

Inquiry into Funding Australia's Research

On 9 May 2018, the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training adopted an inquiry into *Funding Australia's Research*. The inquiry was referred by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham. The Committee was asked to inquire into and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and coherency of Australian Government funding for research. Terms of Reference for the inquiry can be found [here](#).

Aim of inquiry

The aim of this inquiry is to examine ways to improve the *administration* of Australia's research funding. In particular, the Committee will examine ways to reduce red tape, and to help reduce the time and effort spent by researchers applying for research funding. By improving the administration of research funding processes, it is envisaged that researchers will have more time to conduct innovative and collaborative research, which drives Australia's economic and social prosperity.

Background

In 2017-18, the Australian Government invested \$10.3 billion in research. Much of this investment was provided to research institutions through a range of competitive grant and block grant processes. These processes require research institutions to spend considerable time and effort applying for research funding. In the majority of cases, these applications will be unsuccessful; with approximately 80 per cent not securing research funding.

The current system of Australian research funding is complex, involving a range of programs, open to a broad range of agencies and institutions, and characterised by different application processes. This inquiry will consider ways to streamline and simplify application and assessment processes, rather than examine different types of research or specific funding allocation.

The Committee is aware of recent reviews of research funding arrangements.¹ While the Committee acknowledges there is some overlap between its inquiry and these reviews, it will not be revisiting these issues as part of this inquiry. The Committee does however welcome any additional views which would help streamline research funding application and assessment processes.

Submissions

Interested stakeholders and parties are invited to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry by 30 June 2018. Further information on making a submission to the inquiry can be found [here](#).

¹ *Performance Review of the Australian Innovation, Science and Research System*, Innovation and Science Australia (December 2016), *Structural Review of NHMRC's Grant Program*, NHMRC (July 2016), and *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements*, Dr Ian Watt (November 2015).