

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10
21 October 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

TOPIC: Regional Universities

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 21 October 2009, E28-30)

QUESTION No.: SI-25

Senator LUDLAM—I have a couple of questions relating to a particular project that I believe is underway at the moment. Could you point out to me where I can find it in your annual report, because I have not been able to. It is a Special Projects Program award of \$133,500 to fund the National Academies Forum to undertake a study on understanding the formation of attitudes to nuclear power in Australia. Are you aware of that project?.....

Prof. Sheil—We understand that it is a three-year project, but we will confirm that.

Senator LUDLAM—Initiated in late 2007?

Prof. Sheil—Yes, it was initiated in 2007.

Senator LUDLAM—I will check that annual report. Can you tell us who the partners are who are implementing the project and give us as much information as you can about your understanding of who is conducting it and who they are working with?

Senator LUDLAM -Are they formally partnered with particular organisations for that research? I will let you know why I am asking that. I am on the Australian Uranium Association email list. Obviously, they have got a strong interest in how opinions of Australians are formed around nuclear power and related issues. They received an invitation by the researchers to distribute the survey, which I believe they did. I wonder who else the researchers would have asked to distribute that survey and which other organisations were invited to be a part of that consultation?

Prof. Sheil—That is a level of detail that we would not have at hand at the moment. When they produce a final report, and indeed their annual report, we would have that sort of information, but we do not have that level of detail about an individual project.

Senator LUDLAM—Okay, but it would be in an annual report. This has been running since 2007. I understand that they have not provided a final report yet but I am just wondering whether you could provide us with anything that was in their 2007 or 2008 annual reports that might inform the committee about the organisations that the researchers have either partnered with in a formal way or are consulting with directly.

Prof. Sheil—We will take that on notice and look at what we can provide within the constraints of the reports we have received.

Ms Harvey- If I could just clarify, the annual reports are on a calendar year basis. So we would be able to check the 2008 calendar year. If you are expecting two though, there will only be one.

ANSWER

The Australian Research Council (ARC) would like to clarify the references to when the project was initiated and the availability of the annual reports (or progress reports).

- The project was awarded funding on 28 March 2008.
- The first progress report is due on 31 January 2010.

The ARC will not be able to provide information on which organisations were invited to take part in the survey, or consulted with, until the progress report is received.

The information available about the project, including known partners, is as follows:

Funding Scheme	<i>Linkage Learned Academies Special Projects</i>
Project Title	Understanding the Formation of Attitudes to Nuclear Power in Australia
Administering Organisation	The National Academies Forum (through the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering)
Partners	1. Australian Academy of the Humanities 2. Australian Academy of Science 3. Academy of Social Sciences in Australia
Date Announced	28 March 2008
Funding Duration	Two years
Total Funding Awarded	\$133,500 (GST exclusive)
Funding 2008	\$99,000 (GST exclusive)
Funding 2009	\$34,500 (GST exclusive)