

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: ARC

DEST Question No. E818_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

- (a) The success rate for Discovery-Project grants is slightly up, to 25.8%. That's correct, isn't it? (Annual Report pp. 30-35)
- (b) But, under the Discovery-Projects Fellowships, the success rate is down from 19.9% to 16.6%. Why is that? Is it due entirely to the 22% increase in applications?
- (c) How many applications are we talking about, overall?
- (d) Why do you believe that there has been such an increase in applications?
- (e) Could this trend be related to the level of academic salaries, or to working conditions in universities – teaching loads and staff:student ratios, for example? Isn't it the case that those with Professorial Fellowships are not supposed to teach?

Answer:

Success rates under Discovery-Projects

The ARC has provided the following response:

- (a) The success rate of applications for Discovery Projects grants commencing in 2003 was 25.8 per cent. This was slightly higher than the success rate of applications for grants commencing in 2002 which was 25.4 per cent.
- (b) The success rate of applications for Discovery Projects fellowships commencing in 2003 was 16.5 per cent. This was down from the 19.9 per cent success rate for applications for fellowships commencing in 2002 due largely to a 22 per cent increase in the number of applications. In 2002 and 2003, there were 165 and 166 new fellowships awarded, respectively.
- (c) There were 1,013 applications for Discovery-Projects fellowships commencing in 2003, compared with 830 applications for fellowships commencing in 2002.
- (d) & (e) There are potentially many reasons why the number of researchers choosing to apply to the ARC for funding varies from year to year. In the absence of statistically valid information about researchers' circumstances and intentions in this regard, it would be difficult to identify the main reasons with any confidence.

Under *Backing Australia's Ability*, the number of new Australian Postdoctoral Fellowships available each year was doubled to 110, beginning in 2002. This may have encouraged applications from researchers who would not otherwise have applied for ARC funding.

Australian Professorial Fellows are expected to work full-time on research and research-related activities.