

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING
SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: ARC

DEST Question No. E696_04

Senator Carr asked on 18 February 2004, EWRE Hansard p. 23.

Question:

Senator CARR - Would the ARC have a figure on the cost of administration of research across the whole of government? Have you done any study on that?

Prof. SARA – Not for administration. We certainly have the figure for the ARC, and that is publicly available.

Senator CARR – To refresh my memory, what is that?

Prof. SARA – That is \$12.4 million a year.

Senator CARR – And that is a similar sort of figure for the NHMRC?

Prof. SARA – No, their cost of administration is a lot higher than ours.

Senator CARR – How much is that?

Prof. SARA – We can certainly get that for you, but I cannot—

Senator CARR – What is the factor? How much more was it?

Prof. SARA – I am sorry, we would have to provide that to you.

Senator CARR – I just want to know how you compare with the others. It would be interesting to get a whole-of-government comparison of the amount of funds administered and the administrative costs. You know my concern on this issue. You say you are more efficient, but we would like to see what it costs across the whole of government. That would be an interesting comparison to make.

Answer:

Cost of administering research

The ARC has provided the following response:

The ARC is a statutory authority with separate appropriations which reports its costs as a separate reporting entity. In contrast, the NHMRC is supported by staff and facilities of the Department of Health and Ageing, does not have separate appropriations and does not report its costs as a separate reporting entity.

The ARC is aware that the Auditor-General's Audit Report No.29 2003-04, *Governance of the National Health and Medical Research Council*, provided figures for 2002-03 of \$15.3 million in relation to Departmental funding for the cost of operating the Council, its committees and secretariat and \$6.8 million in relation to Administered funding for committee

program support, committee expenses support, general support costs, medical research institutes and departmental (Health) research capacity.

Separately, the NHMRC has advised the ARC that the amount attributable to the Council's research support function is \$9.0 million in 2002-03, and \$11.3 million in 2003-04. The NHMRC has also advised that the additional costs reported by the ANAO include Secretariat, Committee and Program costs relating to the NHMRC's functions in health advice, ethics and regulation of research involving excess IVF embryos.