

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E234_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

To what extent are findings from CSIRO research incorporated, either directly or indirectly, into submissions to such Committees from:

- a) The Wentworth Group,
- b) The Institute of Public Affairs, and
- c) WWF Australia?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

- a) The Wentworth Group was a partnership of concerned scientists that was formed under the umbrella of WWF Australia. Several of the scientists involved as members of the group in 2002-2003 were CSIRO staff. These included Dr John Williams, former Chief of CSIRO Land and Water; Dr Steve Morton, Group Executive, CSIRO Natural Resources and Environment Group, and formerly Chief of CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems; and Dr Mike Young, Director of CSIRO Land and Water's Policy and Economic Research Unit.

Consequently, the Wentworth Group's submissions and reports reflect CSIRO's research findings to a considerable degree.

As CSIRO's research findings are documented and are publicly available independently of the Wentworth Group's activities, it is difficult to identify the extent to which CSIRO's research has influenced policy through the Wentworth Group or through the usual processes that CSIRO follows. For example:

- The Wentworth Group's recommendations to the NSW Government on land clearing arise to some extent from extensive research undertaken and published by Mike Young and Carl Binning while working at CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology during the 1990s.
 - Recommendation 10 of the recent report by the House of Representative Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – *Getting Water Right(s): The future of rural Australia* – recommends the use of the Robust Separation model developed by CSIRO Land and Water scientists Mike Young and Jim McColl, and also supported by the Wentworth Group.
- b) To the best of CSIRO's knowledge, CSIRO research findings have not been incorporated directly into submissions from the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). However, CSIRO research findings are frequently referred to by the IPA, and often contested by the IPA.

The IPA may have incorporated CSIRO findings indirectly into its submissions by referring to our published work, as is the right of any person or organisation when publication of work places it in the public domain. CSIRO is not in a position to quantify any such indirect use in submissions to inquiries by the IPA.

- c) WWF Australia has directly used CSIRO research findings in submissions from the Wentworth Group, because, as noted above, some CSIRO staff were directly involved in that group during 2002 and 2003.

To the best of our knowledge, CSIRO's findings have not been directly incorporated into other WWF submissions. As in the case of the IPA, WWF Australia may well have incorporated CSIRO findings indirectly into other submissions by referring to published CSIRO work, but CSIRO is not in a position to quantify any such indirect use in submissions to inquiries by WWF Australia.