

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012
19 October 2011

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: ADVOCATING CARBON TAX

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Colbeck

QUESTION No.: SI-66

In his evidence to the Estimates hearing of 19 October 2011, Mr Whelan stated that “any participation by CSIRO in an information campaign would need to ensure that we were not associated, and that officers were not in a position to be seen to be advocating for or against the pricing of carbon or a carbon tax”. What assurances can CSIRO provide the Opposition that action would be taken in the event that any officer(s) is seen to be advocating for or against the pricing of carbon or a carbon tax – and, in keeping with the organisation’s Public Research Charter and Code of Conduct and other associated documents, what would that action be?

ANSWER

CSIRO’s public comment policy states that:

CSIRO staff should not advocate, defend or publicly canvass the merits of government or opposition policies (including policies of previous Commonwealth governments, or State or local or foreign governments).

A breach of the CSIRO Code of Conduct, which requires staff to comply with CSIRO policies, may result in the following disciplinary sanctions:

- reprimand;
- reduction in salary within the same or to a lower CSOF (ie classification) level;
- transfer to another position at the same or lower CSOF level; or
- dismissal.