

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 24 May-3rd June 2010

Question: PM100

Topic: Research Support for National Security

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 July 2010

Number of pages: 4

- a) **What is the role of the Research Support for National Security program?**
- b) **How is the allocation of grants determined?**
- c) **The program is due to terminate on the 30 June 2012. Why is the government terminating the program?**
- d) **According to the PBS 2010-11 p.29 the budget allocation for the program is:**
 - i. **2010-11 \$5,027**
 - ii. **2011-12 is \$3,364**
 - iii. **Why does the figure differ from PBS 2009-10 p.38 2011-12 \$5,100?**
 - iv. **Why has there been a decrease in funds for the 2011-12 year?**
- e) **At the Senate Estimates hearings in May last year Mr Davis indicated that that there would be a new round of applications for grants in August 2009.**
 - i. **How many applications were received for the August round?**
 - ii. **Were decisions made on the allocation of grant funds?**
 - iii. **How were the priority areas for research determined?**

Answer:

- a) **What is the role of the Research Support for National Security program?**

The Research Support for National Security program co-funds science and innovation projects aimed at enhancing Australia's national security capabilities.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 24 May-3rd June 2010

b) How is the allocation of grants determined?

Grant applications are assessed by independent panels based on criteria published in the program guidelines on the Department's website at: www.dpmc.gov.au/nsst/research_support.cfm. Authorised departmental officers sign-off on the selection of projects, the commencement of contract negotiations and the final deeds agreed with the researchers.

The majority of grants are allocated to projects following an open call for applications, advertised nationally and via the departmental website. For such calls, the Branch identifies research priorities through liaison with national security agencies and with reference to appropriate strategic guidance (previously the National Security Science and Technology Capability Framework, now the National Security Science and Innovation Strategy). A small number of grants have been awarded to ad hoc project proposals which address urgent requirements or provide innovative solutions to emerging or existing security challenges. A number of projects which achieved successful initial outcomes have been extended and provided with additional funding to continue work of value to the national security community.

c) The program is due to terminate on the 30 June 2012. Why is the government terminating the program?

The Department gained initial funding for the program in the 2004-05 Budget and through a more substantial allocation in the 2007-08 Budget that provided terminating funding through to the end of 2011-12. Any future funding is subject to decision by government and the program will be reviewed prior to the next Budget.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 24 May-3rd June 2010

d) According to the PBS 2010-11 p.29 the budget allocation for the program is:

i. 2010-11 \$5,027

ii. 2011-12 is \$3,364

iii. Why does the figure differ from PBS 2009-10 p.38 2011-12 \$5,100?

iv. Why has there been a decrease in funds for the 2011-12 year?

The variation between the 2009-10 PBS and the 2010-11 PBS figures was due to the Department's identification of potential savings in the final year of current funding for the program.

The Research Support for National Security program generally supports research projects over two or more financial years, with only a limited number of smaller or scoping activities able to be completed within a twelve month window. The revised figure for 2011-12 includes support for projects already in train and an appropriate amount of new work (focussed on international collaborative activities).

Any proposal that may be developed to extend the program beyond 30 June 2012 will be able to consider the need for continuity of funding within 2011-12 and incorporate any requirement for additional funding within a broader resourcing proposal.

e) At the Senate Estimates hearings in May last year Mr Davis indicated that that there would be a new round of applications for grants in August 2009.

i. How many applications were received for the August round?'

The call for applications, which commenced on 24 August 2009 and closed on 2 October 2009, received 86 applications.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 24 May-3rd June 2010

ii. Were decisions made on the allocation of grant funds?

Yes – the allocation process was competitive, with 19 projects provided with grants from the 86 applications. Information on the grants is published on the Department's website at www.dpmc.gov.au/nsst/research_support.cfm.

iii. How were the priority areas for research determined?

The priority areas, as listed at www.dpmc.gov.au/nsst/research_support.cfm, were established following a review of the program's portfolio of current and completed projects against the twelve national security objectives for science and innovation identified for inclusion in the National Security Science and Innovation Strategy.