

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: CSIRO

DEST Question No. E838_05

Senator Stott Despoja provided in writing.

Question:

CSIRO – Media Tender Process

During the investigation of Ms Staunton's comments to Mr Abjorensen regarding the tendering for media training, was any evidence found that supported Mr Abjorensen's concerns?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Tender for media training

The investigation did not support the allegation made by Mr Abjorensen that Ms Staunton had inappropriately instructed him to "get (name deleted) on board, whatever it takes in the media training tender process".

Members of the tender committee (note Mr Abjorensen was not a member of the committee) reported that they were never spoken to by Ms Staunton nor asked by anyone else (including Mr Abjorensen) to give any special consideration to any of the tender applicants. There was no evidence that any of the tender applicants had been advantaged through the tender process.

Ms Staunton believes that Mr Abjorensen must have misconstrued her request to him (as the officer responsible for overseeing the tender process) to make sure that the company in question was advised about the tender. Ms Staunton made this request because she felt that the company had some positive skills to offer CSIRO and that she wanted to ensure the committee had the best possible field from which to select a panel. The company in question did lodge a tender application but, following an assessment by the committee against the criteria, was not short-listed for interview.

Informally advising potential applicants about a job or a tender is common and quite appropriate. It can help ensure that there is a pool of suitable applicants from which to choose and also can help ensure that potential applicants did not miss out on applying simply because they did not see the advertisement when published.