



3 August 2026

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March 2026 outlining your expectations for the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the clarity they provide. On behalf of the ARC Board, I am pleased to present you with our Statement of Intent to fully align with your expectations in the letter.

We agree that the ARC must evolve in recognition of the complex and changing environment in which it operates, and remain a trusted leader, steward and advisor. I thank you for your recognition of the good progress the ARC has already made following amendments to the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* in March 2024 and our establishment as a Board in July that year.

For 25 years the ARC has invested in research through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) to grow knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community. Since its establishment, the Board has worked hard to assure the integrity of the research system. Crucial to that are high-quality, competitive peer-reviewed processes to inform allocation of funding. It is inevitable that certain funding decisions may create controversy, both within academia and the wider community. That is not a bad thing. However, in line with your expectations, I can assure you that the Board will continue to oversight decision-making processes to ensure that they are scrupulously followed and will assess continuously whether improvements can be made.

I particularly thank you for your strong support for implementing significant reforms to the NCGP. Like you, we believe that these changes will deliver wide ranging benefits for researchers, institutions, communities, and industry, strengthening research opportunities, industry collaboration, and ease of administration into the future. The ARC is prioritising the implementation of the revitalised NCGP, with the first new scheme, Explore, expected to commence in March 2027. Over the coming months the ARC will engage closely with the sector to support effective implementation.

We strongly agree that ARC funding should support important research relating to the Australian Government's National Science Statement and National Science and Research Priorities. The revitalised NCGP provides a greater focus on aligning with government

priorities. This is across all schemes, but particularly the Prioritise scheme. Enhanced agility and partnership opportunities under these schemes will strengthen research on these priorities, supporting the security, resilience and health of Australians, and the nation's ability to face future challenges and drive productivity.

The ARC recognises that public trust in research depends on robust integrity, ethical conduct, and security. With its unique legislated responsibilities to assess and advise on research security risks, the ARC has made a substantial contribution, alongside other agencies, to managing research security risk in government funded research. The ARC will continually review and improve its processes for identifying and assessing risks related to prospective and existing funding decisions that it has made or administers, and to ensure grant funding applicants understand their legal obligations. The ARC will continue to work closely with the Department of Education and other relevant agencies on research security matters.

The ARC is collaborating with agencies across government on the identification of risks to security within research proposals put forward to the ARC for funding. We are also working with Australian universities to ensure that they can demonstrate their commitment to protecting Australia's security, defence and international relations. Through engagement with security agencies, universities and other research stakeholders, the ARC intends to play an integral role in mitigating the threat of foreign interference, espionage and unwanted transfer of sensitive intellectual property.

The ARC is a steward of ethical research conducted with integrity, and it recognises and shares the concerns about conduct contrary to essential values including respect and a fair go, ethical conduct, basic freedoms and the rule of law. The ARC, in close collaboration with the NHMRC, has robust research integrity processes and sets clear expectations on research institutions.

The ARC is also actively engaging with the Department of Education through the Commonwealth Research Grants Working Group established by the Antisemitism Education Taskforce, which I am pleased to chair.

Consistent with this important work, the ARC will have strong regard for relevant laws to ensure our processes are compliant. The ARC will continue to work with partners across government and research on these important issues and to provide you with further advice in due course.

The ARC is progressing design and consultation for the new Research Insights Capability (RIC), which will evaluate the excellence, impact and depth of Australian university research. This work is consistent with Recommendation 29 of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report. We anticipate providing you with a proposal for the RIC in the fourth quarter of 2026 and will progress this work in consultation with the Department of Education and the

research community.

The ARC remains committed to the highest standards of public administration including stewardship of public resources. We are actively working to enhance the transparency of the peer review processes, whilst necessarily safeguarding the confidentiality of those undertaking the assessment of individual grant proposals.

The ARC will continue to manage its operating expenses to deliver on the priorities of the government. The ARC will investigate with the Department of Education and other research funders opportunities to reduce duplication and share resources to enhance our efficiency and ability to serve the research sector effectively.

For a quarter of a century, ARC's competitive, peer-reviewed funding has supported excellence across Australian pure basic, strategic basic and applied research. This focus on early-stage research has generated novel outcomes and strengthened the national innovation system, a system that makes an outsized contribution to global knowledge and innovation and in which Australians take great national pride. This focus will continue under the revitalised NCGP.

The ARC will do its utmost to ensure that our funded research continues to contribute to Australia's long-term economic, social, cultural, and environmental prosperity.

On behalf of the ARC Board, yours sincerely,



Professor Peter Shergold AC

ARC Board Chair