

CSIRO Opening Statement, Senate Estimates May 31 2018

CSIRO's purpose is to solve Australia's greatest challenges with science. Your National Science Agency is the country's most trusted research organisation thanks to the excellent science and solutions our staff deliver every day. And we don't just focus on today, we look to tomorrow and beyond. The Australian National Outlook recognizes Australia's future national challenges and is closely aligned with Industry Growth Centre roadmaps and the Innovation & Science Australia missions. We've invested in future science platforms like hydrogen energy to support these national moonshots, and I am proud CSIRO Strategy 2020 continues to substantially increase our investment in blue sky science.

As Australian industries such as Manufacturing and Minerals transition in response to digital and other disruptions, so too must CSIRO in order to remain relevant and deliver impact for the nation. In CSIRO Manufacturing we forecast 32 redundancies but have been successful in managing this to a lesser number of 23. Similarly in Minerals, we forecast 42 redundancies last year – we now believe this will be closer to 32. While changes to staffing are always difficult, overall, I am pleased to report that every year of Strategy 2020 has delivered modest growth in CSIRO impact, staffing, revenue & appropriation.

Just under \$300 million of our appropriation is dedicated to collaborative research infrastructure, so we are pleased to see an investment of \$1.9 billion for Australia's national research infrastructure, including for infrastructure managed by CSIRO such as the Pawsey Super Computer - a key component of Australia's space research infrastructure. On the topic of National Infrastructure, it is with great sadness that I note the passing last Sunday of Dr John La Salle, the Director of the Atlas of Living Australia – John was a great Australian and a great contributor to the global science community. Our thoughts are with his family and others involved in the accident, currently recovering in hospital.

The ON Program & CSIRO Innovation Fund, both funded by NISA, fill a critical gap in the system by taking invention from the lab bench to beta to business, where science can benefit all Australians. So far, ON has supported 222 teams and 825 scientists from 29 universities, four Publicly Funded Research Agencies and all CSIRO science areas. Startups graduating from the ON Accelerator Program have been as successful as those coming out of the best science accelerators in the world, including the US iCorps Program.

But ON also delivers profound public good for environment and society. CoviU is a spinout that brings a unique cloud-based healthcare experience & diagnosis to rural Australians. CoviU was created in CSIRO, accelerated through ON, and funded by CSIRO's Innovation Fund. Like our very first ON spinout Cardihab, CoviU is proof of the power of female founders, and both are great examples of the power of policy to get Australia's innovation system working together to bring life-changing science to all Australians.

Thank you.

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