

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

DEST Question No. E328_04

Senator Carr asked on 4 June 2003, EWRE Hansard page 380

Question:

If you could check your records on that and tell me how long the report [of the committee to make recommendations to the Government about possible national research priorities] was, if you cannot give me a copy of the report. Obviously, I will now seek a copy of that report. There should be no secrecy attached to it now should there – or will we have to wait for the 30-year rule to cut in?

Answer:

The Committee's report was eight pages in length.

The response to the second part of this question, and several other related questions, was tabled by the Secretary, Dr Jeff Harmer on 5 June (page EWRE 546 refers). A copy of this response is attached.

National Research Priorities -committees

Senator Carr asked Mr Cook yesterday (on 4 June 2003) about the membership, terms of reference, meetings and reports of the committees that were involved in the selection of National Research Priorities last year. As Mr Cook indicated last night, there were 2 committees:

1. The Consultative Panel which was appointed by the Minister for Science in May 2002.

The panel comprised

- Dr Batterham (chair)
- Mr Stuart Beil
- Professor Janice Burn
- Professor Graham Farquhar
- Professor Chris Fell
- Dr John Keniry
- Associate Professor Melissa Little
- Professor Leon Mann
- Mr Helmut Pekarek

The Terms of Reference are attached.

The Panel met on 10 May 2002, participated in a teleconference on 30 May, and met again on 28 June. In addition, members participated in a series of public meetings around Australia during the month of June. These meetings were held in all capital cities, and in the regional centres of Armidale, Albury, Townsville and Kalgoorlie.

The Chief Scientist submitted a report to the Minister for Science on 12 July 2002. The report is available on DEST's website at http://www.dest.gov.au/priorities/docs/cons_rep.pdf

2. The Expert Advisory Committee was appointed by the Minister for Science in August 2002

The committee comprised:

Dr Jim Peacock (chair)
Dr Robin Batterham
Mr John Boshier
Professor Suzanne Corey
Ms Sharon Brown
Professor Chris Fell
Professor Malcolm Gillies
Professor Terry Hughes
Professor Leon Mann
Professor Sue O'Reilly
Mr Helmut Pekarek
Associate Professor Michelle Simmons

The Terms of Reference are attached.

The Expert Advisory Committee met on 21 August 2002 and 10-11 October 2002.

Dr Peacock provided a report to the Minister for Science on 23 October 2002

The report is not publicly available. It formed part of the policy formulation process, and subsequently informed the Government's deliberations which resulted in the announcement of the research priorities.

National Research Priorities Consultative Panel

Terms of reference and composition

The consultative panel is to be chaired by the Chief Scientist and comprise five or six eminent researchers, research consumers and business leaders with appropriate technical backgrounds or a sound understanding of the research environment. The panel will undertake consultation with the research and scientific community, business and the wider community in relation to:

- nominations for research priorities; including reasons for their nominations; and
- key elements of the national priority setting framework outlined in the issues paper (including the scope of the priority setting system, types of priorities, approach to implementation and approach to review).

In order to facilitate a process that is balanced and inclusive as to the wide range of interests and issues across the spectrum of research, it is proposed that the panel be composed of persons who have:

- strong professional standing in their field; and
- a capacity to assimilate issues beyond the scope of their own field and background, including relevant social, commercial, economic and environmental issues.

Panel members will be appointed on the basis of their individual standing rather than as representatives of a particular interest group or organisation.

To inform the consultation process, an issues paper will be released by the Minister for Science setting out the vision and purpose, the broad issues and the framework for developing a set of national research priorities.

The panel will report to the Minister in early July on the outcomes of the consultation process and advise on what priorities should be included in selecting the final national research priorities.

National Research Priorities Expert Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference and Composition

The Expert Advisory Committee is to be chaired by Dr Jim Peacock, President of the Australian Academy of Sciences and member of PMSEIC. It will comprise available members of the National Research Priorities Consultative Panel, the Chief Scientist and a number of other eminent researchers, research consumers and business leaders.

In order to facilitate a process that is balanced and inclusive as to the wide range of interests and issues across the spectrum of research, it is proposed that the committee be composed of persons:

- who have strong professional standing in their field; and
- who have a capacity to assimilate issues beyond the scope of their own field and background, including relevant social, commercial, economic and environmental issues.

Committee members will be appointed on the basis of their individual standing rather than as representatives of a particular interest group or organisation.

The Committee will assess nominations for national research priorities received from the research and wider community and develop a shortlist of priorities for consideration by the Government. The selection criteria approved by the Government will form the basis for that assessment, and the shortlisted priorities must be supported by evidence that demonstrates their capacity to meet those criteria. The Issues Paper – *Developing National Research Priorities*, and the report by the Consultative Panel will also inform the process.

The Committee will report to the Minister for Science on a shortlist of national research priorities in mid-October 2002.