

DASSH welcomes leaders and members of the 31st parliament

23 May, 2022

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities welcomes the incoming Labor government, along with the suite of new independent and Green members in the lower house.

While results in the Senate are yet to be finalised, this election has shown that the Australian public wants change, with voters endorsing women independents with backgrounds ranging from NGO leadership, to medicine, to journalism.

We hope this new influx of voices with diverse backgrounds will form the basis for strong communication with representatives of our sector, bringing about change for the better. Now, more than ever, we need strong, critical, analytical and interdisciplinary voices in Parliament – a highly diverse set of voices.

DASSH looks forward to working with the incoming Minister for Education, Tanya Plibersek, to rebuild funding for and confidence in humanities, arts and social sciences research and teaching.

In particular DASSH will be working to bring about change to the Research Commercialisation Action Plan, the Jobs Ready Graduate Package and reforms to the Australian Research Council.

Taken together, these three policy shifts represent a sustained assault on the arts, humanities and social sciences. Ministerial vetoes of ARC discovery grants in late 2021 have added to the picture of federal government disregard for our fields of education and research and their role in Australian society.

The value of our disciplines can be seen in every part of Australian life. Without arts, humanities and social sciences research we would not be using languages to build peace and diplomacy in our region, or have our current social institutions forging democracy. We would have little shared conceptual knowledge of our nation's ancient histories and Indigenous cultures.

We have extensive collective experience as deans of these disciplinary fields in almost every university in Australia. We argue that researchers in the humanities, arts and social sciences have been highly responsive to the need to forge relevant research.

We look forward to working within the new paradigm, with representatives of every persuasion, for the better of our members, academics and researchers, teachers and their hundreds of thousands of students from the humanities, arts and social sciences sector.

Professor Catharine Coleborne

President, Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities