

FASTS Forum on rights and obligations of scientists and researchers

22 February 2008

On Friday 22nd of February, FASTS are holding a forum on issues arising from Kim Carr's decision to establish a charter to protect the integrity, rights and obligations of researchers and research institutions.

While the proposed charters will initially apply to PFRAs in Carr's portfolio - CSIRO, ANSTO and AIMS – it is clear he sees issues around the rights and responsibilities of scientists and researchers to apply more broadly to all public sector research including universities.

FASTS believe issues of academic freedom, scientific independence and the notion of obligations for scientists to contribute to public debate are of critical importance for science practice.

Speakers at the forum will include Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR); Professor Margaret Sheil (ARC) and Professor Peter Cullen. It will include panel discussions on

- rights/obligations and academic freedom
- Managing obligations – issues for institutions
- The experience of scientists in politicised debates – water, climate change and stem cells
- Science engagement-science communication
- Implications for education, training and research practice.

I realise this is short notice but we had the opportunity to involve the Minister and felt that the issues were so important that we should leap at the opportunity to encourage a sophisticated and thoughtful discussion of the issues.

The forum will be at Questacom in Canberra from 9.30am – to 4.00pm on Friday 22nd of February. The numbers will be limited but there will be no charge for FASTS nominees.

I will forward registration details and more detailed program next week but do drop me a line if you want to come along or send a representative.