

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

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

#### DEST Question No. E201\_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

Please provide full details of all other cases where CSIRO has relinquished to individual staff members IP rights to research that the organisation had paid for or which had been undertaken under its auspices?

#### Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

#### *Relinquishment of IP to individual staff*

CSIRO has surveyed its Divisions for any cases where CSIRO has relinquished IP rights to individual staff members over the past 5 year time period. The following five cases have been reported.

#### 1. Assignment of the "DOS PATN" software package.

This software package was developed in the then Division of Wildlife & Ecology to extract and display patterns in any type of complex (multivariate) data. Development of this software commenced in 1984 and continued throughout the '80s and '90s. CSIRO licensed the software package to a number of users, under standard User Licence Agreements, for a standard fee. When the staff member involved in developing the software left CSIRO, the Division no longer had the expertise to provide system support or update the software package. Furthermore, the cost of administering licenses to the software package was greater than the return being received by CSIRO. In view of these factors, the Division took the decision in August 2003 to assign the software to the former staff member to permit the software to continue to be supported.

#### 2. Licence of Ecosystem Function Analysis (EFA).

The technology was developed by the Division of Wildlife & Ecology and subsequently Sustainable Ecosystems. EFA is a fast, rigorous method of monitoring landscapes to assess stress or disturbance. CSIRO had provided training in the use of EFA to organisations such as mining companies and environmental protection agencies. While the Sustainable Ecosystems Division continues to use the EFA technology in its research and also sells the Landscape Function Analysis Manual through its web site, it decided that continuing to provide training courses was not a strategic priority. Therefore, in December 2003, CSIRO licensed to a former staff member rights to use the technology specifically for the purposes of providing training courses in EFA for a period of 5 years.

### 3. Assignment of ED, PD and Habitat software.

The ED, PD and Habitat software packages were developed in CSIRO's Wildlife & Ecology division before 1996. No further development of these software packages was conducted after this date. The Division made a decision that, as the software had not undergone development since 1996; and there was no continuing value in the software to the Division, the software could be assigned to a staff member who was about to retire and who had requested access to the software in order to undertake further research. This assignment occurred in April 2005.

### 4. Licence of data

CSIRO has agreed to provide a license to relevant data to two researchers who, due to changes in the division's research priorities, will soon cease working for CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems. Both researchers plan to continue their work as consultants. The data that is being licensed comprises published data that was generated in the 1980s and 1990s; data from collaborative and contract research projects with external partners that have been completed recently; and data from existing collaborative research projects that will be terminated at 30th June 2005. The licenses will be permanent, non-exclusive and royalty-free for research and development and educational purposes.

### 5. Assignment of software

In February 2000, the Division of Mathematical and Information Sciences assigned rights to some highly specialised software, together with some associated obligations to provide future support to existing users, to a staff member who was leaving CSIRO. Prior to this, CSIRO had been unsuccessful in its attempts to interest major statistical software players in incorporating the software into their packages. Further, an internal report on the technical quality of the software and associated investigations indicated that the cost of upgrading the user interface to permit successful commercialisation would be much greater than the likely long-term income from the product. On this basis, a judgement was made that it was not commercially prospective for CSIRO to conduct further licensing or sales of the software.