

# Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
References Committee

## **Inquiry into the Office of the Chief Scientist**

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**Submission no:** 5

**Received:** 3/06/2004

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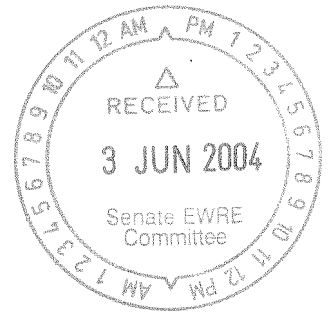
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The Secretary  
Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee  
The Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

**SJ NO. 144 17 Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee—The Office of the Chief Scientist**

In response to the Committee's call for submissions, CSIRO would wish to make the following comments pertinent particularly to the first two terms of reference:

1. The Chief Scientist, supported by his Office in the DEST, has been a strong supporter and advocate of the significant change program that CSIRO has been embarked upon over the past few years. The aim of this program is to enhance the relevance of CSIRO its impact on many the major challenges Australia faces. Central to this response is the organisation's Strategic Plan for 2003-7 and the National Research Flagships Program. The latter is the key plank in our response to the National Research Priorities. In framing both the Strategic Plan and the Flagships, we have valued the constructive, if at times challenging, engagement of the Chief Scientist. In this engagement we have particularly valued his broad perspective that is derived from his public and private sector experience.
2. We are aware of suggestions that his position with Rio Tinto has the potential for conflict of interest with his Chief Scientist role. However, in none of our interactions with the Chief Scientist have we experienced any situation in which he has acted with anything other than the highest integrity. His role in Rio Tinto is well known and in our dealings with him he has always been careful to distinguish the two roles.
3. We also note that the Academy of Science in a media release in May 2002 on his reappointment commented: "Robin Batterham has worked exceptionally hard to put science and technology at the forefront of the national agenda". CSIRO would strongly endorse that view and add to that statement "and for the national benefit".

We hope that these comments assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Michael Barber'.

Michael Barber, FAA  
Executive Director, Science Planning

2 June 2004