

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY: AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

TOPIC: Staffing

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 26 February 2009, E135 - 136)

QUESTION No.: AI-70

Senator ABETZ—...In relation to staff at the ARC, have you lost senior staff in recent times?

Mr Marsden—Yes, we have.

Senator ABETZ—In which categories?

Mr Marsden—We have lost one of our executive director positions, so we are going through a recruitment process at the moment to combine an executive director to cover a number of fields, and that is the physics, chemistry, geoscience and mathematics area. We have lost two non-research SES positions: one is the position of deputy chief executive officer, who has retired, and the position has not been refilled. The other is the position of legal counsel. The officer has left the ARC, and that position has not been refilled.

Senator ABETZ—It has been put to me that one of the government's best evaluators on staff has left, that the deputy CEO has left, that the chief operating officer, head legal person—pejorative language is used in relation to this—has left; it has been suggested to me 'kicked out' but I will not use that; and that three or more executive directors have been encouraged to leave early or have been asked to leave, one of whom was the ex-head of the British Geoscience Agency with lots of high-level experience in government. The head communication person left and the evaluation expert person gave up and took a job elsewhere, and the program staff have had the deckchairs shuffled multiple times, all in the last 12 months. The suggestion was made to me that I should look at the termination funding figures in your annual report. What does that tell us in relation to other years as to terminations in the ARC? I think I said in relation to another area of this portfolio that when you are a shadow minister a lot of these accusations come to you by way of email, unsigned letters, et cetera, and therefore I am only asking the questions; I am not making the allegations. Conclusions might be able to be drawn from the answers that are provided.

Senator Carr—You make a number of comments about the manner in which you allege these persons left, which you said you would not make, and then you put them on the *Hansard* record, which is a pretty grubby way to do business, frankly.

Senator CAMERON—That is after saying earlier that you would not name people.

Senator ABETZ—I have not named anybody in this. I have referred to positions.

Senator Carr—No, you just refer to their positions in a research community where everyone knows who you are talking about. It is a pretty grubby exercise, Senator.

Senator CAMERON—It is very grubby.

Senator ABETZ—Senator Carr, all I would invite you to do is go back through the *Hansards* and see how you actually named people, referred to people, and denigrated people. I always preface these sorts of comments—or I try to preface these sorts of comments on the basis—

Senator Carr—Come on, who do you think you are kidding? Don't be such a sanctimonious flea.

CHAIR—It is getting quite late.

Senator ABETZ—Mr Marsden, can you tell us what the termination figures are?

Mr Marsden—I will have to take those figures on notice.

Senator ABETZ—Can you do a comparison for me for, let us say, the three previous years?

Mr Marsden—Yes, Senator.

Senator ABETZ—Termination payments—and, if you can assist me with all the classifications that I have read into the *Hansard*, whether the person who held that particular classification has left in the past 12 or 18 months and the circumstances in which they left. That would be very helpful.

ANSWER

Separation rate for ARC staff 1 July 2005 to 31 March 2008

Separations by classification

Classification	1 July 05- 30 June 06	1 July 06 – 30 June 07	1 July 07 – 30 June 08	1 July 08 – 31 March 09
SES	4	1	3	4
EL2	0	0	0	0
EL1	4	3	2	5
TOTAL	8	1	5	9

Please note the following re the above table:

1. The classification SES – includes positions titled Deputy CEO, Executive Directors and General Manager Legal Services and Governance, and in each case the individuals either retired or resigned.
2. The Chief Operating Officer is still employed by the ARC,
3. The classification EL1 – includes a communication officer, and
4. There were no separations relating to evaluation staff.

Reasons for separation 2008-09

Three retirements

Three resignations of ongoing staff

Three resignations of non-ongoing staff

These figures do not include staff on leave without pay.

SES Separation/Termination Payments

Financial Year	Separation/Termination Payments
2007-08	\$324,974
2006-07	\$31,478
2005-06	\$85,663

These figures are disclosed in the executive remuneration note in the annual financial statements for the ARC, in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders and Accounting Guidance Note and include the discharge of any accrued leave entitlements.