

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry Portfolio  
Additional Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14  
27 February 2013

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** QUESTACON

**TOPIC:** Prime Minister's Science Prize

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 27 February 2014, page 69-70)

**QUESTION No.:** AI-138

**Senator KIM CARR:** Has Professor Schmidt's review of the Prime Minister's Science Prize been completed?

**Prof. Durant:** Yes. The review made 19 recommendations, of which 13 have been approved and implemented.

**Senator KIM CARR:** Do we have a copy of those recommendations?

**Prof. Durant:** I can indicate the types of things—not that I do not have the full list. The recommendations include splitting the prize for teachers between the teacher and the school.

**Senator KIM CARR:** Can you provide that to me? I take it this is not a controversial issue.

**Prof. Durant:** We can provide that.

**ANSWER**

The 2012-13 *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* Review made 19 recommendations.

Recommendation 1. The names of the *Prime Minister's Prize for Science* and the two science teaching Prizes should remain unchanged. The Government should consider renaming the *Malcolm McIntosh Prize* “*The Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Excellence in the Enabling Sciences*” and renaming the *Live Sciences Prize* to honour a famous Australian life scientist. This Prize might be called “*The (name) Prize for Excellence in the Life Sciences*”.

Recommendation 2. Certificates should be reintroduced as a component of the three science Prizes.

Recommendation 3. The existing values of the Prizes' cash components are currently appropriate. Treating these as the lower limit, they should be reviewed in the context of budgetary reviews of the Government program through which the Prizes are funded.

Recommendation 4. In considering nominations for *The Malcolm McIntosh* and *Science Minister's Prizes*, the Science Prizes Committee should reserve the right to reassign a nomination from one category to the other, for the benefit of the nominee. This right should be specified in the Prize Nomination Guidelines.

Recommendation 5. The eligibility criterion for nominations for *The Malcolm McIntosh* and *Science Minister's Prizes* should be amended to provide for nominations from those who have realised significant research achievements within ten years of the award of their highest degree. The ten year maximum limit should be measured on either a full-time or full-time equivalent basis.

The Science Prizes Guidelines should clarify that research conducted at any time prior to the ten-year limit is eligible for inclusion in the nomination.

Recommendation 6. The \$50,000 cash components of the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools* should be shared equally by the teachers and the schools where they are teaching at the time of nomination.

Recommendation 7. The school must spend its share of the Prize monies on a project or projects that benefit the school's capacity to teach science. Proposals for expenditure should be presented to and approved by the Department prior to release of the funds.

Recommendation 8. The costs of attendance at the Science Prizes awards event by science teaching Prize recipients' nominating Principals and (where different) current school Principals should be met by the Department.

Recommendation 9. The nomination process should comprise two steps. In the first step, nominators should submit an 800-word argument for the award of a *Prime Minister's Prize* and a curriculum vitae (CV) of not more than two pages. For the three science Prizes, the CV should include reference to four articles or publications or patents that relate most directly to the nomination.

The Science and Science Teaching Prizes Committees will consider these nominations and select a short list for each Prize. For the second step, nominators of short-listed nominees will be requested to submit full nominations for further consideration by the Committees.

Recommendation 10. Recipients of science and science teaching prizes awarded by other Australian governments and by industry and professional organisations should be considered for nomination for one of the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* by the organisations administering or sponsoring those prizes.

Recommendation 11. The current arrangement whereby the Presidents of the Australian Academies of Science and Technological Sciences and Engineering alternate annually in chairing the Science Prizes Committee should be replaced with a permanent arrangement whereby the Chief Scientist for Australia chairs this Committee.

Recommendation 12. Selection processes used by the Science Prizes and Science Teaching Prizes Committees should be captured comprehensively in one new Procedural Rules document.

Recommendation 13. *The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* awards event should continue to be held in the Great Hall of Parliament House during the Spring sitting of the Parliament. A concerted effort should be made to attract a broader spectrum of guests and interest groups, with R&D-focused industry groups particularly targeted for attendance. New events should be created before or after the awards to attract such attendances.

Recommendation 14. Younger people, prominent in science, technology and mathematics, should be invited to attend the awards ceremony for the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science*.

Recommendation 15. The awards ceremony should remain focused on a small number of broadly conceived elite Prizes for Science and Science Teaching.

Recommendation 16. A consultancy firm should be engaged to develop a professional media strategy for the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* that seeks to increase awareness and appreciation of the Prizes and their recipients in the year following award. The strategy should embrace participation by past Prize recipients through the creation of an alumni program to maximise the impact and stature of the awards.

Recommendation 17. A new *Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation* should be created, equal in stature to the *Prime Minister's Prize for Science*. Both should carry a cash component of \$300,000.

Recommendation 18. Teams of more than four individuals should be eligible for nomination for the Prime Minister's Prize for Science. In the event of an award to a team, the Prize could be accepted on-stage by up to four representatives. These arrangements should apply also to any new Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation.

Recommendation 19. New *Prime Minister's Prizes* in particular scientific disciplines and for university science teaching should not be created.