

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 1
Output Group: ARC

DEST Question No. E1000_07

Senator Carr asked on 14 February 2007, EWRE Hansard page 8.

Question:

Linkage International Scheme

Senator CARR—I presume that you have recommended to the minister that other international programs be funded? Is that the basis of the recommendation?

Mr Marsden—I think the answer requires a bit more analysis and I will explain why. The amount of money we have allocated to Linkage International has been reasonably constant across the years—what we have allocated as opposed to what we have actually funded. I will have to analyse the reason for the difference between what has been funded and what has been allocated. It could be for reasons such as that the researchers are coming through discovery projects and sourcing funding from a different route. I will take that on notice and give you a detailed analysis of that.

Senator CARR—I have had a quick look over your report. It seems to me that the international award programs have declined quite substantially—from \$2.1 million in 2004 to \$815,000 in 2006. If you were able to tell me that that money had been allocated to another international program I might be able to follow that. But what I see is that the linkage program, the fellowship program—the other international program—has only increased relatively slightly by comparison. So I take it the money has been reallocated somewhere else and that the ARC has made a decision to switch resources away from international research collaborations of this type and to take up something else. Would that be a fair conclusion?

Mr Marsden—It would be, but it may not be driven by us artificially moving things; it may be driven by the number and nature of applications—and that is why I want to provide that analysis on notice. As Mr Harper said, we have basically split our programs, through the strategic plan, into discovery and linkage and we have moved within those splits based on what applications are coming forward.

Senator CARR—I understand that and I look forward to your answer. I notice that the international fellowship success rate has dropped from 48 per cent to 25 per cent and the linkage projects and fellowship success rate has dropped from 51 per cent to 36 per cent. These are very significant drops. I take it the ARC has not been able to demonstrate that international awards of this type should be a lower priority—because that is what appears to be the case.

Mr Harper—I think the recommendations of the ARC are set against the context of the budget that the ARC has at its disposal and the context of a variety of other schemes. The budget, as I indicated earlier, has increased over time. Notwithstanding that, as we are seeing, the number of some awards and the amount of dollars applied to some awards may have dropped, while in other schemes it will have increased. There is an amount of context there, and that is what Mr Marsden and I are saying we would prefer to take on notice.

Answer:

ARC has provided the following response:

Linkage International Scheme

Refer to response E999_07.