



History of CSIRO

The evolution of CSIRO

In 1916, Prime Minister Billy Hughes was instrumental in establishing an Advisory Council to work on the establishment of a national science institute. The Council's earliest work was to collect information about the state of scientific research in Australia, undertake research, review existing science research, and collect and disseminate information.

The moves to establish a permanent body resulted in an ACT to establish the **Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry** being passed in 1920. The Institute's work was hampered by a lack of funds and a clear mandate for its existence; the imperative for organising research in a country at war had gone and the economic benefits were not yet appreciated.

Prime Minister Bruce saw that it was time to foster and take advantage of this closer cooperation and funding and so arranged for Sir Frank Heath of the British Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to report on reorganising the Institute of Science and Industry. His report resulted in new legislation passed in 1926 that established a successor agency, the **Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

The primary aim of CSIR was to carry out scientific research in connection with or in promotion of primary and secondary industries in Australia. The Council's first annual report to Parliament listed 41 scientists on its staff, located in rented rooms in a technical college in Brunswick, a suburb of Melbourne.

Under an Act in 1949, the CSIR was reconstituted as CSIRO, the **Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization**. Over the next three decades CSIRO gradually expanded its activities so that its research was related to almost every field of primary, secondary and tertiary industry. Many other areas affecting the community at large were also covered – such as the environment, human nutrition, conservation, urban and rural planning and water supplies.

In 1971 CSIRO moved its headquarters from Melbourne to Canberra as part of a government initiative to bring the heads of its agencies closer to the daily workings of the Ministers they served. CSIRO today is governed by a Board of external members and a Chief Executive to lead the daily

workings of the organisations. Research is carried out through Divisions.

CSIRO celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2001 and today is one of the world's largest and most diverse scientific global research organisations.

Working from sites across the nation and around the globe, CSIRO's 6500 staff are focussed on providing new ways to improve quality of life, as well as the economic and social performance of a number of industry sectors through research and development.

For more information, try:

- <http://www.csiro.au/index.asp?type=blank&id=napshot>
- <http://www.csiro.au/index.asp?type=blank&id=CSIROhistory>

What's in a name?

The organisation now known as CSIRO has existed in several forms and names:

- 1916-1920 : Advisory Council of Science and Industry
- 1920-1926 : Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry
- 1926-1949 : Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- 1949-1986 : Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO)
- 1986- today : Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

CSIRO Tropical Forest Research Centre.

Post Maunds Road Atherton Queensland 4883

Phone +61 (0)7 4091 8800 **Fax** +61 (0)7 4091 8888

Email tfrc-enquiries@csiro.au

Web www.tfrc.csiro.au