

HIGHLIGHTS

A Shorten Labor Government will institute a once in a generation inquiry into the Commonwealth Government's research system, to be led by Professor Ian Chubb, former Chief Scientist of Australia and former Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University.

THE ISSUE

Australia's overall research framework and its coherence have not had serious review for years. In the meantime, marginal changes have been made to policy, funding cuts have been imposed and political interference has left behind a system that could benefit from a root-and-branch examination.

This is not novel or unique to Australia. Most notably recently, both the UK and Canada have undertaken and implemented reviews to ensure that maximum value is obtained from the public investment in research.

In 2015 Sir Paul Nurse conducted a review of research funding – *Ensuring a successful UK research endeavour*. The review recommended the establishment of a new body, UK Research and Innovation, to provide better co-ordination and coherence to the UK's various funding councils and research funders.

In Canada the Fundamental Science Review, colloquially known as the Naylor Review, inquired into federally funded research. Its final report, *Investing in Canada's future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research*, led to the creation of the Canadian Research Coordinating committee the establishment of a *Tri-Agency Fund* to streamline research funding and the *Innovation superclusters initiative* on key areas of dense government and business activity.

We must ensure that Australia maintains its international competitive advantage, and that we do not lose our capacity to attract and retain the world's best researchers.

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, as demonstrated by:

- the \$443 million grant to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation in a 15 minute meeting
- the axing of jobs at the CSIRO, including targeted climate change research
- the vetoing of humanities research grants and the imposition of a "national interest test" on the Australian Research Council

Time and time again they have demonstrated their contempt for Australia's research enterprise. Under Labor this will change.

LABOR'S PLAN

A Shorten Labor government will establish a review into *Research in Australia*

The review will focus on international best practice in organising our research system and the need to maintain our capacity for basic and translational research. The review will be expected to provide the government with a comprehensive explanation of Australia's research effort – its coherence and its quality, its gaps and its needs

Labor RESEARCH IN AUSTRALIA

The assessment of the overall research framework will be conducted by Professor Ian Chubb AC FAA FTSE FACE FRSN. He will be supported by an Advisory Group which will include members whose background gives them a broad perspective on the research sector as a whole.

The Group will include:

- Professor Christobel Saunders AO FRCS FRACS FAAHMS, University of Western Australia;
- Professor Emma Johnston AO FRSN, University of New South Wales;
- Professor Karen Hussey University of Queensland;
- Mr Phil Clark AM, JP Morgan Advisory Council;
- Professor Glyn Davis AC FASSA FIIPA

Additional members will be announced in due course.

RESEARCH IN AUSTRALIA - TERMS OF REFERENCE

A Shorten Labor Government will be committed to building the research base required for our nation to shape its own destiny in a complex and unpredictable world.

Public investment in research is the crucial enabler of the inspired risk-taking that builds national wealth in the fullest sense – cultural, social, environmental and economic.

Our future rests on our capacity to embrace research as part of the fundamental fabric of our country.

For too long, our research has drifted without a national strategy, a champion in government or a vision worthy of our true potential. Funds have been stripped and programs abolished without understanding or regard for the flow-on effects.

Labor's ambition is clear: 3 per cent of GDP to be invested in research by 2030, and every dollar well-spent.

As a vital first step, we will assess the overall support framework for research to understand what measures we need to take to position our researchers for the important contribution we rely on them to make.

This inquiry will examine, and provide recommendations, on:

- International best practice in the public programs and policy settings that are crucial to enabling research.
- Australia's existing research profile, and its alignment with national needs and strengths.
- The responsiveness of the funding system to needs and national priorities as they emerge, and the balance between strategic priorities identified by government and investigator-led research.
- Protection of public-benefit research, research integrity and ethics.
- The extent of, and support for, interdisciplinary research.
- Our influence at the global table, capacity to attract global talent, and connections with global partners
- The overall coherence of different channels of public funding, including research grants, research funding in departmental budgets, and research funding provided by the states and territories
- The adequacy, sustainability and effectiveness of funding for research infrastructure.
- The research workforce, its distribution, and its diversity.
- Balancing support for experienced and early and mid-career researchers
- The ability of the funding system to provide for the full spectrum of activities expected of the modern researcher.
- Mechanisms to develop effective and abiding collaboration between industry and the research sector.
- The oversight mechanisms required to maximise the outcomes for all Australians, whilst minimising the administrative burden on researchers.