



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

Ref No: MC20-025612

Mr Andrew Hastie MP
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair

Thank you for your correspondence to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP of 24 August 2020 concerning foreign interference in Australia's universities. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

I wish to refer to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (the Committee) the matter of potential interference conducted by, or on behalf of foreign actors, in Australian universities, publicly funded research agencies and competitive research grants agencies. Special focus should be given to options that reduce technological and knowledge transfer from Australia that may be detrimental to our national interests, while not undermining international productive research collaboration.

To assist the Committee with its review, I outline below some terms of reference for the Committee to consider:

- a) The nature and extent of Australia's relationship and collaboration with international partners in universities, publicly funded research agencies and competitive research grant agencies.
- b) The nature and extent to which foreign actors are interfering in Australian universities, including staff and student bodies, publicly funded research agencies and competitive research grant agencies.
- c) The effectiveness of the response of Australian Universities, publicly funded research agencies and competitive grant agencies to the threat of foreign interference.
 - o Comparisons could be made with similar responses to this issue in other countries.

- d) Noting the existing cooperation, identify opportunities to further strengthen partnerships to build resilience and transparency within the university and research sectors.
- e) Examine whether the current oversight and reporting requirements in response to these issues are appropriate.

Taking into account other priorities for the Committee, I ask that the Committee reports on its inquiry by no later than 1 July 2021.

Subject to your agreement and recognising the sensitive nature of some aspects of this inquiry, the Committee should, as far as possible, conduct its inquiry in public.

I have copied this letter to the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Marise Payne.

Yours sincerely



PETER DUTTON