

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
28 May 2012

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

TOPIC: Workplace Bullying

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 28 May 2012, page 18)

QUESTION No.: BI-6

Senator COLBECK: I think we do. And it would not be correct that a response to that serious and private confidential email from the employee came not from Dr Clark or anyone else, for that matter, within CSIRO but within a couple of hours from Dr Lonsdale himself?

Mr Roy: I would have to take that on notice. What I can say, though—and you may well be aware but for your colleagues—Comcare are in the process of finalising an investigation into some claims brought forward by the officer you are referring to. There are four specific complaints that that officer mentioned to Comcare. They are in the process of handing down a 90-odd page report into their findings. Whilst there is a number of improvement opportunities that CSIRO can have—and we would be disappointed if they did not identify improvement opportunities—they did say, and I will quote from the draft report, so it may well change before it is finalised over the next couple of weeks:

"I found no evidence of system deficiencies or a culture within CSIRO or specifically with Entomology division that embedded or promoted bullying type behaviour."

That is the headline summary from the Comcare report. As I indicated before, there will be some matters that we need to work on out of that report, but that is at the broad level, and I think that is representative of the organisation more broadly.

Senator COLBECK: Circumstance does not align very well with your comment from 15 February on *Hansard*:

But we would not have a circumstance in which a complaint was made against a particular officer and was referred back to that officer to solve.

Mr Roy: I would be surprised and disappointed if that had happened. As I said, I am not aware that it has happened, but I will take it on notice and I will look very closely at that matter for you.

ANSWER

An email was received by Dr Clark from an employee on 11 August 2010 regarding employment matters, including reference to a formal grievance complaint that had been made against Dr Lonsdale. It was part of an ongoing and complex staffing matter which has involved many and varied complaints raised by the employee against various managers and management decisions at CSIRO, and with the Organisation for its part suspending potentially serious issues of alleged misconduct by the employee pending the recovery of his health.

Initial complaints with respect to Dr Lonsdale were raised by the employee prior to August 2010 and were responded to by another appropriate senior manager. The response to the employee's formal grievances against Dr Lonsdale continued to be managed by another senior manager and the

grievance investigation process was conducted by an independent investigator. With respect to other matters outside of the formal grievance process, line management arrangements remained in place and Dr Lonsdale continued to interact with the employee with respect to appropriate line management matters.

In the employee's email of 11 August 2010, he queried whether he had to attend a meeting on dates that had been proposed by Dr Lonsdale. As the proposed meeting had been requested by Dr Lonsdale and related to line management matters of potential redundancy and had no connection with the matters referenced in the formal grievance complaint, the email was referred to Dr Lonsdale (as Chief of the Business Unit) for response. It should be noted for completeness that Dr Lonsdale did not have the authority to make a decision in relation to any redundancy. All decisions of this nature are as a matter of CSIRO policy reserved for the Deputy Chief Executive, Operations.