

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: CSIRO

DEST Question No. E176_06

Senator Carr asked on 1 June 2005, EWRE Hansard pages 70 and 71.

Question:

Senator Carr: Re CSIRO Forest and Forest Products. (a) What is the nature of the refocus in research priorities?

Dr Garrett: take the question on notice because I do not have the responsible expert with me.

Senator Carr: (b) What research areas were the nine staff in? (c) Were they research staff or administrative staff?

I need to know what the areas of work were that those nine staff undertook.

(d) Are you seeking to re-employ additional staff?

(e) Were further recruitments to take place between 1 July 2004 and May 2005?

Do you have any information on that?

Dr Garrett: No. I will take it on notice.

Senator Carr: (f) Will the persons that are re-employed be on fixed terms or on ongoing employment? What areas of research are you likely to re-employ in?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products – Refocus in research priorities

(a) Changes in direction in our Forests of Tomorrow Centre of Excellence have been proposed for some time. Closure or downsizing of specific projects has been identified in the areas of molecular biology (marker-aided selection projects), training and extension, seed testing, seed despatch and statistics.

Research in the area of Bioenergy has been scaled down over the past two years and no further research in this area will be undertaken by CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products or ensis (the joint venture with New Zealand Forest Research). CFFP is also moving away from development of carbon accounting tools towards impacts and adaptations of climate change as applied to the forest industry. This research area contributes to the CRC for Greenhouse Accounting, but has no other significant external support.

(b) Of the nine staff who have been impacted by the changes, one was a research scientist working in the field of advanced molecular diagnostics of forest diseases. The other eight were research support staff – four of these were administrative staff, one was a technical officer and the remaining three were experimental scientists working in the fields of strategic native forest research, high-yield pulping research and phenolic-based adhesives for veneer-based products.

(c)

- 4 Administrative staff
- 1 Research Scientist
- 3 Experimental Scientists
- 1 Technical Officer

(d) CFFP is not planning to employ any new staff in any of the above mentioned research areas.

(e) During the 2004-2005 financial year, CFFP recruited a total of eight staff in a range of other areas across its operations including ensis, and has five positions currently advertised. A further 10 new CFFP recruits are provided for in the ensis budget for 2005-2006.

(f) All the following staff were employed on fixed term contracts:

- One technical assistant (Melbourne) - Recruited for the Near-Infrared-Spectroscopy
- One technical assistant (Melbourne) - Papermaking
- One research scientist (Melbourne) - Polymer/organic chemist in wood products.
- One research scientist (Perth) - Forest hydrology
- One technical assistant (Canberra) - Bushfire research
- One Post-Doctoral Fellow (Canberra) - Genetics
- One Manager (Canberra) - Environmental Products
- One Manager (Melbourne) - Finance