

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2008-09
2-3 June 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

TOPIC: Research Grant Applications

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Fielding

QUESTION No. BI-118

Does the Council routinely employ experts in research methods and ethics in consideration of research grant applications? Did the Council do so in the case of Lumby, Albury and McKee's application? Please provide copies of their assessments.

ANSWER

The Australian Research Council (ARC) College of Experts has been established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* to assist in carrying out the functions of the ARC CEO in making recommendations to the Minister on funding for research proposals and in providing advice to the Minister on research matters. Members are appointed to the College on the basis of their research and discipline expertise, professional and academic standing, organisational skills, relevant experience in industry or public sector organisations, and experience in coordinating research activity.

The College is assisted in its role by Australian and international 'Readers' who are assigned to assess individual proposals for funding on the basis of their particular disciplinary expertise.

The ARC does not release assessments of proposals other than to applicants for rejoinder purposes. The effectiveness of the ARC's administration of funding for research is dependent on the quality of the peer review system and the professional obligation on the part of researchers to contribute to that system. Consistent with international best practice, the ARC seeks to meet the expectation of assessors that their identity will be appropriately protected – not to do so could undermine the willingness of researchers to continue to support and contribute to the peer review process.