

Dear Senators,

I write to express the strong concern of the Academic Board of the University of Sydney over the Defence Trade Controls Bill 2011. The concerns of the Academic Board are succinctly expressed by Professor Jill Trehwella in an article in this morning's Sydney Morning Herald and I refer you to that article <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/tighter-defence-ties-will-bind-academics-and-stifle-innovation-20121009-27b4n.html>

The Board has grave concerns over the framing of restrictions on intangible transfers of knowledge with respect to items on the restricted goods list that this bill imposes. These would restrict the right of researchers to publish and correspond freely and are counter to the principle of academic freedom which is essential to the future prosperity of Australian society and scientific advance.

The University of Sydney has received independent legal advice that this bill will place more onerous restrictions on Australian researchers than those which apply to their US counterparts. As Professor Trehwella argues, it is essential for the future of Australian research that we are not subject to greater restrictions than US researchers and that the Bill either be amended to exclude open scientific research, or delayed so that it can be framed in a manner that does not put Australian researchers at a disadvantage.

I urge you to reject the over-hasty passage of this bill to allow proper consideration of measures that will protect Australian science in a way comparable to the protection currently afforded US scientists.

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