

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E530_04

Senator Carr asked on 5 November 2003.

Question:

In Appendix One, the Annual Report lists members of the Sector Advisory Councils,

They make up an illustrious list: senior bureaucrats, academics and researchers, nearly 50 businessmen and women, and representatives from at least 14 peak employer or business organisations.

- a) Why are there no trade unionists? Don't you think that the ACTU has anything relevant to say about our research future, whereas the Australian Industry Group or the Australian Aluminium Council does?
- b) Who determines membership of these Councils?
- c) For how long are members appointed?
- d) Why is this apartheid against trade unions being practiced?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Sector Advisory Councils

- a) Sector Advisory Councils (SACs) provide advice to the CSIRO Board and management. Their role is:
 - to advise CSIRO on the high-level strategic directions for R&D for the appropriate Sector;
 - to act as high-level advocates for CSIRO, and
 - to assist in evaluating performance against planned outcomes.

Consistent with this role, and the terms of reference and membership policy (see below), Sector Leaders, in consultation with divisional Chiefs in the Sector, the relevant Executive Chair and the Sector Advisory Council Chair, issue invitations to prospective members, taking into account the specific expertise and knowledge that the Council requires. In making these invitations, there are no restrictions on who the Sector Leader can approach.

The **terms of reference** for CSIRO Sector Advisory Councils are as follows:

- By understanding CSIRO's objectives and capabilities and Sector and national priorities, provide high-level guidance about how Divisions serving the Sector might best contribute to these larger priorities.
- Contribute to the setting of longer-term strategic directions and the making of strategic investment decisions by Divisions serving the Sector.
- Provide advice on the business and technical needs of customers and how the work of the Divisions serving the Sector can be better aligned with customers.
- Use their understanding of CSIRO's mandate and capabilities to act as advocates for CSIRO in various forums.
- Assist in reviewing progress towards planned outcomes of the Sector Plan, including the methods and effectiveness of marketing, technology transfer and commercialisation strategies, and suggest improvements.
- Establish ad hoc working groups of SAC members, CSIRO officers and co-opted experts to examine critical strategic issues from the Sector and, via the Sector Leader, communicate these findings to the Chief Executive.
- When requested by the Chief Executive, establish a standing sub-committee to assist with the strategic management and performance of a Flagship Project.

The **membership policy** of CSIRO Sector Advisory Councils is:

- The principal criteria for invitation and selection for membership of CSIRO Sector Advisory Councils will be the potential to participate and contribute to the role and objectives of the Council, based on experience and expertise rather than representation of a particular body or interest. It would therefore be inappropriate for members to nominate proxies or alternates for meetings.
 - Whilst recognising the principal criteria (above), selection will also seek to achieve balance, including between genders, between the private and public sectors, and regional distribution. The selection process is carried out by each Sector Leader in consultation with all Chiefs in the sector, the Executive Chair and the SAC Chair.
 - Normal term of appointment to the Council will be for three years. To ensure continuity of membership, the initial appointments will be staggered for 2, 3, or 4 years. Subsequent appointments will be for three years.
 - The Chair of the Council will be a member of the Council and will be appointed to that position by the CSIRO Board for a two year term.
 - Membership of the Chair of the Council may be terminated by the member or by the CSIRO Board on the advice of the Chief Executive or Executive Chair. Replacement would be on the same basis as appointment.
 - Membership of other members may be terminated by the member or by the Chief Executive or Executive Chair. Replacement would be on the same basis as appointment.
 - Council members will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in carrying out their tasks. Council members who are self-employed will be paid sitting fees at the rate determined for such positions by the Remuneration Tribunal.
- b) Each Sector Leader, in consultation with all Chiefs in the sector, the relevant Executive Chair and the Sector Advisory Council Chair.
- c) The normal appointment term is for three years.
- d) See response to (a) above.