



JUNE 5, 2024 – SENATE ESTIMATES OPENING STATEMENT

DR DOUG HILTON – CSIRO CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Thank you, Chair.

It's an incredible honour to represent CSIRO this evening and to speak on behalf of our dedicated team of scientists, researchers, engineers, technologists, and all those who support the delivery of this crucial work.

CSIRO has one critical purpose: to deliver research that serves the national interest and benefits the Australian community.

This includes research that tackles generational challenges like climate change and supports meeting Australia's commitment to Net Zero by 2050. An important part of that commitment requires a detailed understanding of the costs of building future electricity generation, storage and hydrogen production in Australia. The GenCost report, produced by CSIRO in collaboration with the Australian Energy Market Operator – AEMO – provides a policy and technology neutral view of the options available.

CSIRO research also enhances our understanding and protection of the environment and our unique and precious biodiversity. This work includes monitoring and deepening our understanding of the substantial climate-driven impacts across the Great Barrier Reef, as well as contributing to key studies like the Reef Snapshot report released in April and developed jointly by CSIRO, the Reef Authority and the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

CSIRO's research also strengthens and diversifies our economy and boosts the productivity and sustainability of our small to medium-sized businesses and in our agricultural sector. I saw this firsthand last month at Beef Week in Rockhampton where CSIRO showcased a new process to add value to the beef sector by turning red meat into a highly nutritious, allergen-free and protein-rich powder. CSIRO's *Just Meat* protein powder has the potential to grow Australia's \$75.4 billion red meat industry and capture more value from the production process.

CSIRO is also privileged to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and 65,000 years of scientific knowledge and experience. Their insights are invaluable, their extraordinary observations, adaptations, and innovations built up over millennia in an unpredictable and often harsh environment.

We currently support 30 Indigenous-led research projects and 69 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research partnerships across the country.

CSIRO is committed to delivering benefits for Australia through our science, but we cannot do it alone, so we also collaborate widely and generously with many players in the Australian research and innovation eco-system including researchers in universities and institutes, government departments and agencies, companies of all sizes, and members of the community.

This work also extends beyond our borders and, as an example, staff from our Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness have been working with Indonesia's Veterinary Centre Wates to strengthen Indonesia's biosecurity practices and ultimately improve our defences against Foot and Mouth Disease.

In a world beset by challenges but also rich in opportunities, science and CSIRO is contributing facts, models, and data to the important conversations shaping Australia's future. As the national science agency, an important part of our role is to build and protect the community's trust in science and this includes being transparent about the scientific process and the rigorous foundations of good governance, process integrity and ethics upon which it is built.

While public debate and policy decisions are made by others, it is important they are informed by science. We thank the Australian community and its elected representatives for their trust in CSIRO and science. Everyone at CSIRO understands the responsibility we have as the national science agency, and we're committed to honouring it.

<ends>