

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

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: ETS

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: AI-88

What is the justification of preventing the publication of the scientific paper criticising the ETS by one of your department's scientists?

ANSWER

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) is not opposed to the publication of scientific papers. However, CSIRO did not support the publication of the paper by Dr Clive Spash as the paper did not meet the scientific standards required by CSIRO. In order to maintain CSIRO's reputation for scientific excellence CSIRO will reject papers that do not meet those standards, regardless of how many times it has been peer reviewed, either internally or externally.

In addition to the failure of this paper to meet the scientific standards of CSIRO, it was CSIRO's view that the paper breached the Public Agencies Research Charter, specifically that "As CSIRO employees, they should not advocate, defend or publicly debate the merits of government or opposition policies (including policies of previous Commonwealth governments, or State or local or foreign governments).".

Further, the author of the paper failed to comply with CSIRO policies regarding the submission of scientific papers, which require an internal review process to be undertaken and approval to be received before a paper is submitted for publication. These policies also require that CSIRO staff members must list their CSIRO affiliation on all publications authored in their area of professional expertise and reputation as an employee of CSIRO. These policies are in place to ensure that CSIRO continues to produce scientific papers of the highest quality.