

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
17 October 2012

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

TOPIC: IMT Division staff termination

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 17 October 2012, pages 12-13)

QUESTION No.: SI-5

Senator COLBECK: I turn to the termination of IMT division staff. You gave us an answer to question BI-8. Are you completely comfortable with that particular answer?

Dr Clark: Actually, we sent a letter to Senator Mark Bishop because, in reviewing our response to that question on notice from the May 2012 budget estimate hearings it came to our attention that the answer to BI-8 included an incorrect date. We apologise, it was a typographical error. We have written and corrected that in response to this question. The answer states: Staff identified as potentially redundant were formally notified on 23 June 2011.

The correct date on which staff were notified was 23 June 2010. That correction was provided to the chair.

CHAIR: And circulated.

Senator COLBECK: So the advice to staff of anticipated changes was 17 May, and the actual date of notification was 23 June 2010—that is, the following month?

Dr Clark: Yes.

Senator COLBECK: I want to go to your answer to question on notice B-145. You say in that statement that the employment of one of the relevant whistleblowers ceased on 4 September 2011. The information I have is that the termination date was actually 4 January 2011.

Dr Clark: If you have information, we would be happy to look into that.

Senator COLBECK: My information is that the actual date is 4 January 2011, and the date of 4 September in fact only refers to the date of the final settlement—a very elongated termination payout.

Dr Clark: We would be happy to look into that, if you have further information.

ANSWER

The information provided by Senator Colbeck was correct. The former employee was made redundant on 4 January 2011, not 4 September 2011 as indicated in the original answer. The 4 September 2011 date was the date that the officer in question ceased to receive income maintenance payments from the CSIRO and the error appears to have occurred through a misreading of our payroll system.

The CSIRO wrote to the Chair of the Senate Economics Legislation Committee on 24 October 2012 advising of this error and requesting that it be corrected. In the letter the CSIRO also apologised to the Committee for this mistake.