



# RESTORING INTEGRITY TO THE AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

## HIGHLIGHTS

A Shorten Labor Government will restore integrity to the Australian Research Council and end the political manipulation of world class, peer review assessment of competitive grants.

## THE ISSUE

In Australia's major research funding councils – the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – our nation has strong, effective processes to ensure that only the best research gets funded.

The exposure of secret political interventions into the ARC grant processes has exposed the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison government's obsession with playing culture war games and suppressing expert advice they don't like. They have also abandoned measures that ensured that refusals to sign off on ARC recommendations for funding would be fully transparent.

For a century, our research system has been guided by a principle that politicians should not be allowed to pick and choose what research gets conducted or funded at universities. In the UK this is called the Haldane principle.

These basic protections are not enshrined in law. They should not need to be, but the actions of Liberal Ministers have made it necessary.

The Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Government has broken the relationship between the Commonwealth and the Australian research community. They have constantly interfered and manipulated, on political and ideological grounds, in the allocation of science and research funding.

Time and time again they have demonstrated their contempt for Australia's research enterprise. Only Labor will end the war on research.

## LABOR'S PLAN:

This measure will commit a Shorten Labor government to legislating to restore the integrity of the Australian Research Council.

Our legislation will place an explicit reference to an Australian interpretation of the Haldane principle – that politicians should not pick and choose individual research projects based on political whim – into the objects of the Australian Research Council Act.

We will also legislate a requirement that Ministers must table an explanation in Parliament within 15 sitting days of rejecting an recommendation of funding by the Chief Executive Officer.

Further changes, if required, will be informed by Professor Chubb's *Research in Australia* review.