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News item



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SENATOR CARR HEAVIES CSIRO FOR POLITICAL OUTCOMES

Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Sophie Mirabella MP, Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, said that scientific integrity at the CSIRO has taken a back seat to the political game playing of the Rudd Government.

"In a clear abuse of the scientific process, the Minister for Science, Kim Carr, today continues to defend his use of a confidential referees report to discredit a paper titled *The Brave New World of Carbon Trading* by Dr Clive Spash," Mrs Mirabella said.

Dr Clive Spash left the CSIRO late last year as a result of the controversy surrounding the publication of this paper. In last month's Senate estimates hearing, Science Minister Kim Carr quoted selectively from a referees report criticising Dr Spash's early draft of the paper.

"The referees report referred to an early draft of the paper prepared by Dr Spash which was subsequently rewritten – which is the whole point of peer review and part of the scientific process to ensure the integrity of the paper," Mrs Mirabella said.

"It was the peer reviewed paper that was accepted for publication by an international journal that was later banned by CSIRO managers."

"This is a clear violation of the peer review process."

"How do we expect scientists at the CSIRO to do their work effectively if they feel that their work will be subject to this sort of political interference or censorship?"

Dr Spash said (ABC Radio PM 24 February 2010):

"This report must have been passed on to him [Kim Carr] by senior CSIRO management."

"I think they've [CSIRO] got themselves into a total mess both with their public policy statements and also their charter signed with the Minister. It seems impossible for the CSIRO to conduct research engaging on public policy issues and yet maintain a statement which prevents them from doing that."

"The good work of scientists at the CSIRO, and the CSIRO brand, is under threat from a desperate Labor Party playing political games to try and avoid criticism and open debate," Mrs Mirabella said.

Mrs Mirabella said that the case of Dr Clive Spash, who is not a climate change sceptic, is not isolated. The former head of the climatology department of the CSIRO, Dr Garth Paltridge, has said that there is systematic intimidation of scientists within the CSIRO who do not agree with the views being put forward about the human causes of climate change.

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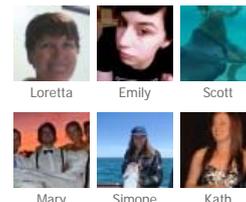
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