

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 3  
**Output Group:** 3.3

#### DEST Question No. E165\_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

Can you provide a listing of all the projects funded under the program, "International Centres of Excellence"? Please provide details of funding for each one over the life of the program.

Can you describe the basis on which they are funded – for how many years, under what conditions, type of contract or agreement and so on.

For how many years is each Centre funded in the first instance?

Is it the case that DEST is able to unilaterally to revoke or stop the funding for any one of these Centres without notice? Under what circumstances?

Aren't these centres supposed to operate autonomously from the Commonwealth?  
How does this sit with the concept of "arm's length" approach?

#### Answer:

*Projects funded under the program, "International Centres of Excellence"*

There are five international centres of excellence: Asia-Pacific Studies and Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy; Sustainable Tourism Education; Water Resource Management; Sports Science and Management; and Education in Mathematics.

The funding details for the centres are as follows

- Asia-Pacific Studies and Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy -- \$8.8 million over four years (2003-04 to 2006-07);
- Sustainable Tourism Education – \$2 million over four years (2003-04 to 2006-07);
- Water Resource Management – \$6.7 million over three years (2003-04 to 2005-06);
- Sports Science and Management – \$7.8 million over four years (2003-04 to 2006-07);
- Education in Mathematics - \$7.8 million over four years (2003-04 to 2006-07).

Each of the funding agreements for the Centres is based on the standard DEST funding agreement, adapted for the particular features of each Centre. Under these agreements DEST may, by written notice, terminate the agreement, or reduce its scope. This is intended to be used only in those circumstances where the Australian Government, because of a significant change of policy, wishes to discontinue the project.

In regard to termination, the Department's intention is to apply the position which pertains at common law where the doctrine of "executive necessity" permits such an action. The rationale is that a government cannot bind its own freedom to govern, nor that of any future government.

In the highly unlikely event that the project is curtailed, either by legislation or by change of policy, the agreement obliges the Commonwealth to pay all reasonable costs that may have been incurred and which are attributable to the termination. These costs include reasonable costs that would be incurred by the Centre in extricating itself from commitments it has entered into in accordance with the agreement.

The Centres will operate autonomously in that they have their own governance and management structures and are expected to manage their own activities. DEST will, however, monitor the Centres and their performance in accordance with the agreements made with the Centres.