

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry and Science Portfolio
2015-16 Budget Estimates
3 and 4 June 2015

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: International Science Engagement Strategy

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Carr

QUESTION No.: BI-91

In relation to Ms Urquhart's evidence on the development of a whole-of- government international science engagement strategy (page 43 of the Hansard), Ms Urquhart indicated there is currently a process underway to examine that.

- a) Has an IDC been established to consider a whole-of-government international science or research engagement strategy?
- b) If so, which agencies are represented on IDC, when was it established and how many times has it met to date?
- c) What is the timeline for this work?
- d) Is it expected that this process will involve external consultation? If so, when will this occur, who will be consulted, and what form will the consultations take?

ANSWER

- a) At the government level, Australia's international science and research engagement is led by the department together with the Department of Education and Training, through treaty-level science agreements and MOUs; strategic government to government meetings with priority partner countries and the international network of science, industry, research and education counsellors, science and education treaties and network. The department is currently following a prioritised approach to international engagement focused on global science and technology leaders but also including strong performers or increasingly competitive countries. The development of a new whole-of-government international science engagement strategy has been considered by the National Science, Technology and Research Committee (NSTRC) as a possible action associated with the Government's response to the Chief Scientist's paper *Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics: Australia's Future*. The NSTRC is the whole-of-government officials' level body with responsibility for supporting the work of the Commonwealth Science Council.
- b) The National Science, Technology and Research Committee (NSTRC) last met on 11 June 2015 and is expected to meet next on 11 August 2015. NSTRC was established on 27 November 2014. The NSTRC members, drawn from senior levels of Commonwealth departments and agencies, are: Australia's Chief Scientist (Chair), Deputy Secretaries representing the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Industry and Science, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health, Deputy Secretaries of other departments with an interest or direct role in funding or supporting science and research as the agenda requires, the CEOs of the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council, and CEOs from the major publicly funded research agencies (on a rotational basis).
- c) Possible development of a new international science engagement strategy is a matter for Government consideration.

- d) The Government is currently consulting on the development of a response to the Chief Scientist's paper, *Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics: Australia's Future*. The consultation paper, *Vision for a Science Nation — Responding to Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics: Australia's Future*, was released on 22 June 2015. The response includes a section on international science engagement. Stakeholder roundtables have commenced and will take place in Canberra, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth addressing international matters as one of the four themes of the paper. Participants include representatives of academia, Learned Academies, research organisations, vocational education and training and school education peak bodies, teacher and student associations, industry organisations, SMEs, state and territory governments and community organisations. The Chief Scientist's paper also underwent significant consultation.