



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
report:

*Australian Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research
Independence) Bill 2018*

NOVEMBER 2024

Overview

The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee (the Committee) Inquiry into the Australian Research Council Amendment (Ensuring Research Independence) Bill 2018 (the Bill) proposed amendments to the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act).

The Bill sought to amend the ARC Act to remove Ministerial discretion from research grants administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC) by legislating that the Minister must approve a research proposal and associated expenditure if that proposal was recommended for approval by the ARC Chief Executive Officer.

The Committee recognised it had been 20 years since the ARC Act was examined in detail and accepted that a broad review of the ARC was necessary. They recommended an independent review of the ARC, including its governance and research funding processes, with a view to maximising the impact of public investment in university research.

Government response

A substantive Government response is no longer appropriate due to the passage of time and the Bill having lapsed on 25 July 2022.

However, the Australian Government noted the recommendations contained within the Committee's report and on 30 August 2022, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced an independent review of the ARC Act (ARC Review).

The Government agreed, or agreed-in-principle, to all 10 recommendations of the ARC Review final report, subsequently introducing the *Australian Research Council Amendment (Review Response) Act 2024* (ARC Amendment Act).

On 2 April 2024, the ARC Amendment Act was registered on the Federal Register of Legislation, enabling the changes under the ARC Act, which sets the foundation for modernising the ARC's governance, bolstering its independence and enhancing its role in supporting Australia's dynamic research landscape. The amendments to the ARC Act commenced on 1 July 2024.