



AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL'S ROLE IN DETERMINING QUALITY RESEARCH MUST BE SUPPORTED

A STATEMENT PREPARED AND SUPPORTED BY:

- **THE AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL OF DEANS OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**
- **THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF DEANS OF SCIENCES**
- **THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF DEANS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

Australian universities' deans of sciences, arts, social sciences, humanities and information and communications technology are issuing a joint call to the new Federal Government to support the Australian Research Council's (ARC's) vital role in maintaining the integrity of Australia's comprehensive research funding system through its independent assessment processes. The ARC's role is critical in assessing research from all disciplines, as well as assessing the quality and excellence of research where narrow definitions of impact or societal relevance may not apply.

The Australian public should expect nothing less than the highest quality research from its universities. The best way to ensure this is to maintain a rigorous, peer-review based evaluation of the allocation of research funding that draws on leading experts in their fields from Australia and around the world.

We strongly support the role of the ARC in ensuring Australia's comprehensive research system – encompassing basic and applied research across the life sciences, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, humanities and creative arts – produces the highest quality research possible. In light of this we express our concern about recent claims that the ARC has funded 'wasteful' research and urge respect for the expertise of the ARC in ensuring appropriate use of taxpayer funds and that Australia supports outstanding research across the disciplines.

Australian universities have a global reputation for outstanding and innovative research across a wide range of disciplines spanning the sciences, humanities and creative arts. As Deans of faculties in which much of this outstanding research is carried out, we know how important it is to support ground-breaking research that tackles the most difficult and challenging questions in fundamental ways. The kind of innovation that leads to great discoveries that benefit the nation comes from a comprehensive research system in which basic research is a vital component, driven and carried out by our talented research workforce.

Many of the significant challenges facing Australia today will require even greater interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation than ever before. The solutions of the future will require new knowledge that brings together the life sciences, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities in new and creative formations.

It is important that universities are held accountable for the investment in our research provided by the Australian taxpayer. We welcome the ongoing measures introduced by the Government to evaluate our research against the best in the world and to strive for quality. We also welcome the rigorous evaluation process currently in place to decide on the allocation of ARC and NHMRC research funds.

A critical aspect of the success of Australia's universities has been a fundamental commitment to the value of basic research. We look forward to working with the new Coalition Government to continue to support Australia's outstanding research system and our universities more generally.

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