

UNSW responses to PJCIS Questions on Notice

Can each university provide material evidence of:

1. What Foreign Interference tools do they have in place and when were they developed?

Following the release of the University Foreign Interference Guidelines (UFIG) in November 2019, UNSW established a new Division of Assurance & Planning, headed by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor George Williams AO. This Division is leading the University's work to review UNSW's existing policies and practices including, but not limited to, procurement, third-party engagements, gifts and sponsorships, staff recruitment and cyber-security framework.

In 2021, UNSW established a new *Framework to Counter Foreign Interference* to further strengthen protections against national security risks. This document was provided to the Committee as part of our opening statement at the hearing on 19 March 2021.

Further information on UNSW's response to foreign interference can be found in our submission to the inquiry.

2. What business processes do they use in the implementation of those tools?

Refer to UNSW's *Framework to Counter Foreign Interference*, which has previously been presented to the inquiry.

- 3. What criteria do they use to assess an engagement with a foreign entity and identify the risks?**
- 4. What is their definition of non-mitigatable risk?**
- 5. How many engagements have they reviewed and when did they start with the review?**
- 6. Were any cases reviewed prior to the tools mentioned above being developed/implemented? If so, how?**
- 7. How many new engagements have been rejected, when and on what basis?**
- 8. What risks or irregularities with previous/ongoing engagements have been identified?**
- 9. How did the institution address the risks?**

Answer to questions 3-9:

As highlighted in our submission to the inquiry, UNSW liaises regularly with a range of Federal Government agencies, including security agencies, and draws on their advice relating to relevant risks and appropriate risk mitigation strategies. That advice also informs our own due diligence processes, including the review of foreign arrangements.

This was the case prior to the development of our *Framework to Counter Foreign Interference*, and will continue into the future.

UNSW has reviewed thousands of arrangements, and continues to assess new and existing arrangements to identify risks. Where risks are identified, we act accordingly. However, we do not keep statistics relating to such instances.

Further information can be found in UNSW's written submission to the inquiry, as well as evidence presented at the hearing on 19 March 2021.

10. Have they found any irregularities in previous/ongoing engagements that may create a conflict with federal funding provisions?

No.

11. Did the development of an internal FI framework also prompt a review of existing internal conflict of interest policies?

Yes, and UNSW has implemented a new mandatory disclosure policy for all staff as a result.

12. What steps have they taken to prevent IP theft?

UNSW has a robust process for the disclosure by its employees of any IP arising from research, to ensure that where appropriate and possible, UNSW owned IP is registered, and commercialisation opportunities are secured. UNSW requires that collaboration arrangements with research partners including foreign entities contain appropriate IP provisions to ensure that ownership and use rights are protected.

UNSW has a well-established Intellectual Property (IP) framework, outlined in the UNSW IP Policy, which is publicly available at <https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/ippolicy.pdf>.

UNSW also continues to implement cyber-security protocols, including the establishment of a new research oversight committee for third party commercialisation to protect the University and its researchers from IP and patent theft.

13. Is there a central repository/register of institutional IP?

Yes. UNSW maintains a central IP register covering patents registered or applied for in the name of the University's nominee, NSi.

14. Do they have a mandatory storage/access/sharing of research materials that belong to sensitive subject matters in a system-based repository server that creates an audit trail?

Yes. The detection of potential or actual information security incidents relies on timely and comprehensive event information being available from key security controls. These events are critical during forensic investigation in the event of a security incident. The IT Security standard sets out the baseline requirements for logging and monitoring security events within UNSW. The UNSW policy is publicly available at https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/ITSS_06.pdf.

The University is also required to identify and document its high-risk and high-value records and information, and the systems that manage them. UNSW maintains a High-Risk High Value Records Register. Further information can be found at <https://www.recordkeeping.unsw.edu.au/information-governance/high-value-high-risk-records>.

UNSW

- 1. Question: In February 2019, UNSW signed a \$3 million deal with the "Providence Asset Group" (PAG) and kick-funded UNSW Professor Joe Dong's Digital Grid Futures Institute and the ARC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions. Was this announcement taken off the UNSW website? If so, why did UNSW do this and who is behind Providence Asset Group? Who initiated this venture?**

Providence Asset Group is an Australian company and has a range of renewable energy assets in Australia (see <https://providences.com.au>). UNSW has extensive research strength in renewable energy and collaborates with a large number of industry, government and community organisations in this sector. These collaborations could ultimately be of significant value to the Australian economy, and closely align with the Government's stated policy priorities. All research undertaken is subject to compliance with relevant regulations.

An article was written about the New Energy Industry Research Centre (NEIRC) that was going to be established between PAG and the Digital Grid Futures Institute (DGFI). However, this collaboration did not go ahead and the article was removed from the UNSW newsroom as there was no longer any association between DGFI and PAG.

A similar article remains on PAG's website, with changed content to reflect a separate and subsequent partnership between PAG and the UNSW Hydrogen Research Centre (HERC), that was entered into in 2020. Further information on HERC can be found at <https://www.herc.unsw.edu.au>.

- 2. Question: Does UNSW know that the academic advisor to PAG in its links with UNSW and beyond is Professor Li Guangjun 李光俊 of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, which is intimately tied with the PLA?**

UNSW is aware of Mr Li. However, he is not involved in any activity at UNSW, either via PAG or otherwise.

- 3. Question: The Australian Research Council provided \$12 million to UNSW for the RC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions at UNSW, led by Professor Joe Dong of UNSW. Other key figures in the new UNSW operation include Thousand Talents scholar Wang Guoxiu of UTS, Jie Bao of UNSW and Professor Rose Amal of UNSW. What was the rationale behind these appointments? What vetting was in place that allowed these appointments?**

This question is based on an erroneous Tweet, and the value of the ARC grant to UNSW is \$3.1 million. For further information see the answer to questions 3, 11, 12 (below)

- 4. Question: We know that the team leader UNSW Prof Joe Dong has links to these projects and was, until recently, a PRC Thousand Talent Program scholar and ran a research program for China's second largest grid China Southern Power Grid as a Thousand Talents program scholar, and registered patents for that company while**

employed at UNSW. We also know that People's Daily (in 2017) noted Joe Dong as head of Changsha University of Science and Technology's School of Electrical & Information Engineering involved in "Internet Operation and Planning of Energy Based on Distributed Optical Storage". Also, today PRC majority-owned Jemena is now working with UNSW energy project run by former China Southern Power Grid research leader and Thousand Talent Program scholar Joe Dong (董朝阳) to trial intelligent control technologies in Australia's power grid. Is UNSW concerned about this intimate intrusion by PRC-tied figures and operators into the planning of Australia's future energy grids? If not, why not?

The premise of this question is incorrect, and is addressed in the answer to questions 3, 11 and 12 (below). Questions relating to the planning of Australia's future energy grids are a matter for the relevant minister(s).

- 5. Question: Does UNSW know that at Joe Dong's ARC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions at UNSW, chief investigator & sr lecturer Meng Ke 孟科 is also noted on Changsha University of Science & Technology's site as a professor (since 2015)?**

We are advised that Dr Meng Ke was previously a distinguished visiting professor at Changsha University of Science and Technology from 2015 – 2017. However, this arrangement concluded prior to his appointment at UNSW.

- 6. Question: Does UNSW know that Wang Guoxiu 汪国秀教 of University of Technology Sydney serves as the Theme Leader for batteries in the ARC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions at UNSW, and is also a PRC Thousand Talents scholar?**

Any questions relating to the affiliations of academics at another institution are best directed to that institution.

- 7. Question: Does UNSW know that Jie Bao 包捷, a chemical engineer of UNSW is the Theme Leader for process control in Joe Dong's research hub and yet assigns his inventions to a range of PRC companies?**

We are aware of Tweets making these same allegations, and have been advised that none of the 156 patents cited in those Tweets relate to Professor Bao, nor are any in his research field.

- 8. Question: Does UNSW know that Dai Liming, a chief investigator in Joe Dong's hub, is also a Thousand Talents plan scholar? His affiliations with Zhejiang Key Laboratory of Biotechnology Pharmaceutical Engineering are excluded from his English-language CV. Why?**

Professor Liming Dai has disclosed a previous link with the Thousand Talents Program between 2010 – 2015, prior to his arrival at UNSW. We are advised this is no longer current.

- 9. Question: UNSW Sydney will lead Australia's first fully integrated smart city trial in partnership with Providence Asset Group & Tamworth City Council, incl IoT technologies across transport, energy, health, telecommunications & other**

community services. Is UNSW not concerned about the almost exclusive PRC connections of those involved? If not, why not?

UNSW was not leading this project, although had involvement in it through HERC. This project has been paused due to COVID-19. For further information, refer to the answer to question 1.

10. Question: Can UNSW confirm whether or not UNSW Prof Joe Dong who heads the ARC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions is in fact the brother of Alinta Director Jason Dong? Alinta is a massive energy company now owned by Hong Kong's Chow Tai Fook.

Jason Dong is Joe Dong's brother, as Professor Dong disclosed to the university under its conflict of interest procedure. Jason Dong also declared this to UNSW prior to being appointed to the Advisory Panel of the ARC Research Hub for Integrated Energy Storage Solutions.

11. Question: Does UNSW know that Joe Dong is a director of a company in Shenzhen known as Turing Techtron, alongside Australia's chief scientist Alan Finkel and that he registers his inventions with that company while working at UNSW?

12. Question: Turing Techtron is involved in new energy, the Internet of Things and energy efficiency. This patent application of July 2019 involves inventor Dong Zhaoyang [Joe Dong TPP scholar of UNSW], and the patent is applied for by Turing Techtron, a Shenzhen-based firm. The website of Turing Techtron 深圳市□□□□□□□□ is here: <http://www.sztikc.com/index.html?firstlist=0> <http://archive.is/jOu8j>

It is involved in new energy, the Internet of Things and energy efficiency. How do we know that the inventor of the "Overload and short-circuit protection circuit" is Joe Dong of UNSW? Because it is clearly noted on a now-removed section of the Turing Techtron website that he Joe Dong on UNSW is part of their "Centre".
<http://archive.is/TdN7y>

It notes clearly that Dong Zhaoyang (Joe Dong) is a professor at UNSW, he is still a Thousand Talents program expert with China Southern Power Grid, and says that he is leading a \$600 million Australian smart energy smart city project. Is this appropriate?

Answer to questions 3, 11, 12:

UNSW encourages, and engages in, collaborative research with many international partners as part of our work as a globally engaged university. In all of our collaborative work, UNSW conducts rigorous assessments as required by the Australian Government's Defence Export Controls framework.

UNSW requires all employees – academic and professional – to disclose pertinent information or issues that are relevant to the discharge of duties, constitute a conflict of interest, or activities that require disclosing under either government regulations or relevant UNSW policies.

Professor Joe Dong is a highly regarded academic in UNSW's School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications and a world leader in the development of efficient, reliable and sustainable renewable energy solutions. He was a member of the ARC College of Experts from 2015-2017 and is Director of the UNSW Digital Grid Futures Institute and the ARC Hub for Integrated Energy Solutions. Professor Dong and other members of UNSW staff are hired for their ability to deliver learning, research and professional excellence.

UNSW has previously responded publicly to range of claims about Professor Joe Dong, including in response to claims made in *The Australian* last August. We refer the Committee to those responses.

We are aware that Professor Dong held a visiting title with China Southern Grid under a foreign talent program prior to his arrival at UNSW. The title and his relationship were disclosed to UNSW at the time of his appointment. However, Professor Dong is no longer a participant in the program.

Professor Dong is not a Director of Turing Techtron and has not registered anything with Turing Techtron while working at UNSW. Patent applications were filed by Turing Techtron naming Professor Dong as an inventor without his knowledge by a former PhD student. Professor Dong's name had been withdrawn successfully from all Turing Techtron patents and applications by January 2021.

UNSW continues to liaise regularly with relevant Federal Government agencies, including national security agencies, to seek their advice relating to possible national security risks. Where concerns are raised, we act in accordance with the advice provided to us.

One measure in our *Framework to Counter Foreign Interference* is the implementation of a new mandatory disclosure policy to identify potential conflicts of interest. With the initial round of disclosures soon to conclude, we will review individual disclosures as a matter of priority.