

Mr Peter Khalil MP

Committee Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

pjcis@aph.gov.au

15 November 2023

Dear Mr Khalil

The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security review of the Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets) Bill 2023.

Universities appreciate the intent of the new regulations on the work that certain former defence staff members can perform for or on behalf of a military organisation or government body of a relevant foreign country, and the training that Australian citizens and permanent residents may provide to relevant foreign militaries or governments.

ATN recommends that when the Committee is considering these new regulations, it examines how they work cohesively and effectively in concert with existing regimes and regulations. The Committee is particularly aware of the roles and responsibilities of universities having conducted its inquiry into national security risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector.

That inquiry covered the adequacy and effectiveness of a number of the Government policies and programs that apply to universities that are administered by an array of Departments that include:

- Australia's sanctions regime (Foreign Affairs and Trade)
- Critical Infrastructure protections (Home Affairs)
- Critical Technologies list (Industry, Science and Resources)
- Defence Trade Controls (Defence)
- Foreign Arrangements Scheme (Foreign Affairs and Trade)
- Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (Attorney-General)
- UFIT Guidelines (multi-agency).

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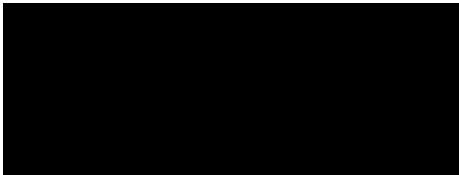
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Given the complex and dynamic regulatory environment with which universities comply, ATN recommends that due consideration be given to how this Bill would apply to university teaching and research staff, any possible unintended consequences, and whether the Bill could be amended to streamline authorisations or exemptions given existing regulations.

Australia's capacity to produce world class skills and conduct research, safeguard resulting intellectual property, share that with trusted partners, and engage in secure development will be crucial to protecting and promoting Australia's interests.

We look forward to further engagement with the Committee on our shared goals in securing Australia's interests and enhancing our capability. If you need any further information from ATN or our member universities, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

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Luke Sheehy

ATN Executive Director