

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E614_04

Senator Carr asked on 5 November 2003.

Question:

- a) Figure 4, on page 40 of the current Annual Report, shows that the number of refereed articles, papers, books and chapters has yet to recover from the slash and burn actions of the Government in 1997. Is this a worry to you?
- b) Although such publications are still running at 5-6% below 1997 levels, I see that what are called client reports have grown by nearly 50% in the same period. Is "client report" a polite term for a consultancy report?
- c) Are these refereed?
- d) What is the average time spent on such a report?
- e) What do your calculations tell you about the average time spent by CSIRO researchers on consultancy work?

Answer:

CSIRO has provided the following response.

Publications and reports

- a) The number of refereed papers has fallen by 5.5 percent since 1997, mainly due to a decrease in the number of conference papers and technical reports, with journal articles, books and chapters having increased. It should be noted, however, that the numbers for calendar year 2002 are up 9.4 percent over 2001. The number of patents has increased 16 percent in this time (i.e. since 1997), while client reports have grown by 48% over this same period.

CSIRO's publication reputation remains healthy and the organisation "punches above its weight" in terms of the impact of its publications. Data from the Institute for Scientific Information shows CSIRO ranks in the top one percent of scientific institutions in the world on the basis of rates of citation in 12 of 22 disciplinary areas.

- b) No - In some cases client reports are prepared as part of a consultancy, but in many cases these reports relate to co investment activities.
- c) Confidentiality restrictions generally mean that Client Reports cannot be sent outside CSIRO for independent refereeing, but a senior CSIRO Group or Program Manager will, in most cases, read and approve the report prior to its being sent to the client. The detailed process used depends on the nature of the report and the type of work being performed.

- d) The time spent on client reports varies widely according to the size and scope of the project.
- e) Around 9% percent of revenue in 2002/03 was gained from consultancy work. The amount of time that is spent by researchers on this type of work is very variable. Some researchers spend large portions of their time on consulting work, whilst others spend hardly any time at all on such activities.