

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10  
01 June 2009

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

**TOPIC:** ERA Complaints

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard 1 June 2009, E52-53)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-58

**Senator ABETZ**—The point that I think Bruce Marshall of this organisation says quite rightly is that the reputation of journals will hinge on this list and scholars will not seek to have their research published in them if they are left off or given a low ranking, and their rank will become fossilised and very difficult to change in people's perceptions. I think that is a matter of some concern, at least to myself, and I trust it is to the ARC as well. How many complaints has the ARC had about its journal ranking lists to date?

**Ms Harvey**—'Complaints' might be a strong word—

**Senator ABETZ**—All right—issues?

**Ms Harvey**—We run a help desk for a range of various things, including a whole range of different sorts of aspects. We have actually had feedback over the time with regard to it. Often they are one or two a week. They are not prolific in number. However, as we get closer to actually starting the trial people have actually been trying to clarify things more. I could get you a breakdown of exactly how many there were with regard to the journals themselves. But in total, since August last year, we have had just over 600 inquiries in total for ERA.

**Senator ABETZ**—I dare say those 600 inquiries did not include a majority saying, 'Well done, we agree with our rating'?

**Ms Harvey**—We do get inquiries of that nature but—

**Senator ABETZ**—I am sure you do. But I am asking whether a majority of those inquiries—

**Ms Harvey**—No.

**Senator ABETZ**—Chances are the majority of those 600 are related to certain issues surrounding the ERA process?

**Ms Harvey**—No, but I am happy to clarify that.

**ANSWER**

The ERA Helpdesk was established on 25 August 2008. Since its establishment the Helpdesk has fielded 275 questions in relation to Journal Rankings.