

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

Question: AET 98

Topic: Survey of Research and Experimental Development Businesses

Written: Received from Committee – 22 February 2013

Senator BUSHBY asked:

98. Upon whose decision and/or upon whose instruction was the collection of the ABS 'Survey of Research and Experimental Development (R&D), Businesses' (as part of Category 8104.0) changed to a two yearly format instead of annual, and when and why?

Answer:

98. Changes to the overall program of R&D Statistics were made under the authority of the Australian Statistician. Recommendations for change were developed as part of a review undertaken by the program area and endorsed by the Deputy Statistician, Economic and Environmental Statistics Group and then submitted to the Australian Statistician for approval. The changes were communicated to users of R&D statistics in June 2012.

In 2010 / 2011 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) undertook a review of the R & D statistics program following concern that the program costs were continuing to rise and were no longer sustainable. The design of the collection is such that any business with greater than \$100K expenditure on R & D is included in the collection. Over the years, policies aimed at increasing R&D activity have resulted in a growing number of businesses and organisations performing R&D. For the ABS this has led to an increase of over 60% (approximately 10% per year on average) in the size of the business R&D census since 2005. This substantial increase in workload has become unsustainable and has meant the ABS has needed to reduce the scope of the R&D statistics program.