

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF CARBON TRADING

Order

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (10.44 am)—I move:

That there be laid on the table, no later than 1 pm on 26 November 2009, Dr Clive Spash's uncensored and unamended research paper, *The brave new world of carbon trading*.

Senator CARR (Victoria—Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research) (10.44 am)—by leave—We will not be dividing on this matter but I do want to publicly indicate the government's strenuous opposition to this proposal on the basis that it is misguided and totally misunderstands the nature of the relationship between this parliament and the CSIRO. Like all public research agencies, CSIRO is governed by a charter of research freedom and autonomy. That charter guarantees CSIRO's right to pursue lines of inquiry, to publish results and to participate in public debate without political interference. It does not provide a basis for the government to micromanage the organisation.

The CSIRO produces over 3,700 papers per year. It is a ludicrous proposition to suggest that the minister would individually vet those papers. The government has no role in the discussions between CSIRO and Dr Clive Spash about the research paper which is the subject of this motion. This is entirely a matter for the CSIRO to manage. As I understand it, discussions between CSIRO and Dr Spash are continuing. Peer review is central to research enterprises. CSIRO has its own internal peer review processes. Those processes have been established to maintain the standards of excellence that have made CSIRO an international research icon. They have been established to protect the CSIRO brand and to ensure that Australia gets the best possible return on its investment in research. (*Time expired*).

Senator MILNE (Tasmania) (10.46 am)—by leave—There is nobody in Australia who is not proud of the CSIRO but there is nobody in Australia who is also so naïve as to not realise that for 10 years under the Howard government the CSIRO was heavily suppressed in what it could produce. The culture within the CSIRO has led to self-censorship by management to make sure that they know full well what their ministers are prepared to accept or not accept. What is required here is for the minister to tell the CSIRO that the charter allows for the widest possible interpretation so that that suppression order can be lifted.

Senator Carr—To politically intervene.

Senator MILNE—It is not intervention in individual papers; it is to tell the CSIRO that the culture has

changed, that openness and transparency are now the go. If that does not happen with this, then the culture of self-censorship will continue. That is why it is essential we get this paper absolutely tabled as it was written and peer reviewed and not as it is going to be amended by CSIRO management.

Question agreed to.