



We, the **Presidents of Australia's Learned Academies**, are committed to a research and innovation system underpinned by the expertise and talent of researchers across the sciences, humanities, technology and engineering, social sciences, and health and medicine.

We urge that our system be consistent with world's best practice, where expertise in both conducting research, and evaluating which research to support, is essential.

This provides confidence to the community that pays for it, the politicians who prioritise it, and the researchers who conduct it, ensuring that the outcomes of our research support a culturally rich, economically prosperous and secure Australia.

Through the Australian Research Council (ARC), grants are awarded to our best researchers and are assessed by national and international experts. Acting Minister for Education and Youth, Stuart Robert MP, recently exercised his veto power to reject six projects recommended for funding by the ARC.

When the integrity of Australia's research system is compromised by perceived, or actual, political interference, there are real costs to the research sector and indeed the nation – as trust is eroded and the relationships researchers have with industry, the Australian community, and international partners are damaged.

Australia's research system must be responsive to national priorities, with strong governance and innovative and responsive funding schemes. Arbitrary judgements should play no part in a fit-for-purpose system.

We believe there is a strong national interest in a constructive relationship between the government of the day and the research sector.

Australia's Learned Academies are ready to work with the Government, the ARC, and universities to find a way forward, and to uphold Australia's reputation as a home, and champion of, international best practice research.

Professor Lesley Head FASSA FAHA – President, Australian Academy of the Humanities

Professor John Shine AC FRS PresAA – President, Australian Academy of Science

Professor Hugh Bradlow FTSE – President, Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering

Professor Richard Holden FES FASSA – President, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

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