

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E245_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

1. Dr Lonsdale of CSIRO indicates in a conference paper that “we increasingly find dialogue with regulators, stakeholders, and the public is likely to be more fruitful...failures in risk communication can be costly...Good risk communication is probably just as important as risk assessment and risk management, and we must take primary responsibility for it if our work is to be accepted by society.” (242) Indeed the Ecological Implications project included a number of commitments for public work – workshops, flyers, briefings and consultations.
Could you please detail the public work that has occurred in relation to this project?
2. Was public work that was committed to did not occur and if not, why not?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Ecological Implications of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) project

1. At the commencement of the program in July 2000, CSIRO issued a press release and had an array of interviews with the press and radio during the following week.

Dr Lonsdale carried out a series of public talks during the period, including:

- Public lecture at CSIRO Discovery Centre, Canberra, September 2000
- Presentation to NZ Royal Commission, February 2001
- Presentation at the South Australian Farmers Federation, Adelaide, March 2001
- Presentation and debate on ABC talkback radio at Launceston, June 2001
- Presentation to ANZECC in Darwin, July 2001
- Presentation to community forum Dubbo, August 2001
- Presentation to OECD forum Raleigh NC, December 2001
- Presentation to community forum Darwin, March 2003

(This list is not exhaustive and does not include all scientific talks given.)

In addition, CSIRO organised workshops on GMO risk assessment for regulators and policy makers, and gave briefings for parliamentarians on request.

2. A considerable effort was made in public outreach but then declined commensurate with the reduced quantum of external funding obtained.