

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome:** 3

**Output Group:** 3.2 - Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

#### **DEST Question No. E410\_04**

Senator Harradine asked on 5 November 2003, EWRE Hansard page 74.

#### **Question:**

“Would you provide me with those documents? .... With the funding agreements?” [MNRF grant to NSCC Ltd and Centre of Excellence grant to NSCC Ltd]

#### **Answer:**

*Funding Agreements for the Major National Research Facilities (MNRF) grant to the National Stem Cell Centre (NSCC) Ltd and the Centre of Excellence Grant to the NSCC.*

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) is responsible for the MNRF funding agreement with the NSCC. DEST is not responsible for the Centre of Excellence funding agreement between the NSCC and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) and the Australian Research Council (ARC). DEST has obtained the response below in relation to the Centre of Excellence funding agreement from DITR and the ARC.

#### (a) MNRF Funding Agreement

The Deed of Agreement of 30 June 2003 between the Commonwealth (signed by DEST on behalf of the Commonwealth) and NSCC Ltd, in relation to the MNRF Division of the NSCC is at attachment A. Parts of Schedule 1, the Business Plan have been removed for the reasons given in (c) below. Several tables in Schedule 4, Performance Indicators which (apart from the MNRF Specific Indicators) are identical to those in the Business Plan have also been removed for the reasons given in (c) below. Schedule 3, the Facility Budget has not been provided as this contains sensitive commercial information concerning the NSCC's strategy and priorities, the disclosure of which could disadvantage the NSCC.

#### (b) Centre of Excellence Funding Agreement

The Deed of Agreement of 30 May 2003 between the Commonwealth (signed by the ARC and DITR on behalf of the Commonwealth) and NSCC Ltd, in relation to the National Stem Cell Centre of Excellence (except Schedule 2, the Business Plan) is at attachment B.

#### (c) Business Plan

The Business Plan is common to both Deeds of Agreement. Parts of Volume I of the Business Plan have been removed and Volume II has not been provided as these contain sensitive commercial information, the disclosure of which could significantly undermine NSCC's commercial interest and may prejudice the NSCC's ability to deliver against its objectives under the Deeds. Volume II of the Business Plan details the specific research activities of the NSCC, including product-based research and commercialisation. Disclosure of this information could lead to loss of assets and potential IP within the NSCC and Stakeholder universities and institutions, and could provide commercial advantage to NSCC's competitors in terms of product development and market identification.