

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Senior staff complaints

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 15 February 2012, page 12).

QUESTION No.: AI-9

Senator BUSHBY: The question specifically refers to the answer, though, and the answer says: 'There have been cases where the manager to whom the case was initially referred has become the subject of further complaint.' The answer on notice deals with this issue, and I was just clarifying—

Senator Chris Evans: Do we have a copy of the answer?

Dr Clarke: Yes, we do.

Mr Roy: Dr Clarke, as indicated in the answer, receives a number of suggestions and complaints from staff throughout the course of the year. I think the answer notes that it is up to about 10 per annum, and obviously it would fluctuate from year to year and from time to time. The process we follow in doing that is that Dr Clarke would review it. Generally she would not step in and personally address the case itself. It would be done through line management, and she would refer the matter back to line management. In some cases, though, it has eventuated that line management has become the subject of the complaint, and in those cases we would refer to someone either further up the hierarchical chain or across the chain from another part of the business unit. But we would not have a circumstance in which a complaint was made against a particular officer and it was referred back to that officer to solve.

Senator BUSHBY: Just for clarification, there has been no case, whether one that was referred in 2010 or otherwise, where that has actually occurred?

Mr Roy: I am going to the general issue to start off with. I do not know every particular case. We could take that on notice if you had a particular circumstance you wanted us to review.

Senator BUSHBY: I just want CSIRO's assurance that that has not occurred.

Mr Roy: We do protect the individual who has made the complaint. We have strong processes and procedures, including a very constructive whistleblower policy that supports what we do, so it would not be our general practice to do that.

Senator BUSHBY: Perhaps you could take that on notice—to clarify that it has not actually occurred.

ANSWER

To the best of our knowledge, there has been no case where the Chief Executive has referred a complaint to an individual who is the subject of that complaint.