

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1

DEST Question No. E311_04

Senator Harradine asked on 10 June 2003:

Question:

Would the Department consider quarantining a fixed and equitable portion of competitive funding for regional universities to recognise that they are generally smaller institutions and that they are central to the particular populations that they serve?

Answer:

Research funding for regional universities

The ARC has provided the following response.

Currently, the ARC targets at least 20 per cent of funding under the Linkage–Projects element of the National Competitive Grants Program to research that will directly benefit regional and rural Australian communities.

This requirement was announced by the Government in *Knowledge and Innovation: A policy statement on research and research training* (December 1999) as part of a regional package to assist universities to:

- develop regional connections,
- foster a shift towards a more entrepreneurial framework,
- concentrate research activity into areas of strength, and
- assist institutions to take advantage of opportunities presented through new fields of research.

One of the key elements of the regional package was the allocation of a dedicated element of funding under the ARC Strategic Partnerships with Industry–Research and Training (SPIRT) scheme (now known as Linkage–Projects) to research of concern and direct benefit to regional and rural areas. Under these arrangements, \$10 million (or 20 per cent of the budget of the scheme at that time) was to be earmarked to be allocated on a competitive basis to rural and regional research.

In 2002, two rounds of applications were conducted under the Linkage–Projects program. In both rounds, over 40 per cent of the total funding allocated was allocated to research projects of benefit to rural and regional (R&R) areas.

Summary details of the number of R&R applications received and funded in the two application rounds in 2002 (for initial funding in 2003) are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Linkage–Projects, Success Rates of R&R applications, 2003

	Applications (no.)	R&R %	Funded projects (no.)	R&R %	Approved funding (2003-07) (\$)	R&R %
ROUND 1						
Total	662		325		58,097,732	
R&R	323	49	148	46	24,787,923	43
ROUND 2						
Total	580		261		47,565,865	
R&R	265	46	111	43	21,355,875	45

R&R: Rural and regional