

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: ALL
Output Group: ALL

DEST Question No. E443_04

Senator Carr asked on 5 November 2003, EWRE Hansard page 71.

Question:

How do you respond to the [interim] Report's finding that "investment in and maintenance of Australia's research infrastructure appears to have declined and we face significant challenges in building adequate broadband infrastructure to support e-science and to leverage access to international infrastructure?"

Answer:

Mapping Australian Science and Innovation

The objective of the mapping study has been to take stock of the state of Australian science, technology and innovation by developing a comprehensive overview in terms of resources, players, linkages and performance. The terms of reference released by the Minister for Education, Science and Training in January 2003 required the collection and assessment of key factual information on our science and innovation system. The study was not to include consideration of policy options, but to lay the groundwork for future policy development by the Government. Issues about research infrastructure, along with other issues identified in the work, will be considered by the Government as it considers policy options in the follow-on to *Backing Australia's Ability*.

In the case of infrastructure, these issues have also been considered by the National Research Infrastructure Taskforce which was established to:

- identify the availability of, and gaps in, research infrastructure in the context of the National Research Priorities, and domestic and international research trends, across all disciplines;
- set out an overview of likely needs for investment to acquire research infrastructure, sustain its operation, and plan for its operation, including the skills necessary to use and operate it;
- consider how to foster collaborative acquisition, operation and research. It will also consider where access to research infrastructure should be pursued through international collaboration and how Australia's access to overseas infrastructure should be prioritised and pursued; and
- in the context of its natural advantages, identify opportunities for Australia to host research infrastructure.