

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Additional Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14
27 February 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Split of science programs between the Department of Industry and the Department of Education

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

QUESTION No.: AI-24

Senator Kim Carr: Thank you very much. I have got some other questions but I will put them on notice. I am still interested to note the split of programs between the Department of Education and the Department of Industry in regard to science. What programs and strategies are jointly managed by the two departments?

Dr Banerjee: As you would know, at the time of the machinery of government changes, a number of programs were moved to the Department of Education. I will not go through those in detail; they are listed in the additional estimates statements. For all of those programs, there is close continuing cooperation with the Department of Education. You would know that many of those programs have a significant science component; so we are continuing to talk to our colleagues, and the two ministers are working very closely together. In terms of things that specifically require joint ministerial action, or at least very close ministerial collaboration, probably the most significant is the ARC process. In those, while the formal decision-making rests with the Minister for Education, there are formal protocols for consultation with the Minister for Industry.

Senator Kim Carr: Formal protocols—where do I find those?

Dr Banerjee: I am not an expert in ARC processes. I think that would be implemented through the ARC funding rounds. I could take on notice, through the funding rounds, the decision making for which the Department of Education is responsible and come back to you.

Senator Kim Carr: A lot of this is machinery, and it is probably better if you write it out so that there is less room for confusion.

ANSWER

As outlined in the Administrative Arrangements Order, the Department of Education is responsible for co-ordination of research policy in relation to universities; creation and development of research infrastructure; and research grants and fellowships. As part of this responsibility, the Minister for Education administers the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

The Minister for Industry has responsibility for coordination of science research policy; collaborative research in science and technology; and industrial research and development and commercialisation; The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (and other portfolio science agencies); the Cooperative Research Centres Program; and international science engagement.

Due to the complementarity of the two portfolios, maintaining a strong alignment between these policy areas is of critical importance, particularly in how they relate to the Government's industry objectives.

Therefore, in order to ensure consistency of policy, the Minister for Industry will be consulted in relation to the Australian Research Council, research infrastructure, grants, infrastructure projects and the formula for distribution of research block grants.

In addition, as part of its processes regarding grants and fellowships, the Australian Research Council consults the Department of Industry as required. Similarly, the Department of Industry consults with the Department of Education on issues of shared interest.