

Federal Election 2016 – Political Parties

What are the positions of the political parties on CSIRO going into the election campaign?

THE COALITION

In late 2015, the Turnbull Coalition Government launched a National Innovation and Science Agenda that included measures involving CSIRO, including contributing to a \$200 million innovation fund. However in terms of direct appropriation increases, CSIRO is set to receive a mere \$20 million to expand research commercialisation. The damage of 2014's infamous \$115 million budget cut remains unrepaired.

Prior to the start of the election campaign, CSIRO Staff Association wrote to Science Minister Christopher Pyne, requesting that the Minister direct CSIRO to suspend Larry Marshall's proposed job cuts until after the federal election and immediately commission an independent inquiry into CSIRO's corporate management function, structure and processes.

The Minister effectively declined to respond the Staff Association, citing the ongoing dispute over job cuts at the Fair Work Commission. However in media statements as well as responses to individual correspondence, the Minister has declared that decisions about staffing are a matter for CSIRO. There has been no mention of any corporate review.

LABOR

Labor has committed to investing \$250 million in CSIRO to repair the organisation's finances and ensure the future of key national scientific infrastructure like "The Dish" at Parkes and the *RV Investigator*.

In a joint press statement, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Science spokesperson Senator Kim Carr committed "a Shorten Labor Government (to) restore CSIRO's capacity to drive the national science, research and innovation agenda that will grow new industries and build a smarter Australia."

This \$250 million commitment is in addition to \$50 million promised to CSIRO to boost research aimed at protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Concerning a review into the CSIRO Executive, Senator Carr said in an interview with the ABC that "a Shorten Labor Government ... will commission an independent review of CSIRO's corporate structure, management and functions."

THE GREENS

Prior to the election, The Greens criticised the Coalition Government's 2014 funding cuts and have opposed Dr Marshall's plans to slash more jobs at CSIRO.

The Greens have released a research election policy that aims to increase Australia's investment in research and innovation to 4 per cent of GDP. This includes an increase in funding to CSIRO.

"The Greens want to see new leadership at the CSIRO and would restore government funding to prevent current and future job cuts. The Greens will invest an additional \$306.5 million over the forward estimates in the CSIRO," the policy states.

The party has also called for the CSIRO Board to reject the contract extension of Chief Executive Larry Marshall.

NICK XENOPHON TEAM

Prior to the election, Senator Nick Xenophon has been critical of CSIRO cuts, particularly those that affect research in South Australia.

NXT policy principles on Innovation, Technology and R&D include the aim to 'revitalise Australia's economic outlook by strategically growing the innovation and technology sectors.'



CSIRO STAFF
ASSOCIATION

A section of the CPSU

Join the CSIRO Staff Association today

visit www.cpsu-csiro.org.au for more information