



Petition

Registration No.	4
Title	CSIRO Science Centre Manager position
Presented on	28 November 2012
Presented by	Ms Purick
Referred to	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon Robyn Lambley)
Date referred	28 November 2012
Response due	15 May 2013
Response received	5 April 2013 from Minister for Education (Hon Peter Chandler)
Response to be presented	14 May 2013

Petition

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH that we are seriously concerned with the Government's proposal to axe the job of centre manager at the CSIRO Science Centre located at Berrimah. This role is fundamental to the delivery in primary schools across the Northern Territory of science, mathematics and chemistry learning activities that are undertaken in line with the curriculum and learning outcomes. The position is responsible for the delivery throughout the whole of the Northern Territory of 19 in-schools science programmes which include pre and post teacher notes based on the Australian Curriculum.

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY that the Northern Territory Government continues to fund the position of science centre manager so teachers will have access to National Science Resources and hence, be in a position to provide quality teaching to students and have important programmes available in class rooms and for all students regardless of the school or student's location.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

Response

On 28 November 2012, Petition No. 4 and Petition No. 5 were presented and read in the Legislative Assembly. The petitions concerned the ceasing of funding for the position of Consultant with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) from 31 December 2012. I respond to the petitions pursuant to Standing Order 100 as the Minister for Education.

The Consultant position had been funded by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) at a Senior Teacher level 2 for over twenty years through an arrangement with CSIRO that was never formalised. This amounted to funding of approximately \$125 000 per annum. Similar arrangements exist in other jurisdictions but at a lesser amount per capita.

A detailed appraisal of government commitments was undertaken in late 2012 to realign DECS resources and as a result of this process, funding for the CSIRO position ceased. This outcome attracted significant media, public interest and numerous enquiries and complaints in the form of petitions and correspondence from educators, professional associations and parents.

DECS has since negotiated a partnership arrangement with CSIRO from 2013 to provide 'in-kind' support for the CSIRO schools program, including travel and communications, to the value of \$10 000 annually. This will be reviewed by the department mid-2013.

CSIRO is now receiving \$40 000 in funding annually from a private source. Mr Paul Lyons, the former occupant of the CSIRO Consultant position, resigned from DECS in March 2013 and is now employed directly with CSIRO as the CSIRO Education Centre Manager.