Separately we have worked releasing, for instance, the low carb diet that CSIRO worked on. That was a diet low in carbohydrates and higher in healthy fats, to magnify improvements in blood glucose control as a possible reduction in the need for diabetes medication. Our nutrition team works on a number of nutritional diets for different conditions.

Senator KIM CARR: Do you have any clinical trials for any of these?

Ms Bennett: I do not have information on the trials for the diabetes. We did undertake a clinical trial for the flexi weight loss program. Participants in the 16-week trial lost an average of 11 kilograms and saw improvements in cholesterol, insulin, glucose and blood pressure. That was the work we did behind that.

Senator KIM CARR: How soon did they put it back on?

Ms Bennett: I do not have that information, and I think that the idea of a program is that it is behavioural change as well, to try and do that.

Senator KIM CARR: If you could get the information on the amounts of money that have been returned to the organisation, I would appreciate that.

Ms Bennett: We will update the royalty for the centre.

ANSWER

CSIRO has received royalty payments amounting to \$4,416,668 for the six CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet books produced in partnership with Penguin Books, namely:

- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet
- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet Book 2

- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet Recipe Book
- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet, Fast and Fresh Recipes
- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet, Recipes on a Budget
- The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet, Complete Recipe Collection