

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
28 and 29 May 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Inspiring Australia

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Edwards

**QUESTION No.:** BI-117

1. Some \$21 million in funding over three years was announced in last year's budget for the "Inspiring Australia" program. A new national hub for science and technology communications was to be created to coordinate this at a cost of \$2.4 million over three years. What is its status?
2. How is this program being measured and what has both it and the hub produced thus far?

**ANSWER**

1. As of June 2012, the creation of a national hub for the *Inspiring Australia* program has enabled:
  - a. Support for a State and Territory Officers Working Group to share information and develop a more cohesive approach to science awareness programs across jurisdictions.
  - b. Support for an Officers Working Group to share information and develop a cohesive approach to science awareness programs across Commonwealth agencies.
  - c. Establishment of staff within the Questacon Division to support the program elements of *Inspiring Australia*, including the *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science*, *National Science Week* and the *Unlocking Australia's Potential* grant program.
  - d. Commissioning of expert working group reports to undertake further analysis of needs and opportunities relating to science engagement for Australia's desert region, for Australia's tropical region, for Indigenous Australians, and for optimising impact through coordination across marine science research and communication organisations.
2. The *Inspiring Australia* Program - a three year program - commenced in July 2011. As the Program approaches the first year mark, a strategy to evaluate its effectiveness is being developed. In its first year the Program has:
  - a. Coordinated the 2011 *National Science Week* program, attracting over 1.4 million Australians in more than 1000 registered events across Australia.
  - b. Concluded the 2011 *Prime Minister's Prizes for Science* program, awarding three science research prizes and two science teaching prizes on 19 October 2011.
  - c. Renewed support for the Australian Museum's Eureka Prizes by supporting two awards – the Award for Science Journalism and the Award for Promotion of Science Research.
  - d. Set up the new *Unlocking Australia's Potential* competitive grant round to invest \$5 million towards science engagement projects across Australia.
  - e. Set up projects to contribute to the implementation of recommendations made in the "Science and the media: from ideas to action" and "Developing an evidence base for science engagement" reports.
  - f. Established and maintained, through co-funding arrangements with State and Territory Governments and institutions, *Inspiring Australia* Project Officers in each State and

Territory to encourage a national framework – local action approach to science engagement activities.