

CSIRO Staff Association

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A section of the Community and Public Sector Union



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Professor Doug Hilton

CSIRO Chief Executive

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By email : doug.hilton@csiro.au

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Dear Dr Hilton,

Please accept my warm congratulations at your appointment as CSIRO Chief Executive. I look forward to working with you to advance the interests and wellbeing of CSIRO staff.

Enterprise bargaining - application for exemption (pay proposal) from Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy

I am writing to strongly encourage you to stand up for CSIRO staff and seek an exemption from the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy in order to put forward an improved pay proposal in enterprise bargaining.

CSIRO's circumstances are special and unique. Pay outcomes have fallen far behind comparative research industry salaries; a situation only exacerbated by ten years of federal public sector wage suppression and historically high inflation, making it all too difficult to attract and retain talented staff.

The first pay proposal out forward by Executive bargaining representatives - 11.2 per cent over three years (4% in the first year, followed by 3.8% and 3.4%) has been comprehensively rejected by CSIRO staff.

In a recent poll involving more than fifteen hundred Staff Association members, 81 per cent of recipients rejected the proposal and called on CSIRO Executive to improve the offer.

Executive bargaining representatives have clarified how the Australian Public Sector Commission's (APSC) bargaining policy applies to CSIRO as a Corporate Commonwealth Entity.

However, the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy does allow for the consideration of policy exemptions, albeit in 'exceptional circumstances.'

Paragraph 93 states 'exemptions to the Non-APS Policy will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. An application for exemption must be assessed by the APSC and is subject to endorsement from the portfolio Minister and approval from the Minister for the Public Service.'

The exemption application process was confirmed by the APSC in the Non-APS Bargaining Government Parameters. Changes classified as Category Two – including any salary increase in excess of the three-year, 11.2 per cent pay offer – will 'require an exemption... (and) will be considered in exceptional circumstances.'

I note that contrary to statements reported by Executive bargaining representatives during an all-staff webinar, neither the policy or the parameters mention any limitations or exclusions on exemption applications made by STEM workers in the federal public sector.

On behalf of Staff Association members across the country, I call on you to immediately commence the process of applying for an APSC policy exemption to make an improved pay offer, including initiating discussions with the offices of Science Minister Ed Husic and Public Service Minister Katy Gallagher.

With enterprise agreement negotiations scheduled to continue next week and a Protected Action Ballot of CSIRO Staff Association members currently underway, I would be welcome an opportunity to meet with you in early December to discuss the progress of bargaining progress, with a priority focus on the pay proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Tonks

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