

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: AWI-CSIRO Contract

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 22)

QUESTION No.: AI-9

Senator HEFFERNAN: ...I have another issue and I would like to give you some documents.

Dr Clark: Certainly.

CHAIR: Senator Heffernan, are you seeking to table the documents?

Senator HEFFERNAN: Yes.

CHAIR: Can you table the documents and circulate copies, please.

Senator HEFFERNAN: It includes correspondence between parties. You will be familiar with the SWAG group; you will be familiar with the CSIRO—it is all part of selling the goods and chattels to make the place pay—at Belmont, Geelong, and the worsted wool equipment there.

Mr Whelan: I am familiar with that material.

Senator HEFFERNAN: As you would also be familiar with, there is a letter of support from the Chairman of AWI, Wally Merriman. You know the issue. You know that we woolgrowers and the Commonwealth paid for the equipment. There is an enclosed document, which we are not allowed to see, which is an agreement between AWI and the CSIRO to settle the ownership of the various bits. Given that they are both publicly funded and you are a public entity, why do you need an enclosed document? Why can't we see the document so that woolgrowers can know whether they have been duded or not? Why does it have to be an enclosed document?

Mr Whelan: I am not sure of the details about any enclosed document. If there happens to be a commercial agreement between—

Senator HEFFERNAN: A sealed document between CSIRO and AWI dated 12 October 2001.

Mr Whelan: I would have to take the details of that on notice. You were making some observations then around funding of the organisation; what I do know is that the assets are surplus to requirements and CSIRO has obligations, under the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines and the processes for handling of assets, to responsibly dispose of those.

ANSWER

The CSIRO and AWI entered into a deed on 12 October 2001. Under the deed the CSIRO and AWI agreed to deal with the ownership of a number of properties including equipment and improvements located on some of those properties. The ownership of Belmont and the improvements and equipment located on that property were dealt with under the deed. More particularly, AWI agreed that the CSIRO retained ownership of the Belmont property and all improvements and equipment located on that property, with AWI having no further interest in the property, improvements or equipment.