

CSIRO FAILS ON WORKPLACE BULLYING

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Just two days after Julia Gillard said she would launch a parliamentary investigation into workplace bullying, one of the government's biggest agencies has been rocked by claims of an endemic culture of intimidation and harassment.

At a Senate Estimates hearing in Canberra today, senior officials from CSIRO admitted under questioning from Tasmanian Senator Richard Colbeck that they were unaware of action taken by at least 7 former scientists from the agency to request an investigation of allegations of systemic workplace bullying and harassment.

The agency's Chief Executive, Megan Clark, was also careful to avoid answering claims that, in 2010, she had referred a private and confidential complaint from an aggrieved employee directly to the officer against whom the complaint was made.

Craig Roy, the Deputy Chief Executive – Science, Strategy and People, was likewise unable to refute the suggestion that at least one employee has been placed on suicide watch as a result of their experiences at CSIRO.

"It is unacceptable that government officials at the most senior level are, at best, unaware of serious complaints of workplace bullying in their own agencies," said Sophie Mirabella, Shadow Minister for Science, today.

"If the government is serious about tackling workplace bullying, it must urgently review systems within its own agencies, because clearly they are not working," Mrs Mirabella concluded.

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