

From: Hilton, Doug (Executive, Clayton)
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:02 PM
To: Hilton, Doug (Executive, Clayton)

Subject: An update on our priorities

Hi everyone,

As I approach my one-year anniversary as Chief Executive of CSIRO, I continue to be inspired by the work all of you are doing to help navigate the profound challenges that confront us as a nation and globally – challenges that you all live and understand, and which are discussed non-stop in our 24-hour news cycle.

As individuals and families, as an organisation and nation, one of the most profound challenges we are facing are these tough economic times. We have global uncertainty, inflationary pressures, increases in the cost of living and softening of markets, coupled with a myriad of calls on public spending.

These economic challenges underscore the need to continue our work in reshaping CSIRO – to ensure we can focus on effectively solving the problems that matter to Australia and Australians, sustainably and in a way that engenders trust and confidence. We're continuing to deliver this change through our three key priorities – our research portfolio, infrastructure, and Enterprise Services (ES) Reform.

ES Reform

CSIRO cannot effectively deliver impactful research without the skills and expertise contained within our ES teams.

Through our ES Reform, we're working to ensure the services that support our research impact are delivered in a simple, efficient and financially sustainable way.

While these changes are essential, I fully appreciate that they are not easy. These changes are affecting people differently and for some they come with a personal cost. This is being felt acutely right now by our ES team members and colleagues.

As we've shared previously, the task ahead is significant. To support CSIRO's financial sustainability, we need to reduce costs across ES by 25 per cent – which is at least \$100M.

Up until now, it has been difficult to quantify this in terms of roles, due to the variety of factors at play. Based on modelling conducted as part of Wave 3, I can now share that the staff impact during Wave 3 of the Reform is likely to be between 375 and 500 roles.

The range reflects several variables, and we will be doing everything possible to minimise staffing impacts. This includes looking for additional savings in our operating budget, term ends where appropriate, natural staff attrition, and in some cases, through voluntary redundancy.

I know this is a confronting reality, but I also firmly believe in transparency.

The scale of these impacts will look different for different units. This will be informed by a broad range of inputs, most importantly, early engagement and consultation with the teams potentially impacted.

This is a difficult time. You can refer to the [MyCSIRO Information Hub](#) for more details about the Reform, including FAQs. Please know that you have support – through your peers, your leaders, and our [support services](#).

Research portfolio

I'd like to acknowledge the significant amount of work happening across the organisation, to help CSIRO shift towards a more holistic approach to managing our research portfolio.

While recent focus has very much been on Programs on a Page, I want to take a step back and reiterate where we want to get to with this work.

We want to get to a position where we invest in R&D simply, transparently, and strategically to solve the problems that matter, and will support a thriving nation that is sustainable, healthy, prosperous and safe.

In doing so, we want to be able to draw on skills, with minimal friction, from across the organisation and system.

We want to be able to tackle major problems at scale and for sufficient time to have a reasonable chance of success.

Most critically, we want a research portfolio, where we balance research that will deliver more predictable incremental benefits with research that is higher risk but has the possibility of changing the world in profound ways.

Infrastructure

This priority is focused on ensuring our infrastructure is sustainable, safe and fit-for-purpose, now, and into the future.

To do this, we are developing a Research and Enabling Infrastructure Plan. Initially we focused on gaining a baseline understanding about the current state of our research and enabling infrastructure, as well as an understanding of domestic and international best practice.

Using the insights gained from the baselining work, we are looking for ways to improve our infrastructure investment decisions to ensure they are being informed by our research portfolio and aligned to our nation's challenges.

It is our people that make CSIRO a place that inspires wonder. Despite these extremely difficult challenges, I admire and respect the almost universal care that you have for each other.

Thank you for your honesty, generosity and commitment to creating a better future – not just for CSIRO, but for Australia and the world around us.

Doug