

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

TOPIC: Regional Sites Working Group

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 20)

QUESTION No.: AI-8

Senator MASON: Going to regional sites, Strategic Action 3.5 of CSIRO's strategy for 2011-15 outlines CSIRO's commitment to ensuring:

... the vibrancy of our regional sites through appropriate science agendas, internal and external science connections, local community engagement, and support mechanisms.

In response, CSIRO established, I understand, the Regional Sites Working Group. In its November 2011 report the working group made 10 recommendations and provided a time line for implementation, with some actions to commence immediately, or some from 1 July 2012, the next year. What progress has CSIRO made in implementing the working group's recommendations with respect to that?

Dr Clark: Can I take that question on notice for providing you with the detailed progress against each one of those recommendations? Each of the recommendations were accepted. There are several of them and I will provide detail, under each one of them, of the progress we have made to date.

Senator MASON: Can you give the committee an overview of what has happened?

Dr Clark: We have made significant progress. As you mentioned that working group was led by Dr Daniel Walker, who is one of our deputy chiefs. It was presented to our consultative council. On the areas of progress from CSIRO, we have been looking at our planning and implementation work. We have looked at our Indigenous employment. We have looked at our regional support arrangements. We have also looked at all of our plans for our sites, moving forward. In terms of our regional sites, we have sites in New South Wales: at Armidale, Griffith, Myall Vale, Narrabri and Parkes. In the Northern Territory we have a site at Alice Springs and we have plans as well in Darwin—

Senator MASON: We will hear of the plans for these things, but in the question on notice could you provide details of any outcomes that have been achieved.

Dr Clark: I would prefer to provide them to you in a detailed and documented way against each of the recommendations. I think that would serve your purpose.

ANSWER

The CSIRO is well advanced in implementing the recommendations of the Regional Sites Working Group. Progress was last reviewed by the CSIRO Executive Team in September 2012 and by the Joint Staff and Management Consultative Committee in December 2012. A summary of actions taken against each of the 10 recommendations is shown at the following table:

#	Recommendation	Status
1	Develop and maintain a plan for each regional site with respect to place-based rationale, science directions, key internal and external partnerships, community engagement and pathways to impact	Complete and transitioning to business as usual. Site plans are now being used as inputs to Divisional and Flagship planning processes and will continue to be refined and developed.
2	Ensure that planning for the CSIRO's ten year capital plan incorporates strategic consideration of changes to CSIRO's regional footprint.	Complete and transitioning to business as usual. The CSIRO Property Plan is a comprehensive strategic response to the CSIRO's current and future needs to guide our capital investment priorities. It includes consideration of the future role and directions of our regional sites.
3	The CSIRO regional sites to be a focus for organisational activity with respect to Indigenous engagement and employment.	Complete and transitioning to business as usual. Under the CSIRO's updated Diversity and Inclusion Plan, Indigenous employment and engagement is a key priority for the Organisation. The Indigenous employment working group is supporting this priority. Regional site plans address local Indigenous engagement priorities and inform Divisional workforce planning.
4	The CSIRO to (i) communicate and implement agreed standard site leadership role statements, including associated accountabilities and responsibilities; (ii) explore opportunities for building a community of- practice amongst regional site leaders; and (iii) invest in developing our Site Leaders by enabling and encouraging participation in development opportunities.	(i) Site leader role statements have been developed and disseminated. (Complete) (ii) Site leaders have participated in several teleconferences and are encouraged to consult amongst their peers. The regional sites working group process has facilitated greater connectivity between these leaders. (Complete and transitioning to business as usual) (iii) Divisional capability planning and individual performance agreements recognise the roles of site leaders and allow identification and implementation of agreed development activities. (Ongoing business as usual activity)
5	Ensure that implementation of regional site plans developed under 1) can fully utilise opportunities for access to enterprise capability funds (such as CDFs, TCPs and OCE Science Leader scheme).	Complete and transitioning to business as usual. Divisions consider regional site plans as well as a range of inputs, including the CSIRO strategy, in prioritising access to and deployment of the various capability funding sources.
6	Implement a model of 'regional transaction support staff' at sites to interface with, and provide delivery points for, enterprise functions and consider the role of regional sites in developing enterprise-wide support.	Partially complete transitioning to business as usual. A meeting of enterprise service leaders has identified some current best practice examples and opportunities for further application of a shared model. These are being pursued within those support functions.
7	Initiate enterprise-wide communication to increase the internal and external understanding of our regional sites, highlighting what they deliver the organisation and their local communities.	Partially complete transitioning to business as usual. The findings of the regional sites working group have been shared with staff and feedback encouraged. Sites are supported by Corporate and Divisional communication staff to develop tailored communication initiatives relevant to their unique profile.
8	Ensure an integrated approach to decision making by (i) assessing impact of project planning, workforce planning and enterprise resource allocation decisions on individual region sites; and (ii) mitigating unforeseen negative consequences for site vibrancy.	Complete and transitioning to business as usual Divisions with regional sites have implemented processes to ensure representation of sites in planning. For example, Ecosystem Sciences has a Site Leaders Forum chaired by a member of the Divisional Executive.
9	For each regional site, appoint a Chief or Group Executive to take overarching responsibility for the vibrancy of that site.	Complete Each site now has an appointed Chief or Group Executive to provide leadership.

#	Recommendation	Status
10	<p>As part of the CSIRO's Operational Planning Cycle</p> <p>(i) allocate specific responsibility for implementation of recommendations 1 to 9 and determine timelines for their completion;</p> <p>(ii) commission a review of progress against Regional Sites Working Group recommendations annually for the period of the 2011-15 Strategy and report outcomes to Executive Team.</p>	<p>(i) A detailed implementation plan with deliverable accountabilities and timelines was developed and approved by the CSIRO Executive in February 2012; and last reviewed in September 2012. Complete</p> <p>(ii) Annual progress updates will continue to be provided to the Executive Team with the next update to be considered by the Consultative Council in the 2nd half of 2013. Planned and ongoing</p>