

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-15  
Thursday, 23 October 2014

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

**TOPIC:** Council Membership

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice

**QUESTION No.:** SI-96

1. When did you first brief the Prime Minister on the operation of PMSIEC?
2. Were any subsequent briefings provided? If so, how many and when?
3. Please describe the process undertaken in determining the make-up of the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC) and the membership of the Council.
4. Was the final decision on CSC membership made by the Prime Minister or the Cabinet?
5. What will be the role of ACOLA, if any, in supporting or providing advice to the CSC?
6. Your STEM strategy paper emphasised the importance of international engagement in science and research.
  - a) What are your key policy prescriptions to increase international science engagement?
  - b) What measures would you recommend implementing to measure the impact of any such policy measures?

**ANSWER**

**1.** The Prime Minister was first briefed on the operation of PMSEIC in the incoming government briefing.

**2 and 3.**

- From 5 December 2013, the Chief Scientist met regularly with the Prime Minister, and Ministers Macfarlane and Pyne to discuss future governance arrangements for the PMSEIC.
- On 19 March 2014, the Prime Minister wrote to the Chief Scientist and Ministers Macfarlane and Pyne stating that he had decided to convene a reinvigorated Commonwealth Science Council (Science Council).
- On 23 July 2014, the Prime Minister wrote to both Minister Macfarlane and the Chief Scientist requesting that a formal appointment proposal be provided for membership of the Science Council.
- On 9 September 2014, Minister Macfarlane wrote to the Prime Minister requesting that he endorse the appointments of ten nominees to the Science Council.
- The Prime Minister endorsed the appointments of the ten nominees on 23 September 2014 for a 4 year term.

**4.** The Prime Minister endorsed the appointments of the ten nominees.

**5.** Any role of ACOLA will be determined following the first meeting, in considering the forward work program.

6a) The STEM strategy paper recommends that the Australian Government:

- **Adopt an international strategy for science, research and education that provides:**
  - a prioritised approach for international engagements that are funded
  - for collaborative activities, excellence-driven institutional and individual collaborations, and business partnerships.
  
- **Establish a fund for strong government-to-government linkages as a basis for international collaboration, with a focus on:**
  - building on existing partnerships with regional countries to establish an Asian Area Research Zone
  - further developing STEM relationships with the EU and US
  - building similar strategic relationships with countries aimed at mutually beneficial outcomes with enduring legacies.
  
- **Unlock flows of knowledge and research talent through:**
  - international exchanges for postgraduate, early and mid-career researchers
  - incentives for top international STEM experts to study, teach, and work on projects of global significance in Australia.
  
- **Leverage STEM in international diplomacy by:**
  - providing a framework for science diplomacy as a tool in Australian diplomacy
  - promoting the role of Australia's education and science counsellor network.

6b) The impact of policy measures could be measured by:

- the increase in the number of collaborative activities including on shared research priorities
- the number of international exchanges of postgraduate, early and mid-career researchers.