



Cuts hurt... CSIRO

The CSIRO Staff Association has slammed a management plan to introduce budget and staffing cuts across the nation's premier science research organisation.

In an email to staff, Chief Executive Dr Megan Clark said that deteriorating revenues would require management to make deep cuts to science research and operations over the next twelve months; likely to result in the loss of more than 200 jobs from the 6,500 strong workforce.

CSIRO Staff Association Secretary Sam Popovski said that the union was concerned that the organisation's capacity would be seriously damaged.

"The union will be fighting to protect as many scientists and jobs in CSIRO as we can."

Mr Popovski said that the Staff Association would work at all levels to:

- minimise the number of involuntary redundancies
- ensure that voluntary redundancy substitution and redeployment processes occur
- enforce consultation provisions and entitlements contained in the CSIRO Enterprise Agreement (EA)

- scrutinise potential savings, such as CSIRO's contractor and consultant expenses and
- ensure all members are treated fairly and respectfully.

Mr Popovski said that CSIRO's significant and far reaching contribution to national prosperity might be threatened.

"This is science in service of the national interest. Australia's standing as the clever country will be affected - in one way or another - by these cuts to CSIRO."

The fact that the CSIRO's budget was in such bad shape - only halfway through a four year funding agreement with the Government was very concerning, Mr Popovski said

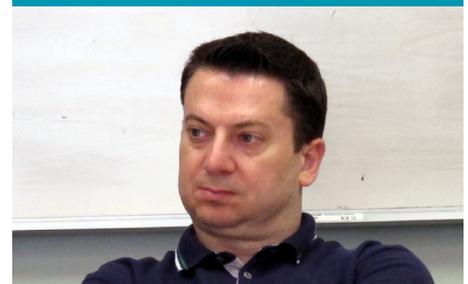
"We think there needs to be a reassessment of the funding model for CSIRO.

"The Staff Association has had an urgent meeting with Science and Research Minister Don Farrell to voice the concerns of our members directly to Government," Mr Popovski said.

"It's obviously not sustainable that year upon year there are job cuts coming through into significant research areas," he said.



Not happy, Megan: CSIRO Chief Executive Megan Clark (above) and Staff Association Secretary Sam Popovski



Mr Popovski also expressed fears that further cuts may be on the cards if September's Federal Election results in a change of Government.

"The Staff Association is also deeply concerned at the cuts promised by the Coalition - at least 12,000 public sector jobs and anywhere between \$50-70 billion in funding - and the potential impact on CSIRO, should Tony Abbott win Government later this year, he said.

Members will be provided with regular updates on job cuts and redundancy process.

Where will the cuts will hurt the most?

Briefings with the majority of Divisional Chiefs and HR at this stage have provided the following information on potential FTE job loss numbers.

Note the numbers are approximate, subject to change and may be reduced through mitigation processes such as redeployment.

Where areas of CSIRO are not specified below, further information and confirmation will be sought by the Staff Association.

CMAR	50
<i>(25 redundancies and 25 term employment cessation/other attrition)</i>	
CPSE	up to 35
CESRE	10 - 20
CES	30
<i>(15 redundancies and 15 term employment cessation/other attrition)</i>	
CMSE	30 - 35
PI	4 - 7
CET	6 - 9
CAFHS	45 - 50

CLW	40-45
<i>(up to half this number may be term employment cessation/other attrition)</i>	
CASS	
<i>(minimal impact apart from Tidbinbilla site)</i>	
CMIS/ICT	up to 5
Property	up to 6
Finance	10 - 15
<i>(with creation of 11 new CSOF 2s in a new declassified structure)</i>	

FULL COVERAGE INSIDE

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- Who's afraid of Big Society?
- Know your rights - special guide

Budget bounce?

There was some positive news on the funding front for CSIRO in the Federal Budget. In addition to the increase in base appropriation funding of \$11.1m - consistent with the Quadrennial Funding Agreement - CSIRO will receive additional funding to progress with the development of two Global Precincts in Clayton and Black Mountain. The Budget also provides funding for CSIRO to operate the Marine National Facility and conduct sea trials of the new research vessel *Investigator*.

Yes, Minister

A warm welcome on behalf of CSIRO Staff Association to the new Minister for Science and Research, Senator Don Farrell. Minister Farrell took over the job in March following the resignation from the Ministry of Chris Bowen MP. Staff Association President Dr Michael Borgas and Secretary Sam Popovski will meet with Minister Farrell in Canberra this month to discuss jobs and funding cuts in CSIRO and the *Science Integrity Charter* initiative for Federal Public Sector science organisations.

Scholarships now open

Did you know the Staff Association awards up to seven scholarships to members each year? These include the long standing John Little (Study) Scholarship, and our two new scholarships created in 2012, Women in Science and Community Citizenship.

Open to all financial members of the CSIRO Staff Association, applications close on 31 May 2013. Visit the website for eligibility and application information. Last year's winners include Jenny Hayward (Women in Science Scholarship), a research scientist in the Energy Transformed Flagship in Newcastle (NSW) and Ali Green (John Little Study Scholarship) from Clayton in Victoria, the PA to the Computational and Mathematical Modelling Program Leader and the Government and Commercial Services Theme Leader.

Regional Science score card

We've run the rule over CSIRO management's response to the Regional Sites Review recommendations and the results are underwhelming, to say the least. Of the ten key recommendations, Staff Association activists in regional sites could only award one pass mark - management's response failed to pass muster for the remaining nine. It is clear from the feedback from sites that 'vibrancy' has not been achieved and in the coming weeks delegates and activists will be visibly campaigning in support of regional science - Keep an eye out for the green postcards. For more information email jeff.carig@cpsu.org.au

CSIRO mourns helicopter crash victims



Photo: News Limited

The tragic deaths of four retired CSIRO scientists in a helicopter accident in late March has stunned former colleagues and members of the Australian physics community.

Gerry Haddad, Tony Farmer, Don Price and John Dunlop were killed when their Robinson R44 helicopter suddenly crashed and exploded at Bulli Tops, forty minutes south of Sydney.

All four men were recently retired CSIRO veterans and career members of the CPSU and CSIRO Staff Association.

"I was deeply saddened to receive this tragic news," Staff Association Secretary Sam Popovski said.

"Tony, Gerry, Don and John were Staff Association members throughout their careers and I was fortunate enough to have received their advice and guidance over the years.

"Our thoughts and condolences remain with the families, colleagues and friends of these four special men," Mr Popovski said.

Funeral and memorial services for the four close friends were held in Sydney with CSIRO Chief Dr Megan Clark leading the mourners.

Dr Gerry Haddad (71 years old) was the former CSIRO Chief of Industrial Physics. Gerry started work at CSIRO Lindfield in 1982 as a Senior Research Scientist. He was appointed Deputy Chief in 1999 before becoming Chief of Industrial Physics in 2004. Gerry retired from CSIRO in 2007.

Dr Tony Farmer (68) was a CSIRO Fellow and former Deputy Chief of Operations. Tony began his career at CSIRO in 1973, eventually appointed CMSE Deputy Chief of Operations in 2008. He was made an Honorary fellow following his retirement in 2010.

Dr Don Price (67) also was a CSIRO Fellow and former Senior Research Scientist. Son of CSIRO Chair Sir James (Jerry) Price, Don commenced his CSIRO career following the retirement of his father. A solid state physicist, Don was respected as an outstanding theorist and experimentalist. Don was also made an Honorary fellow after retiring from CSIRO in 2009.

Dr John Dunlop (66) was a former Senior Research Scientist. John joined CSIRO in 1976 as Research Scientist with the National Measurement Laboratory. A member of the team that won the Chairman's medal in 2001, John retired from CSIRO in 2008.

The cause of the accident remains undetermined and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau is investigating. However the helicopter model involved - a Robinson R44 Defender - had been the subject of several warnings and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has subsequently grounded all of these helicopters upgraded fuel tanks.

A tribute to celebrate the lives of Gerry, John, Don and Tony will be held on Wednesday, 22 May at CSIRO's Lindfield site in Sydney.

Tribute speeches will commence in the Lehany Theatre at 2 pm followed by light refreshments.

All welcome.

Submissions to Pearce Investigation closing soon

Staff Association members are reminded that submissions to the Pearce Investigation into workplace bullying at CSIRO are due before the end of May.

In February, CSIRO Chief Executive Megan Clark announced the establishment of an independent, external investigation into claims of bullying and unreasonable behaviour by CSIRO employees and affiliates.

Emeritus Professor Dennis Pearce AO has been appointed as the independent investiga-

tor and is being assisted by an investigation team from HWL Ebsworth Lawyers led by Ms Melanie McKean.

Contact details for the investigation, including links to submission forms and FAQs can be located at www.hwlebsworth.com.au/csiro-investigation.html

Staff Association representatives have met with Professor Pearce and his team and received assurances that all submissions - especially allegations of bullying, harassment

- will be treated seriously with the strictest of confidence.

The investigators have indicated that submissions can expect to receive an individual, formal response to allegations and claims over the course of the enquiry, as well as making a contribution to the overall investigation.

The deadline for submissions to the Pearce Investigation is 27 May 2013.

Big choices ahead for science and society

The premise sounds positive enough: A reformed public sector that encourages greater community involvement, built on volunteering and local decision making, underpinned by open and transparent processes. Just ignore the slightly Orwellian-sounding language.

Big Society. What's not to like?

Championed by the UK's David Cameron and increasingly embraced by Coalition policymakers at home in Australia – Big Society is all the rage when it comes to contemporary reimagining of the public sector from the right-of-centre. Think of it as Compassionate Conservatism for the digital age.

But what is the real-world impact of the Big Society? The bitter realities of the deep public sector cuts currently visited on the UK are well documented. But if you need an example closer to home, look no further than Queensland.

A year on from their thumping election victory, Campbell Newman's LNP Government has begun to flesh out their plans for the Queensland public sector.

Former Federal Treasurer and perennial political bridesmaid Peter Costello was commissioned to conduct an audit of Queensland's public sector – and recommended the privatisation of public assets, relaxation of regulations and the widespread outsourcing of public services.

As with the UK, the results for Queensland may be big, rather than positive.

So what does this all mean for Australian science?

According to the OECD, Australia spends roughly 35 per cent of GDP in the public sphere, across all levels of government. Our larger trade competitors spend much more: Japan (42%), the United States (43%) and Germany (48%) to name a few.

When it comes to government-funded research and development in the public sector, Australia invests 0.27% of GDP.

Again, that places us behind some of the big players such as the United States (0.29%) and Germany (0.35%) but streets ahead of the UK (0.16%).

The figures indicate the continuing support of Australian science by successive Governments; set against the challenging backdrop of a changing economy, diverse ecosystems, massive marine and land territories and a relatively small yet widely dispersed population.

CSIRO is a large and privileged part of the government science system in Australia and often draws the gaze of budget 'razor gangs,' in search of a big, soft target.

The reality is that the proportion of spending on government science - including CSIRO - has not increased in real terms for decades. It's a clear case of funding maintenance rather than investment.

By contrast, science doesn't become any less relevant with the passage of time, quite the opposite. One of the ways our society depends on publically funded science is in the development and regulation of industry and trade.

Take the topical example of Coal Seam Gas. Here is an emerging industry that relies on new research not only to explore and develop but to help draft a social contract. Local communities are also counting on science to protect their lands, health and livelihood.

The financial independence of research – via arm's length of government funding – is important to maintaining credibility and confidence, protecting the public good from private interest.



Tony Abbott (Photo: Fairfax)

Not all would have it this way. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) – free market think tank and conservative policy incubator – would prefer to see Government out of the science game altogether.

In an article last August (devoid of Big Society sugar coating) the IPA exhorted Federal Coalition leader Tony Abbott to pursue 75 policies designed to transform Australia.

“Recommendation 72. Privatising the CSIRO.”

There's been no response from Mr Abbott concerning Recommendation 72, specifically. However, in a speech at the recent IPA birthday dinner, the Opposition Leader identified twelve areas from the list of 75 that a Coalition Government would support.

The man famous for making a political virtue out of saying no crowed: “So, ladies and gentlemen, that's a big fat YES to many of the 75 specific policies you urged upon me.”

The current internal funding and staff cuts at CSIRO – seeming largely in response to a collapse in external earnings – has also served to throw the public funding issue into sharp relief.

There is a clear role for government in providing science functions in modern society, particularly when that society gets bigger with increasing demands on resources.

For the past year the Staff Association and CPSU has been advocating for a broad *Science Integrity Charter* which seeks to help make government science more open and transparent where possible, independent of commercial and political bias, and resourced for quality and soundness.

In some respects our *Science Integrity Charter* is an anathema to those cheering Big Society – simply more Government red tape instead of responsible industries engaged in noble self regulation.

And yet when it comes to trust, the public favours researchers – and public servants for that matter – far ahead of business executives, corporate CEOs and advertisers.

Populations of modern states may want more participation and local decision making – a sentiment that Big Society seeks to tap into - but they also want trusted science, free from commercial, political and ideological pressures - and common sense suggests a key role for government science.

A bigger society may be inevitable, but it will be a poorer society if government science in Australia were massively cut back or misdirected by vested interests.

Dr Michael Borgas is the President of CSIRO Staff Association

Staff Association to challenge Finance 'restructure'

A management plan to restructure CSIRO's Finance Business Unit will result in job losses and stunt career development, the Staff Association has warned.

The detailed plan - complete with a detailed organisational chart mapping the changes - was sprung on Finance staff earlier this month without prior consultation, said Staff Association National Organiser Paul Girdler.

“The plan identifies fifteen positions to be made redundant but our reading of the restructure documents suggests that many more will be affected - specifically the career paths of remaining staff who will be subject to a reduced classification profile,” Mr Girdler said.

“The Staff Association is of the view that the lack of consultation has denied staff a genuine opportunity to influence the decision or propose alternative options,” he said.

Mr Girdler said that the Staff Association had little choice other than to notify a dispute on behalf of Finance members.

Past public statements by CSIRO management concerning the future of the unit only added to the confusion, Mr Girdler said.

“Part of the reason offered for these proposed changes is that it's all part of the post implementation review of the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) report of the Finance functions,” Mr Girdler said.

“Little over a year ago after PWC report broke, CFO Bennett made a commitment that substantive levels for all staff would be maintained and no reductions to staffing numbers would be made as a result of the review.

“Clearly that commitment has been broken,” Mr Girdler said.

Mr Girdler said that he had requested a meeting with CEO Megan Clark to resolve this dispute, but if that proved unsuccessful the Staff Association may seek to refer to the independent umpire, Fair Work Australia.

Know your rights

In response to recent requests, we examine three relevant areas of CSIRO employee's rights: Consultation, Redeployment and Retrenchment

Consultation

Section 57
CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014

Consultation facilitates informed decision making, and provides officers and their representatives - such as Staff Association delegates - with the opportunity to influence the decision maker. While the consultation process does not represent joint decision making or constrain management's prerogative to make decisions, consultation should afford staff and representatives a genuine opportunity to influence the decision maker.

Consultation must occur at two distinct stages. The first is where initiatives or proposals have implications for the employment of staff or the way work is performed, CSIRO shall consult with affected officers and their representatives.

The second stage is where CSIRO has made a definite decision to introduce a major change to production, program, organisation, structure or technology and the change is likely to have a significant effect on officers. In this circumstance, consultation shall occur before the major change is introduced.

Consultation may take many forms but regular meetings are encouraged to provide an avenue for sharing information, receiving feedback, generating ideas and resolving workplace issues in an environment of cooperation and trust.

Under the provisions of the disputes settlement provisions of the agreement the parties must first try and resolve the dispute at the workplace level. If this does not resolve the issue, the matter may be referred to Fair Work Australia.

Redeployment

Schedule 3
CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014

Most employees have a right to redeployment if CSIRO deems the position potentially redundant. However, redeployment rights do not apply for probationary or casual employees. Separate provisions apply for specified term employees.

An officer can be deemed potentially redundant if a) the officer is included in a group of officers, which group comprises a greater number of officers than is necessary for the efficient and economic working of CSIRO; b) the services of the officer cannot be effectively used because of technological, structural or other changes in the nature, extent or organisation of the functions of CSIRO; or b) the duties of the officer are to be performed in a different city and the officer is not willing to perform duties at that city

Voluntary Redundancy Substitution (VRS) can apply where no suitable redeployment opportunities are identified an officer who is potentially redundant exchanges positions with another officer who will not contest redundancy. Substitution will however only be approved where CSIRO determines that the skills of both individuals are a close match and there will be no adverse impact to ongoing work requirements.

CSIRO management is bound to provide potentially redundant officers with comprehensive information concerning redundancy procedures and available assistance. Employees who are members of the Staff Association are entitled to union representation throughout the process. For more information, members should contact their local workplace delegate or Staff Association organiser.

Retrenchment

Section 57
CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014

CSIRO is obligated to consider Voluntary Redundancy Substitution and seek redeployment for potentially redundant officers. Where there are no apparent redeployment opportunities and redundancy is to proceed, the officer will first be advised in writing. This notification will detail the various options in terms of the timing of termination and the relevant benefits.

This notification shall provide formal notice of five weeks (or nine weeks in the case of officers over 67) which will commence 4 weeks from the date of the formal written notification. Upon request, CSIRO will fund up to two visits to a nominated service to obtain job seeking skills, career assessment and planning and CV preparation. CSIRO will also fund one visit to a mutually agreed financial advisor.

Fast track: If an officer does not contest redundancy and agrees to a termination date that is within 10 working days of the receipt of formal advice the officer shall be paid the equivalent of 8 weeks pay in addition to their termination benefit (lump sum or income maintenance payments). During the ten day period officers who 'fast track' must also provide formal advice as to their preferred termination benefit option.

Slow track: Officers who choose to 'slow track' and remain beyond the 10 days following the receipt of their formal written notification, will receive, in addition to the lump sum or income maintenance benefit (where applicable), the remainder of the formal notice period. During the notice period the officer will continue to be eligible for redeployment within CSIRO. Employment will end at the completion of the notice period if the officer remains excess to CSIRO's requirements.