



Ms Susan Tonks
Secretary, CSIRO Staff Association
Level 3 / 99 William Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000

By email: susan.tonks@cpsu.org.au

Dear Ms Tonks,

CSIRO Staff Association notification of dispute under the CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2023-2026 – Consultation

I write in relation to the above matter and the Staff Association's correspondence dated Wednesday 4 December 2024 and follow up email of 6 December 2024.

Background

CSIRO has undertaken extensive efforts across the organisation and within the relevant ES Units to engage and consult with affected staff throughout the ES Reform Program. This has included:

- Ensuring the Major Change Consultation process has been followed and communicating with staff and leaders about the process in specific information sessions and outlining the steps in the process on CSIRO's Intranet;
- Each of the Partnerships and Business Development, Finance, Strategy, and Business Infrastructure Services ES Units undertook a minimum of two weeks Early Engagement and provided, or are providing, at least three weeks or more for Consultation. This will also be the case for other ES Units scheduled to conclude Consultation this week (Communications and People).

CSIRO also notes the extensive consultation that has occurred to date with staff and the Staff Association regarding the ES Reform Program generally, and the specific workplace changes proposed as part of that Program. As you are aware, CSIRO's consultative approach includes fortnightly meetings with the Staff Association, along with the adoption of the Major Change Consultation Process. Staff and the Staff Association are invited to provide feedback and comments in relation to any proposed workplace changes as part of that process, and this includes feedback relating to any aspects of the process that the Staff Association may believe are not being followed.

Responses to specific matters raised by the Staff Association in its correspondence of 4 December 2024:

CSIRO can provide the following responses to the specific matters raised by the Staff Association in its correspondence. Please be advised that I have sought advice from CSIRO's People Partnering and Industrial Relations Teams in preparing the responses below.

- *"Staff Association members have reported to the union that information provided about the proposed changes is inconsistent and unclear, and information is not being provided to employees and the union to support proper consideration of the proposed change. The CSIRO has not provided the Staff Association with all the relevant details of each proposed restructure."*

- *“The CSIRO has failed to comply with clause 54.3(b) in that all relevant information about the proposed changes has not been provided to the Staff Association, and it is unclear what information has been provided to employees”*

The Staff Association’s assertion is rejected by CSIRO.

CSIRO has provided all relevant information in relation to all ES Unit and workplace change proposals put forward to date. CSIRO understand from the discussion on 5 December 2024, the main area of concern is the proposed changes in CBIS. These are addressed further below and in response to the email of 6 December.

- *“Additionally, the CSIRO has failed to comply with clause 54.3(d) in the case of completed restructurings in that employees and the Staff Association were not advised how the feedback provided was considered in the decision-making process. It is entirely unclear to the Staff Association how the CSIRO has met their obligation under clause 54.3(c) to consider feedback in the decision-making process, given the CSIRO has not advised the union how our members’ feedback was considered”*

The Staff Association’s assertion is rejected by CSIRO.

Several workplace change proposals have followed the Major Change Consultation Process. CSIRO has made significant efforts to provide feedback from these consultation processes and explain how it informed decisions. CSIRO requests more specific information regarding this concern in order to provide a detailed response.

- *“As a consequence of the CSIRO’s failure to provide all relevant information and advise the Staff Association how feedback has been considered, the CSIRO is failing to comply with clause 54.3(a) in so far as employees and unions have not had a genuine opportunity to influence the decision before it is made.”*

The Staff Association’s assertion is rejected by CSIRO. As outlined above, CSIRO maintains it has provided all relevant information to staff and provided information to the Staff Association regarding these processes. In relation to workplace change proposals that have been completed since the Major Change Consultation Process was agreed with the Staff Association, CSIRO rejects any assertion that staff and unions have not had a genuine opportunity to influence the decision before it has been made.

- *“The Staff Association considered the dispute of 16 May 2024 to be resolved on the basis of the agreed major change consultation process. The CSIRO is failing to adhere to this agreed process and failing to meet the requirements of the CSIRO Agreement at clause 54 in the case of both concluded and proposed major changes”*.

The Staff Association’s comment is rejected by CSIRO.

The purpose of the Major Change Consultation Process is to enable staff and the Staff Association to provide feedback in relation to the entirety of the proposed changes. CSIRO has held extensive meetings with the Staff Association regarding ES Reform; to date, the Staff Association have not sought to raise the details contained within the proposals as an item as part of those regular meetings.

Follow up discussion and email of Friday 6 December 2024

By way of responses to the specific requests received by email of 6 December 2024, CSIRO provides the following:

<p><i>Proposed org chart/structure (members report that some staff still had jobs in the chat but had been told they would not have a job prior to the meeting)</i></p>	<p>Proposed organisational structures have been provided for the proposed workplace changes in CBIS.</p> <p>This was included in the pack provided on 3 December 2024 to the Staff Association and in addition, Attachment 1 was also provided to staff which includes further detailed breakdowns.</p> <p>It is unclear which position this is referring to. At no time has any staff member been told “they would not have a job”. Staff have been made aware that they may be potentially impacted if the proposal proceeds. CSIRO would be happy to address this feedback with individuals directly if further specifics can be provided.</p>
<p><i>Details on the scope of the impact, number of impacted roles</i></p>	<p>Impacts were outlined to all CBIS staff in the Town Hall discussion of 14 November 2024 and further information was included in the slide pack including the number of reductions to Executive Manager roles.</p> <p>As outlined in CSIRO’s correspondence of 3 December 2024, CSIRO has also advised the Staff Association of the following:</p> <p><i>The number of staff impacted through potential redundancy or early term ends includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 indefinite roles • 5 specified term roles <p>Attachment 1 has also been provided to all CBIS staff. This document provides more detail on the proposed organisational structures and role impacts.</p>
<p><i>Risk assessments for the proposed changes, including assessment of the WHS impact on staff regarding workload</i></p>	<p>Risk Assessment documentation for the CBIS proposal is available to staff in DoneSafe, consistent with the assessments for other ES Units.</p> <p>A psychosocial risk assessment was undertaken for all CBIS staff and mitigations identified. Executive Managers have been working to ensure staff feel supported and have access to assistance. Workplace change is acknowledged as impactful on staff and CSIRO has provided tools and services for all our staff to access.</p> <p>Following consideration of all feedback and in the implementation of any decision, all leaders will be working with their teams on ensuring appropriate workloads consistent with revised service delivery and adjustments in the services being delivered.</p>
<p><i>Impacts on customers (eg science), impacts on regulatory requirements</i></p>	<p>The proposal for CBIS has been available to all CSIRO staff since 14 November 2024 for review and feedback.</p> <p>Specific information briefings have been held with Research Operations Managers, Research Unit Change Leads and Site Leaders regarding the</p>

	<p>proposals. The Research Unit Leader Forum of all Research Leaders have also been receiving regular updates on all ES Unit change proposals.</p> <p>Feedback from these engagements has been included in the feedback relating to CBIS, to be considered as part of Reform implementation. This information was shared with CBIS staff via an update from CBIS Acting Director, Fiona Rothwell on 29 November 2024.</p>
<p><i>Analysis of the proposed cost reduction (to help workers understand the scale of the proposed reduction/what savings are looking to be achieved)</i></p>	<p>The scale of the required savings measures has been shared with staff since the commencement of the ES Reform program and continually throughout. Furthermore, individual units have communicated the nature of the issue and savings required as part of Early Engagement and upon commencement of consultation.</p> <p>Specifically, at the Town Hall meeting on 14 November 2024, all CBIS staff were advised that a key driver of the ES Reforms for CBIS was to deliver significant financial savings and a 20-30% reduction in headcount.</p> <p>At the Town Hall meeting, where Staff Representatives (officials and delegates) were present, Ms Rothwell provided additional details regarding the required cost reductions including that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the initial guidance for the future size of CBIS for FY 25/26 was a headcount savings of 20 to 30%, resulting in a team of around 165 to 185 staff. - To achieve operational savings in the order of \$25 million from the annual CBIS budget; and - The proposal shared accounts for staffing levels at the top end of the range whilst streamlining the scope of CBIS services.

Other Feedback:

<p><i>Staff have been advised that CBIS ES Reform & KPMG Review together are linked & are impacting proposed job losses – while there have been references to KPMG impact on CBIS jobs, no information regarding which relevant sections will be rolled into ES Reform process.</i></p>	<p>CBIS staff were advised that CSIRO would look to deliver some of the objectives of ES Reform (namely simplification and removing duplication) via the longer-term rollout of the KPMG opportunities.</p> <p>CSIRO has not yet finalised the exact detail or timing for delivery of the objectives of the KPMG review as this will form a larger program of work that will be undertaken over a longer period. When CSIRO is in a position to commence this program of work, staff and the Staff Association will be informed and engaged as appropriate and consistent with the required Consultation process.</p> <p>This approach was confirmed in discussions directly with staff and the Staff Association on 19 and 26 November and in a follow up email sent to staff and the Staff Association on 26 November 2024 which specifically noted that:</p> <p><i>These opportunities compliment some of the proposed ES reform initiatives, however I see these opportunities as a much larger piece of work that will require further input from yourselves as we progress over the next 12 months.</i></p>
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<p><i>There have been no position descriptions been released for new roles, despite some staff having been advised they will be moving into these roles.</i></p>	<p>New position descriptions have been available on the CBIS confluence page for staff since 15 November 2024.</p> <p>This was confirmed via email by Ms Rothwell to the CBIS team on 15 November 2024 which stated:</p> <p><i>As mentioned yesterday, position descriptions for vacant roles, new roles and most of the group assessments are now available. A couple are still being finalised but we'll update them asap.</i></p>
<p><i>Risk assessments, if undertaken, have not been shared with HSRs or staff on how the reduction in staff in key roles that will have an impact on safety or Facility Maintenance requirements.</i></p>	<p>Risk Assessment documentation for the CBIS proposal is available to staff in DoneSafe.</p>
<p><i>Information has not been provided as to what Facilities CBIS staff were benchmarked against and the criteria. Some facilities names were provided verbally but further Facilities names are still to be advised.</i></p>	<p>This is in relation to the KPMG Report (which we are not in consultation on), not ES Reforms.</p>
<p><i>Contracting of Positions - No advice or business case has been provided for a plumbing position advised to be redundant and work then done under contract. How can a position be replaced with a contractor be a genuine redundancy.</i></p>	<p>In the specific case referred to it is proposed that the plumbing role does not require a full-time position. The current role undertakes a combination of plumbing trade qualified work tasks as well as other duties as required (which do not require plumbing trade qualifications), which combined, have resulted in a full-time role.</p> <p>The proposal involves contracting on an as-needs basis (as currently happens for larger plumbing work requirements) and the distribution of other non-plumbing trade specific work to other roles and in some cases, aspects of some services not continuing.</p>
<p><i>What is the plan for managing workload and WHS risks for this work to be managed by in house staff supervising contractors.</i></p>	<p>Supervision of contractors will continue to be managed as it currently is. CBIS supervise the work of their contractors, Research Units are also responsible for the supervision of their contractors.</p>
<p><i>Reception staff in CSIRO sites – where these staff are being removed or reduced no clear information on the management of security, deliveries, induction of guests/new staff/groups, provision of adequate number of available relief staff has been provided.</i></p>	<p>During the transition stage, CBIS will work through how to address the issues that have been raised around reception.</p> <p>Induction of guests, new staff etc is not a duty of a receptionist but of the person who has invited them onto the site, as per CSIRO contractor / visitor management rules. There are currently some duties reception staff undertake for Research units during quiet periods, this is a service that will no longer be available to research units in line with CBIS scope of services.</p>

Outcomes sought by the Staff Association

1. *Extension of the consultation period for the proposed changes in CBIS until mid-January 2025.*

CSIRO is not agreeable to an extension of the consultation period for CBIS for such a prolonged period. As discussed at our meeting on Friday last week, such an extension would create unreasonable impacts on the wellbeing of staff within CBIS, many of which have sought to have the process reach a conclusion as quickly as possible.

All CBIS staff have had access to relevant information relating to the proposed workplace changes for CBIS staff since at least 14 November 2024. **Attachment 1** includes additional details on proposed organisational structures and impacts.

In consideration of the Staff Association's request and our obligations to manage the health and well-being of staff, CSIRO agrees to extend the consultation period to **COB on 16 December 2024**. This additional period will provide a necessary balance between offering extra time for staff who require it and ensuring certainty for all staff, thereby avoiding a prolonged consultation period that may increase anxiety and uncertainty during the shutdown period.

2. *CSIRO to provide all relevant information to support consideration of future proposed changes **on the date consultation commences**, to employees and to the Staff Association.*

CSIRO regularly consults with its staff and the Staff Association on workplace proposals. We ensure that individuals likely to be affected are informed before broader discussions take place, minimizing impact on individuals and ensuring transparency.

The Staff Association specifically requested to meet 24 hours after broader Town Hall discussions that address workplace change proposals. CSIRO is willing to work with the Staff Association to establish clear processes and timing, subject to ensuring that key principles remain including that staff are advised of impacts on their roles by CSIRO before it is shared with the Staff Association.

3. *CSIRO to provide a summary of all change proposals either active or closed including the following information.*

CSIRO has recently provided the information requested in relation to Finance via separate email of 9 December 2024. CSIRO will provide relevant information as requested for the other ES Units when available including for Partnerships and Business Development which will be available this week.

3.1 *In relation to Strategy and Communications, the proposed impacted job numbers remain unclear to Staff Association members. The CSIRO should indicate whether this information will be provided in communicating the outcome, or whether indicative numbers can be provided at this stage. The CSIRO should ensure all relevant information is provided to employees at the earliest opportunity.*

CSIRO would like to clarify the above statement and notes that impacted job numbers were shared with all Strategy team staff (during the Town Hall and by follow up email on 12 November 2024) and this was also shared with the Staff Association (by email of 13 November 2024). Specifically, these emails noted the following information:

*The proposal shared plans for staffing levels of approximately 32 FTE (a reduction of approximately 26) while streamlining our areas of focus. If the proposal is implemented, the impact would be determined from **up to 5 Specific Term and 13 Indefinite roles across a mix of CSOF levels and locations.** Please note these numbers are the potential **maximums** only, and the final mix of impacted term and indefinite roles will depend on the outcomes of processes to populate roles in the model.*

3.2 *It may also be useful in this summary to indicate any further change proposals we can expect in the coming months.*

CSIRO has previously shared details regarding the ES Units that have or will be commencing consultation under the ES Reform Program.

This information is available for all staff on MyCSIRO and was communicated via email to all ES staff on 15 November. This was also shared with the Staff Association on the same date.

Specifically, and in addition to the ES Units that have commenced consultation this year, other ES units to commence consultation in 2025 include Integrity, Legal, Government Engagement and the Digital Office.

4. *A further discussion in the week commencing 9 December.*

A meeting has been arranged for 3:00PM (AEDT) on Wednesday 11 December 2024 to hold further discussions.

CSIRO's contact officer for this matter is Clint Smith who can be contacted on 03 9662 7136 or via email clint.smith@csiro.au.

Yours sincerely,



Clint Smith
Executive Manager, Workplace Relations
10 December 2024

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – More detailed organisational charts provided to CBIS staff