

Question on notice no. 309

Portfolio question number: SQ21-000539

2021-22 Budget estimates

Education and Employment Committee, Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio

Senator the Hon. Kim Carr: asked the Australian Research Council on 4 June 2021

Senator KIM CARR: Of course, I expect that. That's not unreasonable. Mr Joske's accused 59 of our scholars. Have you got files on all the 59? Ms Emery: We don't know who the 59 are, so-

Senator KIM CARR: Many of them were published on the front page of the Australian. Surely you have files on those.

Ms Emery: If we're talking about the article on 24 August last year, I think there were 32 allegations-32 researchers who were named-who weren't all funded by the ARC.

Senator KIM CARR: You've kept files on all of those? Ms Emery: They do come up as a list of our potential sensitivities and, as I was talking about before, we're happy to go through the process we undertook at that time if that's of help. Senator KIM

CARR: I just want to know: have you kept files on the 32 who received ARC grants?

Ms Emery: They've been named as a sensitivity- Senator KIM CARR: So the answer is yes? Ms Emery: and we undertook further investigations. Senator KIM CARR:

Have you found any breaches of any of their grants? Ms Emery: I can advise that 31 of those 32 relate to researchers who have been, at some time, named on an ARC grant and that could be some time from quite a way ago- Senator KIM CARR: Have

been acquitted some years ago? Ms Emery: Yes, some years ago, so the grants would have been finalised. We have finalised 30 of those cases and there are two cases

ongoing. Senator KIM CARR: And you're still inquiring into the two-that's what you mean by 'ongoing'? Ms Emery: It means working with the institution in relation to

those cases. Senator KIM CARR: Of the 30 that you've finalised, have you found any issues with the 30? Ms Emery: I'd need to take that on notice. Senator KIM CARR:

You've told the JSI that there are no issues. Was that correct or not? Ms Emery: Well, Senator, that was a couple of months ago and I think since then there have been a few cases which have been finalised, so I need to take it on notice. Senator KIM CARR: Is it the case that-did you tell JSI that, of those that you finalised-the 30 that you'd finalised-there were no issues?

Ms Emery: I think that was in relation to national security, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: I see.

Ms Emery: I just want to clarify that, at the time the joint inquiry hearing, I do believe that we still had a few outstanding-

Senator KIM CARR: You said two outstanding.

Ms Emery: We have two outstanding now. I don't know if-

Senator KIM CARR: You had two outstanding then.

Ms Emery: Thank you very much.

Senator KIM CARR: Were there any problems with the other 30? Ms Emery: I'll need to take the detail of that on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: You told the JSI there were none. Is there something that's developed since then?

Ms Emery: As I just talked about, I don't believe we identified any national security issues, but there may have been other issues identified.

Senator KIM CARR: These people's names have been pilloried. They have been subject to shocking libels on the front page of the Australian newspaper based on an extraordinary document produced by Mr Joske through ASPI and funded by a foreign government. And you've now indicated in your investigation that in 30 of the 32 there are no issues-or certainly that's what you presented to the joint committee-and I'm wondering has there been any change in that status?

Ms Emery: As I explained, there have been no national security issues identified but I'm taking on notice the detail of whether there are other issues identified.

Answer —

Please see answer attached.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2021 - 2022

Outcome: Agency: ARC

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. SQ21-000539

Senator Kim Carr on 04 June 2021, Proof Hansard page 16

ARC | Scholars allegations

Question

Senator KIM CARR: Of course, I expect that. That's not unreasonable. Mr Joske's accused 59 of our scholars. Have you got files on all the 59?

Ms Emery: We don't know who the 59 are, so—

Senator KIM CARR: Many of them were published on the front page of the Australian. Surely you have files on those.

Ms Emery: If we're talking about the article on 24 August last year, I think there were 32 allegations—32 researchers who were named—who weren't all funded by the ARC.

Senator KIM CARR: You've kept files on all of those?

Ms Emery: They do come up as a list of our potential sensitivities and, as I was talking about before, we're happy to go through the process we undertook at that time if that's of help.

Senator KIM CARR: I just want to know: have you kept files on the 32 who received ARC grants?

Ms Emery: They've been named as a sensitivity—

Senator KIM CARR: So the answer is yes?

Ms Emery: and we undertook further investigations.

Senator KIM CARR: Have you found any breaches of any of their grants?

Ms Emery: I can advise that 31 of those 32 relate to researchers who have been, at some time, named on an ARC grant and that could be some time from quite a way ago—

Senator KIM CARR: Have been acquitted some years ago?

Ms Emery: Yes, some years ago, so the grants would have been finalised. We have finalised 30 of those cases and there are two cases ongoing.

Senator KIM CARR: And you're still inquiring into the two—that's what you mean by 'ongoing'?

Ms Emery: It means working with the institution in relation to those cases.

Senator KIM CARR: Of the 30 that you've finalised, have you found any issues with the 30?

Ms Emery: I'd need to take that on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: You've told the JSI that there are no issues. Was that correct or not?

Ms Emery: Well, Senator, that was a couple of months ago and I think since then there have been a few cases which have been finalised, so I need to take it on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: Is it the case that—did you tell JSI that, of those that you finalised—the 30 that you'd finalised—there were no issues?

Ms Emery: I think that was in relation to national security, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: I see.

Ms Emery: I just want to clarify that, at the time the joint inquiry hearing, I do believe that we still had a few outstanding—

Senator KIM CARR: You said two outstanding.

Ms Emery: We have two outstanding now. I don't know if—

Senator KIM CARR: You had two outstanding then.

Ms Emery: Thank you very much.

Senator KIM CARR: Were there any problems with the other 30?

Ms Emery: I'll need to take the detail of that on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: You told the JSI there were none. Is there something that's developed since then?

Ms Emery: As I just talked about, I don't believe we identified any national security issues, but there may have been other issues identified.

Senator KIM CARR: These people's names have been pilloried. They have been subject to shocking libels on the front page of the Australian newspaper based on an extraordinary document produced by Mr Joske through ASPI and funded by a foreign government. And you've now indicated in your investigation that in 30 of the 32 there are no issues—or certainly that's what you presented to the joint committee—and I'm wondering has there been any change in that status?

Ms Emery: As I explained, there have been no national security issues identified but I'm taking on notice the detail of whether there are other issues identified.

Answer

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has provided the following response.

All 31 allegations relating to researchers named on an ARC grant have now been resolved. Three issues relating to two researchers were identified and action taken.