

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3
Output Group: Output 3.1 - Research Infrastructure
 Output 3.2 - Assistance for Science Collaboration and Innovation

DEST Question No. E683_07

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

Page 107 of DEST Annual Report 2005-06 shows an underspend in Administered expenses relating to Research Infrastructure of \$15,766,000 (Budget 2005-06 \$585,137,000 vs. Actual of \$569,371,000).

Page 107 of DEST Annual Report 2005-06 shows an underspend in Administered expenses relating to Assistance for science collaboration and innovation of \$4,479,000 (Budgeted \$266,545,000 vs. Actual \$262,066,000).

Why was this the case? Please also provide a full breakdown of areas within each Output where actual expenditure was lower than budgeted, including the amounts underspent in each area?

Answer:

Outcome 3 Administered expenses

OUTPUT 3.1 - RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE				
Programme	2005-06 Revised Budget \$'000	2005-06 Expenses \$,000	Variation \$,000	Explanation
Systemic Infrastructure Programme	61,368	48,695	-12,673	Funding for the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative is allocated on a <i>calendar</i> year basis. The estimate for the first half of 2006 set aside \$14.1 million for a series of projects that were under development and subject to negotiation on costs. Some contracts were not finalised in time for the payments to be made by the end of June as had originally been anticipated.
Regional Protection Scheme	3,086	0	-3,086	Funding for the Regional Protection Scheme is allocated on a <i>calendar</i> year basis. The department did not make any payments to recipients because the 2006 grant amounts were not determined before 30 June 2006 as had originally been anticipated.
Programme	2005-06	2005-06	Variation	Explanation

	Revised Budget \$'000	Expenses \$,000	\$,000	
National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy	13,151	13,146	-5	Expenses are slightly less than the budget due to the nature of the programme. To exactly match the budget in a project based programme is not always possible.
Framework for Open Learning	2,853	2,851	-2	Expenses are slightly less than the budget due to the nature of the programme. To exactly match the budget in a project based programme is not always possible.
Variance			-15,766	

OUTPUT 3.2 - ASSISTANCE FOR SCIENCE COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION				
Programme	2005-06 Revised Budget \$'000	2005-06 Expenses \$,000	Variation \$,000	Explanation
Radio Active Waste Management	4,714	845	-3,869	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments required to settle residual compensation costs for the failed national repository project land acquisition were less than had originally been anticipated prior to settlement proceeding. • Site characterisation studies for Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility commenced mid financial year rather than start of financial year as had been originally anticipated. Also, the Commonwealth was able to achieve tendered prices for these studies that were less than originally anticipated.
Defence of Common Law – Atomic Tests (RRWM)	543	0	-543	No actions taken against Commonwealth during financial year.
Cooperative Research Centres	208,197	208,097	-100	Expenses are slightly less than the budget due to the nature of the programme. To exactly match the budget in a project based programme is not always possible.
Variance			-4,482	