

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO C.S.I.R.O.

The Government has decided to appoint an independent Committee of Inquiry to review the objectives, structure and programmes of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Over the last fifty years, C.S.I.R.O. has earned a high reputation within Australia and overseas. This has been achieved by conducting research programmes which have been predominantly of high quality and sound practicality.

During these years, the executive and staff of C.S.I.R.O. have made significant contributions to fundamental and applied science and sought to link the two together.

They have helped us to increase our knowledge of the physical and biological environment through which we move and on which we depend.

They have developed new technologies through the application of scientific principle to everyday problems.

The last major review of C.S.I.R.O. was held almost thirty years ago in 1948-49. Since then, science has become increasingly diversified and the Government has come to support science and technology in a multiplicity of ways.

Inevitably, the role of C.S.I.R.O. has changed. It is appropriate at this time to engage in a rethinking of the objectives of C.S.I.R.O. for the future; to conduct an independent examination of the ways in which the Organisation's vigor, its ethos, and its capacity to deal with the challenge of the future can be sustained.

The Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry is Professor A.J. Birch, F.A.A., F.R.S., Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Australian National University. Professor Birch was the foundation dean of the Research School of Chemistry at A.N.U. The other members of the Committee are Sir Cecil Looker, a former President of the Australian Associated Stock Exchanges - he has also held the position of Chairman of the Melbourne Stock Exchange and Director of the Papua New Guinea Development Bank - and Mr. R.T. Madigan, O.B.E. Chairman of Hammersley Holdings Limited and of I.O.L. Petroleum Ltd. He is also a Director of C.R.A. Limited, and R.T.Z. Limited.

The Committee of Inquiry shall examine, and report and make recommendations on:

1. the objectives of the organisation and the relevance to the present and future requirements of Australia of its functions as set out in the Science and Industry Research Act (1949)
2. the extent to which the current research programme objectives and the emphasis given them accord with the objectives recommended for the organisation
3. existing arrangements and procedures for meeting recommended objectives and discharging recommended functions, with particular emphasis on:-
 - (i) the size and diversity of the organisation, its organisational and management structure, policies for the employment of staff, and the role of consultative and advisory machinery.

- (ii) the relationship of the organisation with Government agencies, industry, tertiary institutions, research institutes, and with users of research results.
 - (iii) the methods for selecting, reviewing, reporting on, and re-ordering research programmes, including the effect of the differing sources of funds.
 - (iv) the assessment of results achieved in the light of resources employed,
 - (v) the processes involved in the implementation of research results, and
 - (vi) the role of the organisation in Australia's international scientific relationships.
4. the extent to which and the means by which programmes of the organisation could attract revenue both to support the conduct of ongoing or intended research and also in return for results achieved in research.