

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

National Committees for Science: ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL on 2008 activities

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR: BRAIN AND MIND

CHAIR: Professor M Coltheart FAA FASSA FBA

PERIOD COVERED IN THIS REPORT: 1 January - 31 December, 2008

Please complete and return this form by 12 December 2008.

NOTE: This report will be published on the Academy of Science website at www.science.org.au/natcoms

MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE MET ON:

It was hoped to hold a meeting in December 2008 but, this proving impossible, there will be a meeting in January 2009

THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS ARE PROPOSED FOR 2009 (include date and place, if possible):

Last week of January 2009

MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED WITH ICSU

A little history is needed here. The National Committee for Brain and Mind (NCBM) was established as a consequence of the National Committee for Psychology (NCP) being dissolved. The international organization affiliated with the NCP was the International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS), and the Academy paid a subscription to that Union. When I was Chair of the NCP, it seemed to me that this Union was insufficiently scientific for it to be worth the Academy being affiliated with it, and advised disaffiliation; which the Academy did. I also argued that the annual conference of the IUPsyS was too large and too diffuse for attendance at it to be of interest to serious psychological scientists. As it happens, I was subsequently invited to one of the IUPsyS conferences, the one held in Berlin in 2008, and accepted that invitation because I was asked to debate publicly with one of the world's leading authorities on brain imaging, Professor Karl Friston FRS, on the topic: "Functional neuroimaging has already told us a lot about cognition: Yes or No?", a topic of direct interest to the NCBM..

That was useful with respect to the concerns of the NCBM. But observing this conference at close quarters confirmed my view that attendance at this conference was not a useful activity for psychological or cognitive scientists or neuroscientists. The Committee will therefore

consider at its meeting next month what international organization the NCBM would most appropriately be affiliated with, and so then consider the issue of delegates,

ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE – Please include comments on progress achieved on projected activities identified in your 2008 Business Plan. 2008 Business plans can be viewed at www.science.org.au/natcoms

Go to <http://www.science.org.au/reports/2008anrep.htm>, to view the Chairs' Reports on 2007 activities.

I SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN calendar year 2008 (200-250 words):

2008 was the first year of existence of the National Committee for Brain and Mind and progress in its initial year was limited by the Chair being overseas in Europe for three periods. However, his public debate with Professor Karl Friston FRS at the International Congress of Psychology in Berlin in July on a topic central to the interests of this Committee, "Functional neuroimaging has already told us a lot about cognition: Yes or No?", yielded a great deal of scientific interaction and media attention which will provide valuable input into the Committee's future deliberations (such as the development of a media release aimed at correcting the public's misconceptions about what functional neuroimaging can and can't reveal about mental activities).

Please complete and return this form by 12 December 2008 to:

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