

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 112
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 3
Programme: Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
Topic: AAD - Committees
Hansard Page: 47
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Singh asked:

Senator SINGH: That would be good. On the two committees, do you also have a list of who makes up the committees? How is that determined?

Dr Gales: Yes, we do. I will provide you with that full list. Essentially, the research areas cover off against understanding the role of Antarctica in the global climate system. So we ensure that we have people who are leaders in that broad range of science, and we make sure we have people who understand some of the modelling that goes into the sustainability science, if you like—the fishery science and human impact science. They are drawn from the university sector, in particular, around Australia. As far as possible, we obviously manage conflicts of interest carefully and make sure we try and draw people in who do not have active projects in Antarctica and are able to provide good, independent advice. We also have an external peer review. The projects go out to at least two—typically international, sometimes national—scientists, for a peer review round, and are then assessed by the two committees.

Answer:

The Antarctic Research Assessment Committee (ARAC) was abolished by Government in December 2014 as part of its Smaller Government Reforms, with a recommendation that the functions of the committee be absorbed into the Department of the Environment through the Australian Antarctic Division.

The 2014-15 round assessment of applications was held in August 2014 and at that time ARAC comprised two subcommittees, one of which assessed the strategic relevance of the application and the other conducted a detailed scientific assessment. Strategic assessment subcommittee members included policy makers and leaders of the Themes identified in the *Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan 2011-12 to 2020-21*. Scientific assessment subcommittee members were selected for their expertise and experience in their chosen fields.

ARAC membership (August 2014)

Strategic assessment subcommittee	
Dr Peter Doherty (Chair)	Fellow, Australian Institute of Marine Science
Dr Chris Carson	Section Leader-Antarctic Geoscience Geoscience Australia
Dr Andrew Constable	Theme Leader Australian Antarctic Division
Dr Bill de la Mare	Theme Leader Australian Antarctic Division
Dr Robert de Light	Assistant Director, Climate Change Science Team Department of the Environment
Dr Nick Gales	Chief Scientist Australian Antarctic Division
Mr Jason Mundy	General Manager, Strategies Branch Australian Antarctic Division
Dr Martin Riddle	Theme Leader Australian Antarctic Division
Dr Tas van Ommen	Theme Leader Australian Antarctic Division

Scientific assessment subcommittee	
Dr Peter Doherty (Chair)	Fellow, Australian Institute of Marine Science
Professor Marilyn Ball	Australian National University
Professor Barry Brook	University of Adelaide
Professor Richard Coleman	University of Tasmania
Dr Nick Gales	Chief Scientist Australian Antarctic Division
Professor Janet Hergt	University of Melbourne
Dr Alan Jordan	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Dr Peter May	Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research
Dr Bernadette Sloyan	CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research