

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Science and Innovation

Cooperative Research Centres Committee to appear at inquiry into business commitment to R&D

The Chair of the **Cooperative Research Centres Committee**, Dr Geoffrey Vaughan, will appear today (Monday) at a hearing of the House of Representatives Science and Innovation Committee's inquiry into business commitment to research and development (R&D) in Australia.

The inquiry is looking at the economic benefits for Australia of a greater private sector investment in R&D, the impediments to business investment in R&D, and the steps that need to be taken to better demonstrate to business the benefits of higher private sector investment in R&D.

The Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) program brings together researchers and research users from universities, the public sector and business to undertake long-term, collaborative R&D ventures that contribute to achieving national objectives. The Commonwealth currently contributes some \$145 million per year to 64 active Centres. Industry had been a major contributor to the program since its inception and has contributed 24% of total funding. Industry is the biggest contributor outside the universities.

The CRCs Committee has been appointed by the Minister for Science to oversee the selection of new CRCs and to evaluate the performance of individual CRCs during their period of operation.

The CRCs Committee submission says: "While there has been a recent downturn in industry expenditure on R&D, the CRC program has experienced the opposite; there has been steady growth in industry support for the CRC program since its inception.

"The CRC program has removed many of the impediments to business involvement in R&D through the provision of the benefits of cooperative research."

PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM

Monday 9 December 2002, Committee Room 2R2, Parliament House

5:30 - 6:30pm - The Cooperative Research Centre Committee

For media comment, please contact the Chair of the Science and Innovation Committee, Mr Gary Nairn MP, on (02) 6277 4939 or (02) 6297 3952

For further information on the hearings, please contact Shelley McInnis, Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 2324 or via email at Shelley.McInnis.Reps@aph.gov.au. For further information on the inquiry, **including copies of submissions**, visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/scin/randd/index.htm

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