

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2008-09
2-3 June 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

TOPIC: Report on Pornography

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Fielding

QUESTION No. BI-113

Does the Research Council examine the nature of the research and other possible funding sources to arrive at a view as to the likely statistical or evidentiary usefulness of research to shed light on an issue such as pornography consumption or markets? If so, please provide a copy of that assessment.

ANSWER

The Australian Research Council (ARC) administers a system of expert peer review under which proposals for funding are assessed against specific selection criteria. In relation to the proposed content of research projects, these criteria encompass significance and innovation, approach (including appropriateness of the proposed budget) and potential national benefit. In relation to the proposed investigators, they encompass track record and capacity to undertake the proposed research.

The ARC does not release assessments of proposals other than to applicants for rejoinder purposes. The effectiveness of the ARC's administration of funding for research is dependent on the quality of the peer review system and the professional obligation on the part of researchers to contribute to that system. Consistent with international best practice, the ARC seeks to meet the expectation of assessors that their identity will be appropriately protected – not to do so could undermine the willingness of researchers to continue to support the peer review system.