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To: House of Representatives  
Industry, Science & Innovation Committee

**Submission to inquiry into Australia's international research engagement**

Dear Committee members,

We would like to identify three points for the consideration of the inquiry:

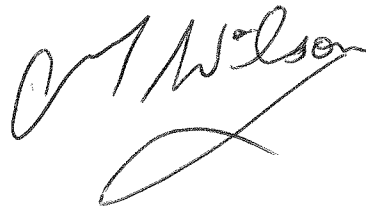
1. Firstly, we would like to commend the Australian Academy of Sciences for their Scientific Visits grants scheme which is relatively easy to apply for and has given a number of us support to spend valuable and productive time overseas working with scientific collaborators. This kind of "seed funding" is very helpful when trying to establish/develop international connections and work towards research objectives that are only possible with the collaborations made. More of this type of scheme, perhaps funded and/or administered by DEETYA, would help increase the international profile of Australian research.
2. Secondly we have some suggestions for improvements to the DEETYA International Scientific linkages scheme (Competitive Funding). There were recently 3 categories of such grants, and we provide comments on each type below:
  - (a) Competitive Grants. The requirement for matching dollars is certain to restrict the scope of projects that are eligible for funding from this scheme. We would suggest that this scheme would be more generally applicable (and hence effective) in promoting international scientific research if this requirement was lifted or at least reduced.
  - (b) French Australian Science and Technology Program. Our understanding is that this program requires that (i) applicants in both countries submit separate applications to their respective governments, and (ii) both applications must be successful in order to secure project funding. This is a very cumbersome process and the inherent difficulties discourage applications. We suggest that the Australian government seek lateral solutions to the administrative challenges that presumably have resulted in this less than ideal process.

Could the French and Australian governments not agree to set aside a defined amount of funds each towards bilateral collaborative projects and each country separately administer the granting process? This would allow the team to apply only once in a single country, streamlining the entire process, thus encouraging (rather than discouraging) applications and the resulting outcomes. Furthermore, the requirement that proposals fall into one of a small number of changing Priority Areas is also rather limiting to this scheme – we suggest that to encourage more internationalization activity, the Priority Areas should be dropped.

- (c) Australia-China Special Fund for Scientific and Technological Cooperation. The same comments in (b) above apply to this scheme.
- 3. Lastly, we understand some changes have been made to national regulations affecting visiting researchers coming to Australia which will make it more difficult for these people to spend time in Australia. This includes changes to visa requirements, and the imposition of school fees for researchers spending time in Australia accompanied by their children. We request that the committee takes note of these changes and consider their negative impact on the internationalization of Australian research.

Many thanks for the opportunity to provide input to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wilson', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

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