

STATEMENT

DASSH responds to the Federal Government's veto of six Australian Research Council grants

19 January 2022

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities holds serious concerns about the veto exercised by the Acting Minister for Education over six Australian Research Council Discovery Grants on Christmas Eve in 2021.

Given all six affected projects were from the humanities and social sciences disciplines, DASSH believes it signals the continued disregard for important areas of Australia's intellectual culture and life.

Our belief aligns with many university sector and humanities, arts and social sciences organisations. More than 1,500 academics from Australia and around the world have signed an open letter calling on Acting Education Minister Stuart Robert to reverse the decision "and commit to legislating the complete independence of the ARC from government interference and censorship".

DASSH President Professor Catharine Coleborne said "Our almost 300 members, the Deans, Deputy and Associate Deans from more than 40 universities in Australia and New Zealand work inside universities with increasingly constrained research funding opportunities.

"Historically, the lack of significant competitive funding for arts, humanities and social science research means that we are continually disadvantaged. The fact that all six grants vetoed by the Acting Minister come from these disciplines compounds this experience.

"We continually seek opportunities to partner with industry and attract philanthropic funding for our important research. Yet our universities also prize Category 1 funding from the premier funding body in the country, the ARC, in our disciplines," Professor Coleborne said.

"Career progression and the international standing of our academic researchers at all levels is damaged by the relative lack of funding for our disciplines. Curiosity-driven 'blue-sky' inquiry in the arts, social sciences and humanities deepens the cultural and social understanding of our society.

"That curiosity is also critical to the delivery of the more than 400 science, technology, engineering and maths projects funded in this grant round."

Of the projects funded, just one in four are in the humanities, arts and social sciences.

Further to a previous [statement](#), President Catharine Coleborne said this decision also heightens the impact of changes to the ARC announced late last year which will materially damage funding prospects for Linkage Projects in the humanities, arts and social sciences.

"Among the proposed changes is a move to allocate 70 per cent of funding under the ARC's linkage scheme based on the six National Manufacturing Priorities," she said.

"There is no doubt that some industry collaboration is crucial when considering the allocation of research funding – this turns to student employment outcomes and the technological and economic advancement of Australia. However, DASSH is strongly of the opinion that HASS disciplines can also make important contributions in pursuing these ends together with their STEM counterparts."

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