



25 September 2019

Committee Secretariat
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

Swinburne University of Technology welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee's inquiry into the Emergency Response Fund Bill 2019.

While Swinburne supports the Government's intent to create a fund to deal with future emergency responses, particularly given the likelihood of future extreme weather events and other disasters, in our considered opinion the total reallocation of Education Investment Fund (EIF) monies for this purpose is short-sighted.

As a public university, our teaching and research missions have benefitted significantly from past EIF funding. Swinburne received \$40m from the EIF in 2010 towards our \$100m Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre (AMDC).

This funding resulted in a state of the art educational facility, with direct benefits to both undergraduate and postgraduate STEM students, and the broader research community.

Importantly, this building has enabled engineers and designers to collaborate in shared spaces, such as the Melbourne Design Factory which is linked with similar design labs in California, Finland, China and Chile. The Factory also creates an interface for innovative solutions between the university and industry sectors.

The AMDC also houses high tech laboratories including a pilot manufacturing plant for innovative 'thin film' solar cell production, and the Factory of the Future, which serves as a test bed for the Federal Government's Industry 4.0 initiative. The Factory brings industry, CSIRO and the University together, to help transform the manufacturing sector in Australia into the global, digital era.

The Government's contribution of \$40m from the EIF was critical for the development of this transformative AMDC building, which is central to our future as a University. Given that Swinburne is now in the process of further campus master planning, and we have identified significant and pressing infrastructure needs, the existence of a higher education infrastructure fund of some description will again be vital to delivering fit for purpose facilities for our students.

The teaching and research outcomes made possible by facilities such as the AMDC will help Australia continue to attract top global talent, and will ensure the higher education sector is able to drive further economic growth in this country. Without the EIF, we will have no dedicated fund to support worthy projects of the nature described above.

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Vice-Chancellor and President

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Given the undeniable importance and prudence of setting aside a fund for disaster recovery, if even part of the frozen EIF fund could be released and designated for higher education infrastructure needs, this would be a most welcome development for our students, researchers and the Australian economy.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely

Professor Linda Kristjanson AO, FAICD, FTSE, PhD
Vice-Chancellor and President