



SCIENCE AND RESEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA

HIGHLIGHTS

A Shorten Labor Government will end the war on science and research by resetting the relationship between the Australian Government and Australia's science and research community. We will:

- Institute a charter with the Australian science and research community
- Establish a Prime Ministers Science and Innovation Council, supported by a National Scientific Expert Panel
- Review and strengthen the National Science and Research priorities, giving the priorities a central role in guiding government investments in innovation, science and research

THE ISSUE

Scientific research and development are fundamental to a nation's capacity for innovation and underpin the creation of new jobs, economic growth and productivity.

That is why Labor is committed to working with business, industry, universities and research institutes to boost Australia's investment in research and development to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030. Part of mobilising this effort must be to enter a compact with the Australian science and research community to establish a basis for working together to improve Australia's performance.

Under the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Government Australia's research and development performance has declined, with R&D as a percentage of GDP falling from 2.12 % in 2011 to 1.88% in 2015. Latest figures on Commonwealth investment in science, research and innovation show that spending will be \$358 million lower in this financial year (In real terms), compared with Labor's last year in government.

The Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Government has broken the relationship between the Commonwealth and the Australian science and 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
- the axing of jobs at the CSIRO, including targeting climate change research
- ministerial culling of humanities and social sciences 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 science and research.

Under Labor this will change.

LABOR'S PLAN

Labor will end the war on science and research by resetting the relationship between the Australian Government and Australia's science and research community. We will:

- Develop a charter with the Australian science and research community to establish the reciprocal role and responsibilities of government and researchers
- Establish a Prime Ministers Science and Innovation Council, supported by a National Scientific Expert Panel



- Review and strengthen the National Science and Research priorities, giving the priorities a central role in guiding government investments in innovation, science and research

The **charter with the Australian science and research community** will be a compact between the government and the research community, in which the expectations and obligations of scientists to the Australian people are clearly established and the commitment and reciprocal responsibilities of scientists and government will be established.

Australia's researchers should expect from Labor a government that respects the professional status and knowledge of experts, protects them from political interference and respects the rights of researchers to publish and communicate the outcomes of their work – all while providing them with the best support the nation can afford. In return we expect the science and research community to strive towards meeting our national challenges and to help ensure that we have, in our great nation, a civilisation worth defending.

Labor will establish a top level **Prime Minister's Council for Science and Innovation**. The current *Commonwealth Science Council* has not met for fifteen months, and has been ineffective and ignored by this government.

Under Labor, the Council will be responsible for providing advice to the Prime Minister and other Ministers on the implications of science, research, engineering and technology issues in the Australian context. It will advise a Shorten Labor Government on a strategic and whole-of-government approach to all aspects of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and innovation.

Membership of the Council will be the Prime Minister (Chair), a Cabinet level Minister with responsibility for Science (deputy Chair), the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for Health, Australia's Chief Scientist (Executive Officer), five eminent and practicing scientists, social scientists or science educators (including at least one with a humanities or social sciences background), and four eminent business representatives.

The Council will be supported by a National Scientific Expert Panel which will provide policy advice on topics that affect the lives of Australians in the present and in the decade ahead. Labor will work with the Learned Academies, led by the Australian Academy of Science, to shape the form and function of this council.

Labor will review, refresh and properly monitor the **National Science and Research Priorities**. The priorities have an important role in guiding Australia's investment in our future. Under this government they have been largely ignored and have become a meaningless tick and flick exercise. Labor will ensure that they are reviewed every two years.