

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into the Office of the Chief Scientist

Submission no: 9

Received: 04/06/2004

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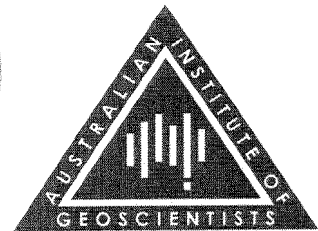
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Supporting Geoscientists

4 June 2004

Inquiry into the Office of the Chief Scientist Submission by the Australian Institute of Geoscientists

The Australian Institute of Geoscientists (AIG) is a professional institute specifically representing the interests of geoscientists (primarily geologists, geophysicists and allied professionals) employed in all sectors of industry, government, education and research throughout Australia. The Institute represents more than 1300 members throughout Australia.

AIG strongly supports the Office of the Chief Scientist in the role of providing the Parliament with independent scientific advice. The provision of appropriate and informed advice to both Members of the House of Representatives and Senators as playing a critical role in the development of Australia's scientific capabilities, the direction and commercialisation of research, and establishing priorities for policy development in a wide range of fields, amongst which natural resource management is of particular interest to our members.

AIG believes that the independence of the Office of the Chief Scientist requires the Chief Scientist to be a full-time appointment.

The appointment of the Chief Scientist should be for a fixed term of three years with the option of a single renewal. We believe that this would help to promote qualified scientists to the role on a regular basis, bringing current and diverse opinions and experience to the role.

During an appointment as Chief Scientist, the incumbent should hold no positions with other organisations, apart from not-for-profit professional institutes or learned societies whose role includes the advancement of science in Australia.

The Chief Scientist should be an Australian citizen, recruited from industry, to provide a balance with advice provided through other channels by academia and government organisations such as CSIRO.

We support the development of legislation to formalise criteria for the selection and appointment of the Chief Scientist that incorporates measures to promote the independence of the role.

Andrew Waltho
President
The Australian Institute of Geoscientists