

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10  
01 June 2009

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

**TOPIC:** Staffing

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard 1 June 2009, E22-23)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-37

**Senator ABETZ**—How many of these do you anticipate will be scientists or scientifically qualified individuals?

**Dr Clark**—As we have in previous years, we have been looking to increase the number of research scientists in the organisation.

**Senator ABETZ**—You are looking to increase?

**Dr Clark**—In our previous years we have consistently increased the number of research scientists...

**Mr Whelan**—As I indicated, we do not prepare the forward estimate of staff numbers at the level of detail you are talking about. However, if I can use last year as a comparison, using the same methodology we forecast a reduction in staffing of 85. As it has turned out, we have grown over that period of time and we have grown the number of research staff further in the last 12 months, and there has been also a slight increase in the number of support staff over the same period. So, over the last 12 months, we have grown the number of research scientists by 60 and of other staff by 11. I cannot answer precisely what the breakdown in the period ahead will be, because we have not conducted the estimates at that level. However, based on the current year's data and previous history, the vast majority of that will be other staff; they will not be research science staff. It could be that there will be no research science staff. But given that I have not conducted—

**Senator ABETZ**—Let us hope so. Could you could take that on notice and let us know. Today is 1 June; you operate on a financial year basis, so would it be possible for us to get the figure for this current financial year?

**Mr Whelan**—Yes, Senator, I just gave you the figure for this financial year to date.

**Senator ABETZ**—Sorry, of course. I have confused myself. This is for the future year. That figure must be based on some assessments, and if you could indicate to me—

**Mr Whelan**—The basis of the assessment?

**Senator ABETZ**—Yes.

**Mr Whelan**—I would be happy to do so.

**ANSWER**

The 2009/10 CSIRO Portfolio Budget Statements project an estimated Average Staffing Level (ASL) reduction in 2009-10 of 136. This number is derived by subtracting the 2008-09 forecasted ASL from the 2009-10 predicted ASL.

The 2008-09 forecasted ASL is calculated based on a 12 month average derived from the average actual month end ASL from July 2008 to the end of April 2009, and a projection of the ASL balances for May and June 2009.

The 2009-10 predicted ASL is calculated using the estimated funding envelopes for labour and operating costs for the 2009/10 Financial Year.

It should be noted that the PBS staffing numbers are high level estimates only, pending finalisation of the more detailed internal budget process which includes calibrating staff numbers to external revenue estimates (not available at the time of compiling the PBS) that reflect the 2009-10 expected outcomes. As this is subject to variation and is not apparent within the early stages of budget planning, it is feasible that the actual number of staff impacted by any changes in staffing levels may be different from the ASL numbers articulated in the PBS.

Since 2004, there has been a net increase in the number of Research Scientists working in CSIRO. To illustrate, over the last five years CSIRO's ASL numbers have decreased (from 6,030 in 2005-06 to a forecast of 5,661 in 2009-10) whilst the number of research scientists has increased from a headcount of 1,623 in 2005 to a headcount of 1,837, as at 24 June 2009.

CSIRO continually evaluates our research portfolio to ensure that our investment in science remains in areas of significance to Australia and in alignment with changing research priorities. As a result, the execution of this may result in changes to the number of scientific staff employed within specific research areas within CSIRO. However, underlying this is the principal that CSIRO will maintain and grow our scientific capability in net terms.