

**Research and Innovation**

22 February 2022

Senate Education and Employment  
Legislation Committee on The Australian  
Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research  
Independence) Bill 2018

**Submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry on the  
Australian Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research Independence) Bill 2018**

The University of Queensland (UQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Senate Inquiry on the Australian Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research Independence) Bill 2018. As a leading Australian research institution, we offer the following comments in response to the draft Bill.

Grant applications submitted to the ARC under the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) go through a [multi-stage process](#) of peer assessment, ranking and selection. This process is accountable to the national [Codes and Guidelines](#) on responsible research, integrity, ethics, conflict of interest, care and use of animals, IP management and child safety as well as the application of the National Interest Test by the ARC CEO. The ARC process is underpinned by a [College of Experts](#) - 213 experts of international standing across fields and disciplines who make assessments of the peer-reviewer comments provided by many hundreds of independent experts from Australia and around the world. As a result of this assessment process, a relatively small proportion of projects are recommended for funding, each of which will have been ranked very highly by this independent assessment process.

UQ reasserts its strong support for the role of the independent peer-review process as the mechanism for the allocation of all funding administered by the ARC.

UQ notes that the amendment under consideration removes any power of Ministerial discretion, and it would reinforce the primacy of peer review as the mechanism for funding allocations.

Should Ministerial discretion for rejecting projects for ARC funding be maintained, its use should be subject to highly restrictive conditions, and reserved for instances where:

- the integrity of due process is in question
- national security may be compromised

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Australian Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research Independence) Bill 2018.

Yours sincerely

Professor Mark Blows  
**Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)**