



COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN LAW DEANS

PRESS RELEASE ON POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

The Council of Australian Law Deans (CALD) expresses its deep concern at the news that the former Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham MP, personally intervened to veto over \$4M in research funding that had been approved through the globally respected, highly exacting peer review processes of the Australian Research Council (ARC)

Political interference of this kind not only damages the careers of the outstanding researchers involved, it undermines Australian and international confidence in the integrity of the entire ARC research funding system. Further, it strongly discourages the efforts of the many Australian academic researchers, and their international collaborators, all of whom put great effort into developing research proposals and justifying their requests for funding.

Interference such as this – targeting a particular research sector and disregarding the considered recommendations of field experts – risks impairing Australia’s international reputation as a site of world-leading inquiry, innovation and research training, and thereby imperils both our opportunities for international collaboration and Australia's third largest export: education.

CALD calls on the Australian Government to reverse this ministerial decision, restore funding to the humanities and social sciences, and affirm publicly its support to research excellence in these areas, as well as give undertakings to preserving the independence of all future funding decisions by the ARC and other public funding bodies in Australia.

Contact:

Professor William P MacNeil
Chair, Council of Australian Law Deans

29 October 2018