

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome:

Output Group:

DEST Question No. E763_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Backing Australia's Ability

1. Is expenditure for BAA2 on target?
2. Is all the funding under BAA2 now committed? If not, what percentage remains to be committed?
3. When do you expect those commitments to be in place?
4. Since the announcement of the BAA2 package, has any funding been added to BAA programmes or taken away? If yes, precise details please?
5. To what extent has funding been reallocated between the programmes and activities identified within BAA2 since its announcement?
6. Can you provide me with an updated financial table showing current expenditure, forward commitments and uncommitted BAA2 funding on a line by line, or programme by programme, basis?
7. Has the Department undertaken, or commissioned, any evaluation or research into the effectiveness and efficiency of BAA2 programmes?

Answer:

Backing Australia's Ability

1. While it is generally not possible to distinguish BAA2 expenditure and commitment from broader programme commitments, programmes supplemented by BAA2 funding are on track. We understand that BAA2 funding to other portfolios is also on track.
2. The programmes for which BAA2 funding information can be distinguished are:
 - **National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy** (NCRIS). The Minister for Education, Science and Training announced commitments for NCRIS in November 2006. The announcement as well as programme information is available at <http://www.ncris.dest.gov.au>.
 - **Regional Protection Scheme** (RPS). RPS grant amounts are determined by a formula and the programme is fully expended each year. Further information can be found at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/programmes_funding/programme_categories/professional_skills/regional_protection_scheme_2007.htm.

- **International Science Linkages programme** – 33% of 2006-07 funds are uncommitted pending finalisation of contracts and provision of progress reports. DEST expects that the programme to be fully expended in 2006-07. Further information about the programme can be found at <http://www.dest.gov.au/science/ISL>.
- **Science Connections Programme** – most 2006-07 funds are committed. DEST expects that the programme will be fully expended in 2006-07. Further information about the programme can be found at <http://www.dest.gov.au/scope>.
- **Boosting Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics Teaching** is fully committed in 2006-07. Further information about the programme can be found at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/science_innovation/programmes_funding/programme_categories/science_teaching_awareness/boosting_innovation_science_technology_mathematics_teaching.htm.
- **CSIRO National Research Flagships** – is fully committed in 2006-07 with some contracts and commitments extending to the end of 2010-11. Further information about the programme can be found at <http://www.csiro.au/csiro/channel/pchbe.html>.

3. See answer to questions 1 and 2.

4. CSIRO has supplemented BAA2 funding for the National Research Flagships through increased investment of its own appropriation funds (totalling \$296 million to 2005-06 with a further \$131 million budgeted in 2006-07) and through external revenue and in-kind contributions from its partners and collaborators (totalling \$87 million to 2005-06 with a further \$71 million budgeted in 2006-07).

\$2.8 million was allocated under BAA2 was for Quality and Accessibility Frameworks. The Research Quality Framework element has been supplemented twice:

- \$3 million was announced in the 2006-07 Budget for further development of the Research Quality Framework.
- On 18 December 2006 the Minister for Education, Science and Training announced \$87.3 million in financial support for the implementation of the first cycle of the RQF. This funding is provided from 2007-08 to 2010-11.

5. BAA2 funding has not been reallocated.

6. While it is generally not possible to distinguish BAA2 expenditure and commitment from broader programme commitments, the information that is available is published in the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2006-07.

7. Economic modelling undertaken by Econtech Pty Ltd estimated that the BAA initiatives produce a net annual increase of \$352 million (2005 prices) in consumer living standards. Econtech also estimated that public R&D activity as a whole increases consumer living standards by \$3,648 million (2005 prices) annually. This report can be found at: http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/publications_resources/profiles/economic_impact_of_public_r_d.htm.