

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Report to the AFP on Air Security Offices

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 26 February 2009, E114-E115)

QUESTION No.: AI-55

Senator BRANDIS—You will have to take these questions on notice, Mr Whelan. Did the CSIRO report recommend a reduction in the number of air security officers?

Mr Whelan—I will take that question on notice, Senator.

Senator BRANDIS—Did the CSIRO report recommend that the number of air security officers should be maintained at its then existing level or did it recommend that the number of air security officers be increased?

Mr Whelan—I will take that question on notice and any other questions of detail about the research, Senator.

Senator BRANDIS—All right. Who was the officer of CSIRO who was the team leader for this research, please?

Mr Whelan—I will have to take that on notice.

Senator BRANDIS—You do not even know that?

Mr Whelan—Senator, we conduct more than 4,500 research projects. I could tell you the names of the people who lead the 100 research themes, and I have those details with me, but I am not sure in which of these themes this research was conducted.

Senator BRANDIS—Could you also take on notice, please, that I would like the names of each of the CSIRO officers involved in this particular research project. I would like to know the date upon which the research was commissioned.

Mr Whelan—Senator, I am happy to take those matters under consideration.

Senator BRANDIS—I understand.

Mr Whelan—Just to clarify, some of the matters you go to may be covered by the nature of the assignment that was conducted. I do not know on what basis it was conducted. If it was fully paid research by the AFP, there may be some constraints in that regard. I would need to have a look at that.

Senator BRANDIS—I can tell you Mr Whelan, as I suspect you are already aware since you have read the *Hansard* of the other estimates proceedings, that this report was a confidential report. None of my questions will be directed to asking you to reveal the confidential aspects or the content of the report; I am more interested in the circumstances in which the report came to be commissioned and was transmitted to relevant agencies. I would like to know the date on which the report was commissioned. I would like to know who prepared the brief to the CSIRO for the preparation of the report. I would like, subject to the redaction of the—

Mr Whelan—Senator, just to clarify, if it was a brief that we received from the AFP, it is probably appropriate the AFP provide you with that information.

Senator BRANDIS—No, I am asking you. I have asked Commissioner Keelty and he has taken that question on notice. I am asking you and you can take the question on notice. In one way or another I hope to get a straight answer. I would like you to provide me, subject to the fact that of course you may feel the need for there to be the redaction of confidential material within it, with a copy of the brief. I would like to know the names of the agencies which commissioned the report. We know from Commissioner Keelty's evidence that the Australian Federal Police was one of them. It is apparent from Commissioner Keelty's evidence that the AFP was not the only agency which contributed to this process, so I would like to know the names of the other agencies with which you collaborated in the preparation of this report. I would like to know the date on which the report was delivered by the CSIRO to those who requested it, in particular the Australian Federal Police. I would like to know the names of any other agencies that were furnished with a copy of the report. I would like to know whether a copy of the report was given to the minister and, if a copy of the report was given to the minister, the date in which the report was given to the minister.

Mr Whelan—Just to clarify, Senator, to which minister are you referring?

Senator BRANDIS—I am assuming that the relevant minister would have been the minister responsible for the Australian Federal Police and for this program, namely, Mr Debus, the minister for homeland security. I do not think I can take it any further with you Mr Whelan. Thank you.

ANSWER:

1. Did the CSIRO report recommend a reduction in the number of air security officers?

The report which was prepared forms part of the confidential information of the party that engaged CSIRO (the AFP) and CSIRO is obliged to not disclose the report or its content.

2. Did the CSIRO report recommend that the number of air security officers should be maintained at its then existing level or did it recommend that the number of air security officers be increased?

See response to question 1.

3. Who was the officer of CSIRO who was the team leader for this research, please?

Dr Richard Jarrett.

4. I would like the names of each of the CSIRO officers involved in this particular research project.

Dr Xun Guo Lin and Dr Peter Toscas, in addition to Dr Richard Jarrett.

5. I would like to know the date upon which the research was commissioned.

7 August 2007.

6. I would like to know the date on which the report was commissioned.

7 August 2007.

7. I would like to know who prepared the brief to the CSIRO for the preparation of the report.

The brief forms part of the confidential information of the party that engaged CSIRO (the AFP) and CSIRO is obliged not to disclose the brief or its contents.

8. I would like you to provide me, subject to the fact that of course you may feel the need for there to be the redaction of confidential material within it, with a copy of the brief.

As per answer to 7.

9. I would like to know the names of the agencies which commissioned the report.

The Australian Federal Police, representing the Commonwealth of Australia.

10. I would like to know the names of the other agencies with which you collaborated in the preparation of this report.

The CSIRO did not collaborate with any other agencies in the preparation of the report.

11. I would like to know the date on which the report was delivered by the CSIRO to those who requested it, in particular the Australian Federal Police.

The report was delivered to the Australian Federal Police on 22 May 2008. The CSIRO did not provide the report to anyone else. The CSIRO does not hold a copy of the report.

12. I would like to know the names of any other agencies that were furnished with a copy of the report.

See response to question 11.

13. I would like to know whether a copy of the report was given to the minister and, if a copy of the report was given to the minister, the date in which the report was given to the minister (minister responsible for the Australian Federal Police and for this program, namely, Mr Debus, the minister for homeland security).

The CSIRO did not deliver the report to anyone other than the AFP. It is not aware of whether a copy of the Report was given to the Minister.