

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000043

Senator Carr, Kim asked on 01 March 2017, Proof Hansard page 61

Support for research infrastructure

Question

Senator KIM CARR: If you are trying to run a university in this country, what support can you expect from the Commonwealth for research infrastructure?

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Senator Birmingham: The Higher Education Infrastructure Working Group recommended or found that there was certainly capacity within the universities' own operations to fund capital investment.

Senator KIM CARR: No. I have asked a specific question about the Commonwealth's contribution. You have referred to NCRIS. Is there any other source of capital funding currently in the Commonwealth budgets?

Senator Birmingham: We will take it on notice to look across departments under old Commonwealth activity.

Answer

The Australian Government contributes to the cost of research infrastructure in universities through a variety of measures. Universities can access Government funded research infrastructure in organisations, such as in medical research institutes and publicly funded research agencies.

In regard to direct funding for research infrastructure, universities can access:

- the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS),
- the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) scheme that provides funding to eligible organisations for research infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and
- the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) provides some support for capital funding to complement other capital funding for research infrastructure.

In addition, the Government supports a broad range of grant programs which provide for the direct research costs for projects that can include research infrastructure. For example, allowable budget items may include equipment required for the project and access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities depending on the specific funding rules. These programs are administered by various agencies including the Australian Research Council (ARC), the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (AREA). The Department of Education and Training administers the Research Support Program which can be used by universities for research related expenditure, including capital costs.

In 2016–17, the Government is providing \$10.1 billion in support of research and development (including support for research equipment and infrastructure). This includes substantial investment through the departments of: Industry, Innovation and Science; Education and Training; Health; Defence; Agriculture and Water Resources; and Resources and Environment.