

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2009-10  
10 February 2010

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

**TOPIC:** Staff Issues

**REFERENCE:** Written Question –Senator Eggleston

**QUESTION No.:** AI-86

There has been media attention given to the issue of CSIRO staff speaking publicly on issues.

What is CSIRO's policy on scientists engaged by CSIRO speaking publicly in their personal capacity on issues within their area of expertise and area of employment?

Have any staff been terminated or disciplined in connection with their speaking publicly on issues within their area of expertise or area of employment?

If so, how many staff have been terminated or disciplined and for what reason?

**ANSWER**

The Public Comment by CSIRO Staff policy states that

*If a staff member is commenting in a private capacity, he or she should state clearly that it is a personal opinion rather than an official view of CSIRO.*

In addition the CSIRO Publication policy states that

*Where publication or comment is made in a private capacity that relates to a 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 fulfil their duties in an unbiased manner  
compromising public confidence in CSIRO as a trusted advisor.*

*Where such a perception might arise, it is the responsibility of the staff member to discuss it with his or her supervisor and where appropriate to effectively manage risks associated with this perception.*

Since 1 August 2006 (when the revised and now current policy on public comment was put in place), there have been no CSIRO officers who have had either their employment terminated, or disciplinary action in accordance with CSIRO's terms and conditions of service and policy taken against them, in connection with their speaking publicly on issues within their area of expertise or area of employment.

None.