

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome:** Qwestacon  
**Output Group:** Qwestacon

#### DEST Question No. E760\_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

Science Circus

1. Can you describe the extent of its current operations of the Science Circus?
2. Are you experiencing any difficulty in recruiting and training science presenters?
3. It has been suggested that the course at ANU is struggling at times to find sufficient students. Is that correct?
4. What do think the reasons for this might be?
5. What could be done to reverse this trend?
6. Is the course offered there cutting edge? Does the course need any renewal from Qwestacon's perspective?
7. How often do you renew Science Circus acts and presentations?
8. Is that cost intensive- how do you fund that?
9. You rely heavily on private sponsorship for the circus, don't you?
10. What is the current status of that sponsorship?
11. Are you satisfied that this sponsorship is sustainable?
12. Could the Science Circus be sustained from your internal resources alone?
13. Have you ever sought to expand the Circus- more tours, more towns, more venues?
14. In an ideal situation, what do you envisage the Circus growing into? In other words, what is its potential?
15. What innovations would you like to see in order to ensure that the Science Circus remains at the leading edge of science education?
16. Have you ever sought additional funding from the Department- or the government- to extend the Circus? If so, what was the result?

#### Answer:

*Qwestacon has provided the following response:*

## *Science Circus*

1. The current operations of the *Shell Questacon Science Circus* are featured on Questacon's website at <http://www.questacon.edu.au/html/sgsc.html> and at [http://www.questacon.edu.au/html/assets/pdf/making\\_a\\_difference.pdf](http://www.questacon.edu.au/html/assets/pdf/making_a_difference.pdf).
2. To date the number and quality of graduates has been maintained. We are not having any difficulty training science presenters.
3. See answer to 2 above.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. The course content of the ANU Graduate Diploma is a matter for the ANU.
7. *Science Circus* acts and presentations are renewed and reinterpreted on a continuous basis.
8. *Science Circus* acts are funded by a combination of resources from the ANU, Questacon and the Shell Sponsorship.
9. Approximately one-third of the total annual operational cost of the programme is funded by private sponsorship.
10. Shell and ANU have recently committed to continue their support through until December 2009.
11. Shell has been a sponsor for 21 years.
12. Questacon receives Australian Government funding and uses the funding at its discretion.
13. Questacon has expanded its outreach activities. In 2007, Questacon will run eight separate outreach programmes, including the *Science Circus*, targeting different audiences.
14. See answer to 13 above.
15. Questacon sees scope to pilot live, interactive video links with schools to test the potential to extend the reach of the *Science Circus* and would like to do more with indigenous communities.
16. Questacon has not sought additional funding to extend the *Science Circus*.