

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates
20 October 2016

AGENCY: CSIRO

TOPIC: Discovery centre

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Carr

QUESTION No.: SI-115

Why have the number of visits to the CSIRO Discovery centre declined from 120,000 in 2013-14 to 18,447 in 2015-16?

ANSWER

In July 2014, the operating model for CSIRO Education changed and as a result CSIRO stopped running most of its out of hours and weekend programs, and stopped hiring the building to external groups, with the exception of groups or activities that are aligned to CSIRO research or the philosophy of the Discovery Centre. CSIRO closed its state-based education centres at this time, which also resulted in a change in the numbers of school visits to Discovery.

Further, at the end of 2014, CSIRO started renovations of the Discovery Building in order to consolidate staff located at the Campbell ACT site to Black Mountain and also began construction of a new science building across from the Discovery Centre. As a result of the renovations and construction work the Discovery Centre was closed for four months at the end of 2015 and into 2016, covering a traditionally busy time of the year. Because of the building works and associated lack of parking CSIRO stopped charging (and therefore counting) non-student/ school entries, although we believe that the numbers of community visitors also dropped because of the building works.