

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: ALL

Output Group: ALL

DEST Question No. E447_04 and E448_04

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

Question:

Has the Department undertaken or commissioned any research in these fields of research infrastructure failure, skills shortages, falling award rates? If yes, can copies be provided?

In the face of such acute problems in these areas, and the evidence that this is a problem that has been evident for some time, the obvious question is just what the Department has been doing to address these problems?

Answer:

Mapping Australian Science and Innovation

Research conducted by the Taskforce on research infrastructure is set out in Section 3.1 of the main Report (released on 28 November 2003) and in the separate background paper on research infrastructure, which is available from the mapping website (<www.dest.gov.au/mapping/>). Similarly, research by the Taskforce on skills issues is set out in Section 3.2 of the main Report and in the separate background paper on skills for science and innovation which is also available from the mapping website. The only research commissioned by the Taskforce relevant to these issues is a paper prepared by Dr Bob Birrell of Monash University on *Skill Utilisation of Persons Trained in Australia*, which examines the extent to which persons trained in Australia's tertiary education institutions are utilising their educational credentials in relevant occupational fields. As with other case studies and research commissioned by the Taskforce as part of the mapping exercise, it is available from the mapping website. The terms of reference of the mapping study did not extend to developing recommendations for change or consideration of policy options.

The Government has commissioned a number of science and innovation-related reviews, which will feed into the Government's deliberations on future policy for science and innovation. In relation to research infrastructure, the report of the National Research Infrastructure Taskforce will inform the way forward for Government investment in research infrastructure for higher education institutions and publicly funded research agencies. In relation to skills, the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education Final Report, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*, was launched on 9 October 2003. The Minister for Education, Science and Training commissioned the report to examine the state of the teaching workforce in Australia.