

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 3

**Output Group:** 3.1 – Research infrastructure

#### **DEST Question No. E666\_06**

Senator Wong provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

Does DEST expect to change the ARC legislation in the light of the Minister's decision about the impact of the UHRIG Review on ARC governance? What is the timeline for this? What changes are foreseen to the governance arrangements for the ARC?

#### **Answer:**

##### *UHRIG Review*

Legislative changes will be required to give effect to the Minister's decisions. A copy of the Minister's Media Release titled *Enhancing Governance Arrangements – Australian Research Council*, is attached. Timelines have not been determined.

## **Media Release**

# **ENHANCING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS - AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL**

**15 July 2005 MIN 1155/05**

I am pleased to announce enhancements to the governance arrangements of the Australian Research Council (ARC).

The decision is informed by the recommendations of Mr John Uhrig's *Review of the Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders*. Mr Uhrig's report developed governance principles for Australian Government authorities that will improve performance and accountability. Two models for governance were recommended; one where governance is best provided by executive management, and the other where it is best provided by a board.

The Australian Government endorsed Mr Uhrig's report and decided that some 170 portfolio bodies would be assessed by their respective Ministers. The ARC was one of the first bodies to be assessed.

The functions of the ARC are best suited to the executive management template developed by Mr Uhrig and, as a result, I have decided to strengthen its arrangements so that it is fully consistent with this model. The existence of a board is inconsistent with the executive management model and I have therefore decided to retire the ARC Board by early 2006.

The revised arrangements will retain the ARC's independence and expedite the ARC's funding processes. This will provide greater certainty to researchers about the future of their ARC funding and allow the ARC to respond quickly and flexibly to emerging priorities. The ARC, under the guidance of CEO Professor Peter Høj, will retain its vital peer review processes and the College of Experts will continue to be a vital source of independent advice to Government.

The ARC will remain a statutory agency and will not return to the Department of Education, Science and Training.

These enhancements will be implemented as soon as legislation permits.

I thank the Board Members, and in particular the Chair, Mr Tim Besley, for their contribution to the ARC, and to the Australian scientific community in general. I have asked Board Members to continue to assist the ARC as it works towards its new arrangements.

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