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18 February 2016

Professor Paul J. Durack, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, USA

Professor Anna Pirani, Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy

Dear Professor Durack and Professor Pirani,

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February 2016 in relation to Australian climate research.

Your letter is directed towards CSIRO's contribution to Australia's climate research activity and follows from strategic investment shifts that were announced recently within CSIRO. I am writing to respond on behalf of the Board of CSIRO, who in 2015 approved CSIRO's Strategy 2020. The overall aim of the Strategy is to significantly lift Australia's technology-enabled innovation and in order to meet our national challenges including improving our prosperity and sustainability.

We agree with you that there is no doubt that climate science is a research field in which Australia has made - and will continue to make - a very strong contribution to global knowledge and also that CSIRO has been a key player in this success. Australian research in the science fields of Environment/Ecology and Geosciences represents more than 5% of global output in these fields – reflecting a relative specialisation of Australian research of 1.5-fold as compared to the world average, for these fields.

Australia's research capability in this field excels and it should be noted that the research strength is distributed across universities and a number of governmental agencies - of which CSIRO is one contributor. CSIRO's scientific output in the relevant science fields represents approximately 17% of Australian scientific article output in these fields and involves extensive collaboration with both national and international research teams.

I want to be clear about what has been decided in relation to CSIRO's forward program. As you would appreciate – there has been quite a bit of speculation about the consequences of our strategic decisions. CSIRO has decided that CSIRO's Oceans & Atmosphere research is one of a number of areas across the whole organisation where we will be redirecting some of our work, specifically in our Oceans and Climate Dynamics and Earth Systems Assessment programs.

I want to reassure you that we do recognise the national and international importance of this particular field of research and we are committed to working with national and international partners to ensure that there is no break in atmospheric measurements at Cape Grim as a result of these changes. CSIRO will continue to operate the RV *Investigator* for the benefit of scientists from Australia and around the world as a state of the art research facility. Further, CSIRO has also committed to working with national and international partners to:

- Deliver on key contractual commitments, such as CSIRO's leadership of the Earth System Science and Climate Change Hub under the National Environmental Science Programme (NESP) and our contributions to the Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS);
- Ensure Australia has access to a state of the art climate model to understand our changing climate and inform adaptation and mitigation decisions; and to

- Contribute to the international Argo floats program, which provides thousands of data-points for temperature and salinity of our ocean.

Over the coming weeks, CSIRO will be working with relevant institutions on detailed implementation and, where necessary, transitions plans to achieve these outcomes. We will also be going through detailed consultation with our people working in these areas to make sure we achieve the best possible outcome.

It is important to put CSIRO's recent announcement into a broader context. CSIRO has a central role to play in the translation of science and technology into products and services that benefit Australia and enhance national productivity. CSIRO is tasked with delivering science across many fields, and serving numerous stakeholders. Reflecting its 2020 strategy, CSIRO has decided to put greater emphasis on delivering technology-enabled innovation that will re-invigorate existing industries and create new ones. With finite resources, growth in some areas necessitates reductions in other areas.

Whilst CSIRO is reducing some of its climate change related investment, CSIRO will continue to employ over 300 scientists working on climate adaptation and mitigation research. We want to continue to make a meaningful contribution to solving the global challenge of environmental change, in collaboration with others including some of the signatories to your letter. CSIRO recognises that collaboration is critical, and we look forward to working with the national and global community to implement real solutions to the challenges of climate change.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss further.

Yours sincerely

David Thodey  
CSIRO Chairman