

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000237

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

Relationship between the Research Infrastructure Review and the Higher Education Infrastructure Working Group

Question

What is the relationship between the Research Infrastructure Review and the Higher Education Infrastructure Working Group?

Answer

Research infrastructure falls within the scope of both reviews. Terms of reference are included below.

The terms of reference for the Research Infrastructure Review

1. To undertake an assessment of existing research infrastructure provision and requirements, that will inform future commitment to ongoing funding for critical research infrastructure in Australia.
2. To examine the role of public funding, including from the Commonwealth, in supporting the provision of research infrastructure in maximising the use of existing funding.
3. To examine the operating costs and priorities of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and its need for ongoing investment required from the Commonwealth.
4. To examine alternative arrangements for leveraging funding for the development and ongoing operations of research infrastructure, such as through partnerships with the private sector and the appropriate application of cost recovery.

The terms of reference for the Higher Education Infrastructure Working Group

1. Investigate and report on:
 - a. anticipated demand for and supply of infrastructure investment across the higher education sector over the short to medium term, having regard to:
 - i. renewal of existing infrastructure
 - ii. construction of new building stock
 - iii. 'transformative' infrastructure initiatives
 - iv. nationally significant collaborative research infrastructure
 - b. the internal and external sources of funding available to higher education institutions, the factors affecting funding streams and the extent to which future infrastructure development is likely to be dependent on external financing and the feasibility of this dependency in different contexts
 - c. the current regulatory, governance and policy impediments to the strategic funding and management of infrastructure in the higher education sector.

2. Investigate and report on:
 - a. the range of options available to the higher education sector to obtain finance for infrastructure development, including from capital markets, and the use of each to date
 - b. the potential scope for their use in the new policy context
 - c. the advantages and disadvantages of each in particular circumstances.
3. The more innovative options to be assessed will include, but not be limited to, loans, bond issues, and public-private partnerships such as build-own-operate-transfer and sale leaseback/lease-leaseback arrangements.
4. With specific reference to major national collaborative research infrastructure, investigate and report on the feasibility of financing new infrastructure through capital markets or other mechanisms, as well as options for meeting the costs of loan repayments.
5. Investigate and report on the role, current extent and potential contribution of philanthropy to infrastructure funding.