

CSIRO Staff Association

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A section of the Community and Public Sector Union



20/9/24

Aaron Goninan

CSIRO HSE Director via email aaron.goninan@csiro.au

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Dear Mr Goninan,

I write to advise you that CSIRO staff have raised serious Work Health and Safety concerns with the Staff Association as a direct result of CSIRO's current Enterprise Services (ES) Reform.

It has been reported to the Staff Association that workers are not aware of CSIRO undertaking any kind of Risk Assessment to assess the risks associated with a significant reduction in staff.

The Staff Association would like to work with the CSIRO to ensure compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 is achieved, and that safe systems of work are in place, and identified psychosocial hazards are controlled in an effective manner.

Workers have identified that the considerable reduction in staff will amplify psychosocial hazards already impacting staff, particularly around workloads, workflow and other associated job demands.

Concerningly, with staff already experiencing significant workplace stress, resulting from the current ES Reform workplace change management processes, and with upcoming momentous changes to staffing levels, excessive and unmanageable workloads look set to be the standard. Staff across CSIRO have also been experiencing lengthy periods of uncertainty relating to job security since February 2024.

The absence of structured consideration of the additional psychosocial hazards relating to ES staff cuts will further generate a heightened risk to workers.

Direct and genuine consultation with staff and their representatives on these significant issues needs to take place as a priority.

The decision to reduce the ES workforce, with a staffing loss of up to 500 positions has been followed by a brief and limited assessment process without regard to the psychosocial impacts on both the workers to be made redundant, nor the workers who will remain with CSIRO and expected to maintain the workload.

The impact goes not only to remaining ES staff but also frontline scientists whose workloads, already heavily impacted, will see further unmanageable workload increases.

The Staff Association is unaware of any steps taken by CSIRO to manage psychosocial risks, or implement control measures to manage these risks. The Staff Association respectfully refers CSIRO to Regulation 55D of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011. Specifically, 55(2)(c) and (d) are of importance with significant job losses, as how work is designed will substantially change. CSIRO also holds a duty to review control measures before a change in the workplace (Regulation 38(2)(b)). A reduction in staffing of up to 500 staff across Enterprise Services is a considerable change which is likely to give rise to new and different risks to health and safety.

Further, the Staff Association is not aware of a current or ongoing assessment of the risk or process to eliminate hazards, which is an additional requirement under Regulation 34 – the risks because of these job cuts create reasonably foreseeable hazards.

Consultation, which is required under Section 47, of the WHS Act has been minimal in relation to these specific WHS matters and has not allowed workers to appropriately contribute to the decision making process (as required under Section 48). Consultation must occur for the PCBU when proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of workers in accordance with Section 49.

As the CSIRO continues to progress and make further changes to ES work areas there will be further workload impacts on research programs support that will include essential support services capability for science delivery that will potentially no longer be available.

The Staff Association has strong concerns regarding the high risk to psychological health and safety association with excessive workload demands and any poor change management processes. The Staff Association requests that the CSIRO provides a copy of the Risk Management Framework which will be applied to any risk assessment undertaken to adhere to the above mentioned duties.

The Staff Association requests to meet to discuss CSIRO's Risk Management Framework and it's implementation as a matter of high priority ahead of any implementation of further ES Reform staff changes.

Please note this request to meet and consult on psychological risk management as a result of ES Reform staff changes is separate from the broader ES Consultation process currently in place.

Given the significant impact on staff across Enterprise Services, the Staff Association is requesting a response to this correspondence with a proposed meeting date within 5 business days from receipt of this correspondence.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Tonks

Secretary, CSIRO Staff Association