



Senate Estimates February 2022

Opening Statement – Ms Judi Zielke, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Australian Research Council (ARC).

Thank you Chair.

I commenced in this role on 1 February this year and am pleased to bring my many decades of experience in the national innovation system to the position, and have the opportunity to work with the team and our stakeholders.

I acknowledge my predecessor, Professor Sue Thomas. As CEO of the ARC for almost five years, Professor Thomas' commitment and dedication to advancing the role of the ARC in Australian research funding and policy has been significant, and I would like to recognise her contribution today.

The ARC has an integral role in supporting the Australian research sector to produce high-quality and impactful research. Our programs support the university sector and around 2,000 industry and other partner organisations each year to deliver tens of thousands of research outputs that contribute national benefits for Australia.

Since it was established in 2001, the ARC has awarded over \$13 billion to support around 30,000 unique research projects, large and small, across all disciplines. This includes 70 Centres of Excellence, over 200 Laureate Fellowships and around 1,800 Future Fellows. Given Universities Australia's research that for every \$1 invested in higher education research, \$5 is returned to GDP – this equates to a return of around \$70 billion in Australia's economy.

ARC programs fund fundamental discovery or 'blue sky' research, as well as collaborative research that facilitates linkages across universities and with industry. We are the home of Australia's first and largest research evaluation exercise – encompassing the whole of Australia's Higher Education research output – Excellence in Research for Australia or 'ERA'.

I look forward to working with my team and our stakeholders to better understand the opportunities and challenges of the ARC and to work together to enable the agency to provide the best service to Government and the university sector, and to increase the translation and commercialisation of research to the benefit of Australia.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Ms Judi Zielke
Acting Chief Executive Officer