

CSIRO'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM ABC RN 27.4.17

1. *In April 2015, CSIRO decided not to make a submission to the UNFCCC Taskforce of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Why did CSIRO request that John Church refrain from making his own submission to the taskforce?*

CSIRO worked directly with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet UNFCCC

Taskforce during 2015. As a consequence, it was not necessary for CSIRO to make further submissions to this process.

Submissions in a private capacity are also contrary to CSIRO Publications Policy, specifically, where publication or comment is made in a private capacity that relates to staff member's area of professional expertise, reputation and employment with CSIRO.

It is not appropriate for CSIRO staff to author a publication in a private capacity that could potentially be perceived as compromising their capacity, as employees, to fulfill their duties in an unbiased manner, or compromising public confidence in CSIRO as a trusted advisor.

2. *Why did CSIRO then change its mind and support a submission made by John Church and others under the auspices of the Australian Academy of Science?*

CSIRO is supportive of staff providing scientific input to the work of the Australian Academy of Sciences and other such institutions. However, in doing so, staff are still required to comply with CSIRO's Publications and Public Comment policies, which is what occurred on this occasion.

3. *Does CSIRO acknowledge that two other CSIRO scientists withdrew their names from the submission after receiving phone calls from management? Did management apply pressure on these scientists to withdraw?*

Originally, three scientists intended to make a submission in a private capacity. These submissions, as proposed, would have breached the relevant CSIRO Publications and Public Comment Policies.

This was discussed with the individuals concerned. Subsequent decisions to participate or not were taken by the individuals involved.

4. *Some CSIRO researchers claim that in 2009 the organisation was "missing in action", by not providing public submissions to two major government inquiries in the lead-up to the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit. What is CSIRO's response to this claim?*

[The inquiries were:

- The Senate Inquiry into the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 and related bills http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Completed_inquiries/2008-10/cprs_2_09/index; and

- *The Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy*

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Former_Committees/climate/index

In the period from the start of 2008 to early 2009 alone, CSIRO provided more than 40 submissions and appearances before hearings to Parliamentary and Departmental Inquiries in the climate change domain.

Additionally, CSIRO officers provided evidence based input into the development of the Green and White Papers on the CPRS, through relevant departments and were involved in many formal and informal discussions and briefings, media articles and public debates.

CSIRO continues to do extensive scientific work in climate and climate change, the most recent major work being the fourth, biennial State of the Climate report released in 2016.

The report drew on the latest monitoring, science and projection information to describe variability and changes in Australia's climate, and how it is likely to change in the future.

In relation to the two specific inquiries referenced above, the Terms of Reference for each focused on policy matters (as articulated through its Terms of Reference). Noting that CSIRO has a long-standing policy that staff should not advocate, defend or publicly canvass the merits of government or opposition policies, including policies of previous Commonwealth governments, or State or local or foreign governments CSIRO decided to not make a submission to either of these Inquiries.

5. *What does CSIRO say to the claim that the organisation's rules governing public communication by staff are being invoked to censor scientists who want to publicly question or dispute government policy?*

CSIRO is committed to communicating the results of our research to ensure the best science is available to inform public debate and government policy.

CSIRO operates under the Science and Industry Research Act (1949) and is required by that act to provide information to the Australian community, industry and governments.

There has been a long-standing CSIRO policy that staff should not advocate, defend or publicly canvass the merits of government or opposition policies, including policies of previous Commonwealth governments, or State or local or foreign governments.

CSIRO staff are encouraged to communicate the outcomes and implications of their scientific work and, where relevant, policy options and scenarios stemming from their scientific findings.

6. *What does CSIRO say to the claim that management takes "a risk avoidance approach" when it comes to providing government with advice that is inconsistent with government policy? Does CSIRO try to limit communications by researchers that may be read as critical of government because it is concerned about its funding?*

CSIRO is committed to communicating the results of our research to ensure the best science is available to inform public debate and government policy.

CSIRO's scientists provide the latest scientific evidence, including its implications for policy development, to the community and to government so they can make informed decisions about Australia's future on major issues.

There has been a long-standing CSIRO policy that staff should not advocate, defend or publicly canvass the merits of government or opposition policies, including policies of previous Commonwealth governments, or State or local or foreign governments.

CSIRO staff are encouraged to communicate the outcomes and implications of their scientific work and, where relevant, policy options and scenarios stemming from their scientific findings.

As noted previously, CSIRO has been actively sharing the knowledge gained from our climate research in many forums, including through participation Parliamentary and Departmental inquiries, through the four biennial publication of the State of the Climate Reports (with the Bureau of Meteorology) and publication in scientific journals and other literature.