

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into the Office of the Chief Scientist

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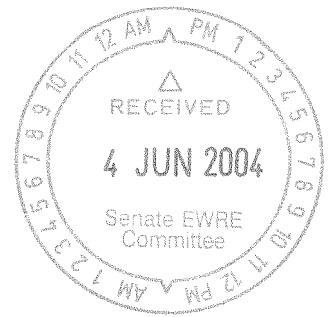
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INQUIRY INTO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SCIENTIST

I write in support of the role of the Chief Scientist. This position has played a vital role in developing Australia's research agenda to ensure that we remain an innovative and prosperous society. Robin Batterham has fulfilled this role with international distinction and has worked tirelessly and unselfishly during his tenure.

I have worked with Robin on a number of high level Boards and Committees and he has always displayed the utmost propriety in any situation where it could be perceived that he might have a conflict of interest. He is a man of principle and I have the highest regard for his integrity.

It has been distressing to witness the personal vilification of someone who has given such service to his country. Australia needs people of Robin's calibre to be active in public life. We are a small country with a limited pool of talent and often we require talented people to assume multiple leadership roles. Australia has been well served by someone of Robin's intellect and drive. Like many Australian leaders who have taken on the mantle of public service while continuing in his corporate position has been acutely aware of potential conflict of interest situations. He has handled these in a scrupulously professional way. If we lose the services of individuals like Robin Batterham by insisting that the role of Chief Scientist is only filled by someone who is not actively engaged in research, we will be the poorer.

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