

**EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING**

**SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING**

**Outcome:** CSIRO  
**Output Group:** CSIRO

**DEST Question No. E190\_06**

Senator Carr provided in writing.

**Question:**

LOPTEx

- a) When did the CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Division patent the technology for the LOPTEx sorter, a unit for detecting and rejecting contaminated fibres in the spinning mill?
- b) Internet references suggest that by 2000 at least 50 LOPTEx systems had been licensed and were in operation. How many such systems had been licensed by the end of 2004?
- c) How much has this system earned CSIRO in royalties since its first release? Is it one of the largest royalty earners for CSIRO?  
What organisations provided the research funding for the LOPTEx system?  
How much of that funding was external?  
How much was internal funding?
- d) Who have been the principal acquirers of the LOPTEx system? (What sort of factories or mills?)
- e) What publicity has CSIRO given to this research success?  
How many press releases are there?  
How many articles has CSIRO placed or promoted on this invention?
- f) What mention is there of this invention or its commercial success on the CSIRO web site or the Textile and Fibre Technologies web site?

**Answer:**

CSIRO has provided the following response.

*LOPTEx commercialisation– CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology*

- (a) The provisional patent for the SiroSorter technology (now commercially known as the LOPTEx Sorter) was lodged by CSIRO in August 1987.
- (b) In 1996, CSIRO, Australian Wool Research and Promotion Organisation (AWRAP) and LOPTEx signed a development and licence agreement. Under this agreement LOPTEx is responsible for bringing the technology to market and the costs associated with this. Information regarding the specific number of units sold is commercial in confidence to LOPTEx.
- (c) AWRAP and CSIRO jointly provided the R&D funding (50:50) for the development of this technology. Since the development and licence agreement was signed in 1996,

LOPTEx has further developed this technology. The LOPTEx licence agreement has returned royalties to both CSIRO and AWRAP (now Australian Wool Innovation Ltd) as joint owners of the technology. It is a significant royalty earner for the division of Textile and Fibre Technology. The monetary value of the royalties received by CSIRO and AWI is commercial-in-confidence information to LOPTEx, AWI and CSIRO.

- (d) The main acquirers of this technology have been cotton spinning mills.
- (e) At the time of its development through to the signing of the licence agreement with LOPTEx, this technology was presented in several CSIRO publications and papers. There is also detailed reference to the technology in the book "From Fleece to Fabric: 50 years of Wool Textile Research" by V. A. Williams, CSIRO: Wool Technology, 1998, a publication which is still widely distributed. In this reference, full acknowledgement is given to the inventors Grahame Abbott and others. All those who played a role in the development of Siroorter are listed.

The technology was written up in the Research Results section of CSIRO's 1996/97 Annual Report.

It is the licensee's responsibility to market its licensed technology in the best way it decides to ensure sales of the technology.

- (f) The CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology web site, which was built in 1999 - 2000, generally has achievements listed and described from those dates onwards.

Senior divisional staff members frequently give a presentation to industry clients (titled *CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Divisional Capabilities*). The presentation includes a number of notable "Case Studies" in which CSIRO has been presented with a problem and has found a solution and commercialised the technology. Siroorter is one of the case studies that is used.