



Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Parliament House

Canberra

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into amendments to the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Bill 2017

Research Australia is pleased to respond to the invitation to make a submission to this Inquiry.

Research Australia's submission to the initial draft of the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Bill 2017, in January 2017, highlighted that the Bill would have a disproportionate and unintended impact on the not for profit sector, including many health and medical research organisations. We called for the Bill to be amended to avoid these unintended consequences, and are gratified to see that this outcome has been achieved with the latest amendments.

Health and medical research receives significant funding and support from Commonwealth, state and territory governments through a range of different funding programs. At the Commonwealth level this includes:

- funding for research activities from the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and the Medical Research Future Fund;
- funding for universities' indirect research costs through the Department of Education and Training; and
- funding for research development and commercialisation activities through the Department of Industry Innovation and Science.

All of these programs are regularly reviewed and changed, and the health and medical research sector is regularly invited to respond to reviews by Government departments and agencies and to Parliamentary inquiries. We are pleased to see that these activities do not fall within the new definition of electoral matter or the associated definition of electoral expenditure, effectively resolving our concerns with the previous iteration of the Bill.

The amendments to the Bill distinguish political campaigning that seeks to influence voters from non-partisan advocacy on important matters of public policy.



Research Australia continues to have a keen interest in the MHR and its role in the digital health system of the future. As always, Research Australia is available to address any questions you may have as a result of this submission.

Yours sincerely

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About Research Australia

Our vision: Research Australia envisions a world where Australia unlocks the full potential of its world-leading health and medical research sector to deliver the best possible healthcare and global leadership in health innovation.

Our mission: To use our unique convening power to position health and medical research as a significant driver of a healthy population and contributor to a healthy economy.

Our role:

Engage

Australia in a conversation about the health benefits and economic value of its investment in health and medical research.

Connect

researchers, funders and consumers to increase investment in health and medical research from all sources.

Influence

government policies that support effective health and medical research and its routine translation into evidence-based practices and better health outcomes.