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AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL (ARC)**

**Opening Statement  
Education and Employment Legislation Committee  
Budget Estimates 2023-24**

**Friday, 2 June 2023**

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has a proud history in supporting amazing research in Australia by our great researchers. We are critical to the national research system achieving excellent research and play a leading role in supporting Australia's highest-quality fundamental and applied research, research training and infrastructure. It's great to have an opportunity to provide you with insight into the work we have been doing over the past year.

Since early 2022, the ARC has been engaging in a comprehensive reform agenda to ensure the agency can meet the needs and expectations of Government, the research sector, and the Australian community. This reform agenda has been guided by the *ARC Strategy 2022–2025* and the Minister's Statement of Expectations.

Almost one year since the release of the Strategy in August 2022, we have been delivering on our priorities to provide world-class advice and engagement, support research system excellence, and empower our people. In particular, we've made significant improvements in our engagement with universities, researchers and industry, and as a result, achieved substantial streamlining of our program guidelines and application forms, which greatly benefits researchers.

Other highlights include:

- Delivery of the first full round of the Industry Fellowships Programs that was co-designed with the research sector;
- Release of assessor scores and feedback to unsuccessful applicants for the Industry Fellowships Programs providing them greater transparency and support. Following this successful trial, we will now implement this as standard practice for our programs; and
- Provision to the Minister of a transition plan for a new research evaluation and impact framework for all university research.

The ARC notes the final report of the Independent Review of the Australian Research Council, '*Trusting Australia's Ability' Review of the ARC Act 2001*', which was delivered to the Minister in April 2023.

While a response to the Review is a matter for the Government, the Review is a strong endorsement of the role and positive impact the ARC has had on Australia's research capability over the last twenty years.

My team and I are currently considering the range of ideas and feedback provided in submissions to the Review as well as preparing to take action when the Minister responds to the recommendations.

Overall, it's an exciting time for the ARC as we work with partners and stakeholders to ensure we are maximising the investment of taxpayer dollars in innovative and impactful research for the advancement of all Australians.