



The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues

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Speech

Address to members of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) for "Science meets Parliament"

National Press Club, Canberra

28 February 2006

E&OE

Transcript Extract on Chief Scientist

Ladies and gentlemen, one particular person normally plays a central role in many of the programmes I have touched on today. The position of Chief Scientist of Australia is an extremely important one. The government has been committed to ensuring that the process of identifying the right person was comprehensive and thorough and as the responsible Minister, I have considered the position carefully.

The formal responsibilities of the Chief Scientist of Australia include the role of Executive Officer of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council and Chair of the PMSEIC Standing Committee. In addition, I will be asking the new Chief Scientist to participate in a number of advisory and funding committees in my portfolio, such as the CRC Committee, the Prime Minister's Science Prizes Committee, the RQF Implementation Group and the NCRIS Committee. I also consider the Chief Scientist will have a key role in building connections between the Government, industry and organisations like FASTS, the Australian Academy of Science, and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. Moreover, and very importantly, I want the Chief Scientist to raise the profile of science, maths and engineering in our schools and in the community more broadly. We need to make science better understood, we need to increase the number of young people taking science degrees and improve the attractiveness of science

careers so that we can build that skills base that will help to turn the concept of a high-tech, knowledge-based Australia into a reality.

This is a prestigious position that needs someone who can contribute to the building of a world-class innovation system, someone who can build effective partnerships between government, researchers and industry to maximise the substantial investment being made by government and to ensure that ideas move smoothly from generation to end-use.

I'm pleased to be able to say that the position did attract an outstanding field of Australian men and women. The search has been careful to ensure we find a person who is not only an outstanding scientist with a record of academic excellence, but who has the respect of the science, engineering and technology industry and community. I am delighted today to announce that Dr Jim Peacock fits this bill and will be Australia's new Chief Scientist.

As many of you will know, Dr Peacock is currently the President of the Australian Academy of Science, he's former head of CSIRO Plant Industry, one of the world's leading plant research institutes, he's the recipient of numerous awards for science, he was made a *Companion of the Order of Australia* – our highest honour – for service to science, particularly in the field of molecular biology, and to science education in 1994. He's a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, The Royal Society, The Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Science. In 2000 he was a co-recipient of the inaugural Prime Minister's Prize for Science. He has an outstanding international and national reputation, his credo is excellence, creativity, urgency and relevance. I believe Dr Peacock will bring to the position a passion for Australian science, a commitment to excellence, an exemplary record in pure and applied research, and a shared vision, with this government, that science and innovation must, and will continue, to play a vibrant role in Australia's social and economic growth and prosperity.

I look forward to sharing the journey.

Thank you.