

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: CSIRO

DEST Question No. E563_05

Senator Carr provided in writing on 16 February 2005.

Question:

Regarding the investigation that Dr Sandland informed the Committee had been undertaken in light of allegations of interference in a tender process for media training:

- (a) Who conducted this investigation?
- (b) Was it undertaken by an external investigator?
- (c) What were the terms of reference of this investigation?
- (d) When was it conducted?
- (e) How many people were interviewed?
- (f) Were records of these discussions kept?
- (g) Was the person who made the initial complaint interviewed?
- (h) If not, why not?
- (i) Was Ms Staunton interviewed?
- (j) Do you believe it to have been a transparent process if the person making the complaint was ignored while others were interviewed?
- (k) Does CSIRO have a separate code governing such processes, or does it use Public service standards?
- (l) Please provide evidence that the inquiry conformed to either of these standards?
- (m) To whom was the final report given?
- (n) On what basis was the report accepted?
- (o) Did the manager with final responsibility for this process inquire whether or not the complainant had been interviewed, and if not, why not?
- (p) Please provide a copy of this report for the Committee.

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Tender Process for Media Training

- a) The Manager of the Media and Communications area, who left CSIRO on 21 December 2004, made one complaint about the media tender process to Donna Staunton (Executive Director Communications) in an email dated 17 December 2004. Ms Staunton immediately referred this matter to her line manager Dr Ron Sandland and asked him to investigate it. Dr Sandland asked a senior staff member in his Office to look into the substance of the allegation.
- b) No.

- c) The allegation of interference was quite specific and there were no written terms of reference. It was quickly established that the firm allegedly being promoted by Donna Staunton had not in fact been shortlisted for interview and would not be part of the panel of preferred suppliers.
- d) Preliminary enquires were made in late December 2004, and these were concluded early in February 2005 when relevant staff had returned from the Christmas break.
- e) The officer investigating the matter spoke to the chairman of the tender committee and staff members who were responsible for preparing documentation related to the tender. Working documents which were part of the tender process were also examined.
- f) There were no detailed records kept of these discussions.
- g) No, there was one quite specific complaint raised in relation to the tender process.
- h) The staff member who had made the allegation in the email dated 17 December 2004 left CSIRO on 21 December 2004.
- i) Yes.
- j) Yes, we believe it to have been a transparent process.
- k) Any allegations of improper behaviour by a staff member within CSIRO are to be initially considered by that person's supervisor. In the situation where the supervisor is the subject of complaint the matter is referred to the next level manager for consideration. This was the process in this case and, in fact, the complaint was referred by Ms Staunton to Dr Sandland as the individual had not raised it with anyone other than Ms Staunton.
- l) See (k) above.
- m) A verbal report was given to Dr Sandland on 18 February 2005.
- n) There was no evidence that any tender applicants had been advantaged or disadvantaged through the process and there was no evidence to support the allegation made in the email to Ms Staunton. There was no formal complaint other than this email. However, the investigation did reveal some clerical deficiencies in the documentation prepared and supervised by the staff member who made the allegation. The clerical deficiencies were rectified.
- o) See (h) above.
- p) See (m) above.