

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Focusing Australia's Publicly Funded Research Review

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Mason

QUESTION No.: AI-186

In relation to the outcomes of the “Focusing Australia’s Publicly Funded Research Review” which were announced by Senator the Hon Kim Carr on 3 November 2011 in a paper entitled “Maximising the Innovation Dividend: Review Key Findings and Future Directions” and which Report had four recommendations:

1. In relation to Recommendation 1, the ministerial press release of 3 November 2011 states that “A new Commonwealth committee, chaired by Professor Chubb, will provide the Government with integrated and strategic advice on future research investments. Initially, the committee will develop a national research investment plan”.
 - a. How is the establishment and set up of this committee progressing?
 - b. What will be its membership?
 - c. Is there any timetable for the committee’s work, for example for developing a national research investment plan?
2. In relation to Recommendation 2, what is the proposed timetable for the consultation to be undertaken by the Department with the research sector and other relevant stakeholders?
3. In relation to Recommendation 3 – when will the feasibility study be conducted? What sort of forms would such measures take? How would the results be utilised?
4. The ministerial press release of 3 November 2011 states that action will soon be taken in regards to Recommendations 2 and 3, but no explicit mention is made of Recommendation 4. What action will the government take in regards to this recommendation and when?

ANSWER

1. a) The Prime Minister formally agreed to the composition, terms of reference and reporting arrangements for the Australian Research Committee (ARCom) on 8 February 2012. ARCom is chaired by the Chief Scientist for Australia, and consists of three elements:
 - a senior Commonwealth officials group;
 - an expert advisory group
 - a research sector group.Initial meetings have been held for all three groups.

b) The membership for all three groups has been confirmed and the complete list is available on the department's website at

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/Pages/AustralianResearchCommitteeMemberships.aspx>.

c) The National Research Investment Plan is due to be provided to government by September 2012. ARCom will undertake work related to the other aspects of its terms of reference as required, building on the work already being undertaken across government.

2. The consultation with the research sector and other relevant stakeholders for the refresh of the National Research Priorities ran between 7 February and 5 March 2012.
3. The feasibility study on research impact assessment will commence in the first half of 2012. The conduct of the feasibility study will include significant consultation with the higher education and research sector. The Department is unable to comment at this time on the forms that measures of impact assessment would take and how the results of the study might be utilised as this would pre-empt the outcome of the feasibility study.
4. On the basis of Recommendation 4, the then Minister requested that roundtable discussions on research-industry linkages take place within the portfolio. The Research-Industry Linkages Roundtable of senior Innovation portfolio officials has therefore been established to do this.