Our Ref: G-04-134

11 October 2012

Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens
Chair, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
c/- Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

senator.stephens@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Stephens

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee – final Report on the Defence Trade Controls Bill 2011 (Provisions)

I am writing to thank members of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for the very considered approach taken by all members of the committee in working to protect Australia's research interests alongside those of national security and our strategic alliances.

The universities sector greatly appreciates the consideration member senators have given to the matter of Defence Trade Controls, particularly given the weight of issues to be balanced when dealing with matters of such importance to our national interest.

For your information, I have attached the media release issued by Universities Australia this morning in response to the Committee's final reports, tabled last night.

Universities Australia looks forward to continuing to work with the Government and senators to ensure any outstanding concerns are addressed in facilitating the timely passage of legislation.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Robinson
Chief Executive

cc: Dr Kathleen Dermody, Committee Secretary, fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

Security legislation set to acknowledge research freedom: universities

Universities Australia has expressed its strong appreciation to the members of the Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for their efforts in ensuring that Australian researchers will not face tougher obligations than their counterparts in the United States as a result of proposed new legislation to control trade in defence technology and services.

Universities Australia, the peak body representing Australia's 39 universities, strongly supports the recommendations of the Committee to ensure that the outcomes of the roundtable process facilitated by Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, are accurately and comprehensively reflected in the amendments to the *Defence Trade Controls Bill 2011.*

Universities Australia also strongly supports the recommendation of the committee that the Bill be amended to ensure that Australian researchers are not subject to more severe regulatory constraints than their United States counterparts.

"The Committee members have listened carefully to the serious concerns raised by the university sector and have comprehensively addressed them in their recommendations," said Universities Australia Chief Executive, Belinda Robinson.

"Universities Australia recognises that this legislation is important for the protection of Australia's national security interests and for our relationship with the United States.

"It is essential, though, that the legislation includes the protections and benefits required by national security interests without compromising our world class research capability.

"We believe that the recommendations have struck the appropriate balance," Ms Robinson said.

Universities Australia will examine the draft amendments carefully to ensure that the recommendations of the Committee members are accurately reflected.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the parliament and the government to work through any outstanding matters through the proposed two year trial process.

"Universities Australia thanks all members of the Committee, the Chief Scientist, the Defence Chief Scientist and all of those who have participated in the roundtable process for their contribution in delivering these welcome recommendations," Ms Robinson concluded.

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