2nd May, 2016

The Select Committee into the Scrutiny of Government Budget Measures
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Attn: Lyn Beverley

re: Proposed cutbacks in CSIRO Staffing

Dear Committee members,

As either supporters or former staff members of CSIRO, we are distressed and appalled by the recently announced measures to significantly reduce CSIRO research staff numbers in both climate change research and Land and Water research, as well as other research areas.

We urge your Committee to recommend immediate reversal of this decision.

There are a number of points we would like to highlight, namely

- In our own experience and from our conversations with colleagues working in CSIRO, the cutbacks in funding and staffing over the past few years have had a significant impact on staff morale, and that can only result in a reduced capacity for research excellence. Cutbacks of staffing of over 500 in 2013, were followed by a $100 million cut in 2014. Now we hear that from Larry Marshall's evidence at the senate hearing another 275 jobs will be cut, with around 75 from Oceans and Atmosphere, 100 from Land and Water, 30 from Agriculture and the rest from other areas.

- Australia has played a leading role in climate change research in recent years and CSIRO scientists have contributed greatly to this. It is quite unbelievable that at a time when there is a critical need to address the many unanswered questions in climate sciences, that Australia has chosen to reduce its climate change research capacity by 60% of staff.

- The overall level of CSIRO staffing has been seriously degraded in the past decade. Annual reports indicate that in the decade from 2005-06 to 2014-15 actual staff numbers have been reduced by close to 20%.

- CSIRO has a special place in the hearts of many Australians as a public agency which contributes enormously to the well being and development of our society. Budget measures which reduce that capacity are not only short sighted but in the long run are counter-productive. The CSIRO Charter expressly identifies that the aim of the organisation is "to seek to deliver innovative solutions for industry, society and the environment."
Friends of CSIRO has been established so that the voices of the many Australians who value the long term contributions of CSIRO staff can be heard clearly by decision makers in our Federal Government.

We ask your committee to recommend reinstatement of the former funding cutbacks in CSIRO at this time when our Prime Minister has stressed the importance of innovation in building a better society.

We trust that your Committee will take full account of the many voices now being raised publicly in support of a strong and well funded CSIRO, and thank you for this opportunity to address you.

Your sincerely,

Friends of CSIRO members in Qld:

- Dr. Ross Gwyther, 71 Kauri Rd Ashgrove Qld 4060
- Dr. John McCollow, 10 Kaloma Road, The Gap Qld 4061
- Dr. Rhodes Hart, 10 Dempster St, Toowong, QLD 4066
- Kathleen Kelly, 28 Hawthorne Ave., Ashgrove, Qld 4060
- Dr. John Griffiths, P O Box 883, Kenmore, QLD 4069, Australia
- Assoc. Prof. Janis Bailey, 260 Beacon Rd, Tamborine Mountain QLD 4272.