



6 May 2020

Hon Karen Andrews MP
Minister for Industry, Science and Technology
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Andrews

On behalf of the CSIRO Board, I am pleased to respond to the Statement of Expectations outlined by you on 13th February 2020, with CSIRO's Statement of Intent.

We note the Government's commitment to science and innovation, and the benefits it brings society, the economy and the environment. We acknowledge CSIRO has a strong role in advancing Australia's science and research capability and will work to ensure we achieve the details outlined in your Statement of Expectations.

As the national science agency, we will continue to deliver on our core mission and deliver science impact for the whole nation – working collaboratively across the research system and with industry, both in Australia and globally. We will focus on solving our country's greatest challenges, and align with Government priorities and key policy objectives including: the digital economy; working collaboratively to advance Australian industry; building SME engagement; encouraging access to national research infrastructure; promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers and equity; and facilitating the translation of research and commercialisation of outcomes.

In particular, the Board shares the points below in relation to the priority areas you have outlined.

Resolving national challenges for a competitive Australia

We note your focus on ensuring CSIRO's research delivers large and sustained economic and social benefits. Through collaboration with industry, universities, government, research agencies and the community, we will maximise the use of our multidisciplinary science to the benefit of Australia. As requested, CSIRO will continue to engage broadly across the Australian Government and contribute to the National Science and Technology Council and national activities to bring CSIRO's research to those discussions, as an input to informing science and technology policy.

Advancing the Government's policy priorities

CSIRO will support the priorities of the Australian Government, particularly in solving Australia's greatest challenges. Today those challenges are many: food security and quality; health and wellbeing; resilient and valuable environments; sustainable energy and resources; future industries and a secure Australia and region.

CSIRO will provide input to government and demonstrate where its capabilities and research infrastructure can be leveraged, to advance Australia forward, at pace and at scale.

Noting your focus on the translation of science and technology, CSIRO will continue its role as a catalyst for innovation and impact, so that what is identified as a breakthrough in a laboratory or in the field is brought as quickly as possible to the hands of those that need it the most.

Working collaboratively to advance Australian industry

Recognising the Government's aim to deepen collaboration between industry and research, CSIRO appreciates the unique position it is in to share its approach and will continue to act as a bridge between researchers and industry, to deliver solutions from science. As you note, CSIRO will continue to engage with Australia's Chief Scientist.

We are committed to ensuring businesses are aware of, and significantly benefit from the support of CSIRO and that the broader Australian Government innovation programs provide them in growing their business.

CSIRO will continue to represent Australian science and innovation and will pursue global engagement for national benefit to Australia. Collaboration will continue with the Australian Space Agency to leverage its deep space science expertise and support the growth of Australia's space sector.

Managing research infrastructure and national facilities

On behalf of the Australian Government, CSIRO is proud to host world-class research infrastructure, facilities and collections, enabling science to be undertaken by researchers from across Australia and the world, as well as safeguarding Australia's health and industries. As outlined, we will continue to ensure these facilities are well utilised to maximise their benefit. These facilities also contribute to enabling Australia to meet its international science and research obligations and deliver impact through science diplomacy.

Translation of research and commercialisation

We note your focus on the translation of science to solutions, and how CSIRO can assist. We will continue to engage with industry including SMEs, and to identify opportunities and help accelerate scientific outcomes through multiple connection points with CSIRO. We will assist in their growth by connecting them with Australia's research sector and facilitating partnerships through the provision of support, advice, expertise and resources.

Through the CSIRO Innovation Fund, CSIRO will continue to support SMEs to grow new research into commercial impact and outcomes, with the objective of closing the gap towards commercialisation. Tightly integrated with entrepreneurship, CSIRO will continue to deliver Australian Government programs to help businesses increase their commercial potential. CSIRO will continue to maintain its intellectual property (IP) and research translation framework.

Embracing the digital economy

In response to your expectation of CSIRO's role in advancing the nation's harnessing of digital technology, CSIRO will draw on our strong domain and digital expertise. We will support translating data science to solutions that will improve our way of life and support Australia's growth, as well as our ability to combat cyber security threats.

The potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications in particular are vast. CSIRO supported the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) to develop the AI Roadmap - the first step in what we expect will be a positive conversation with industry and the community about the potential of AI and the importance of ethics.

Science itself has significant gains to be made from digital. CSIRO has established a Challenges and Digital Transformation program, aimed at harnessing digital technology in scientific endeavour, and fostering new digital skills to accelerate scientific research and impact. We will continue to support businesses and industries to adopt digital technology as the economy transition to a digital economy.

Digital is not without its challenges, and CSIRO is committed to ensuring it complies with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Essential Eight Cyber Security Mitigation Strategies. Collaboration is central to the delivery of science at scale, and CSIRO will ensure security is well managed with this in mind.

Promoting STEM careers and equity

We will continue to promote STEM capability, development and education. Careers in STEM within CSIRO itself are also critical and we are committed to increasing the skills of researchers. CSIRO's Future Science and Technology plan, which casts ahead 10 years, will also assist in identifying science capabilities required for the future.

CSIRO remains committed to diversity including women in STEM and in 2018, began implementing a 4-year Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Action Plan and received a Bronze Award through the Athena SWAN accreditation program – which has been successfully advancing workplace gender equity and inclusiveness in science and technology organisations in the United Kingdom for over a decade.

Performance

As an Australian Government statutory authority, the CSIRO Board and Executive Team continues to ensure CSIRO has best practice governance which enables us to deliver on our purpose and strategic objectives, and meet its legislative requirements including under the Public Governance, performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013.

We will ensure CSIRO continues to operate with a long-term sustainable perspective, maintaining a sharp focus on financial performance and culture that underpin the engagement of CSIRO's people in delivering great science. Affording a safe, positive, supportive work environment, access to high quality facilities and opportunities for learning and development is central, and an area we place high priority upon. We will ensure you are informed of the health and culture of the organisation.

We will continue to keep you informed of major activities in a timely manner through briefings from the Board, and through regular meetings with the Chairman and Chief Executive. Sharing details of the scientific achievements of the organisation will continue, as will the timely provision of updates, advice and information to the Department.

Summary

As Chairman, and on behalf of the Board, we are committed to implementing this Statement of Intent.

Your support of science, technology and industry, and the wider areas of STEM careers and education is greatly appreciated, as is your interest in communicating the scientific impact of the research being conducted by CSIRO on behalf of the nation.

Yours sincerely



David Thodey AO
Chairman