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Dear Chair,

*Senate Education and Employment Legislative Committee inquiry into the Australian Research Council Amendment (Review Response) Bill 2023.*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Senate Education and Employment Legislative Committee inquiry into the Australian Research Council Amendment (Review Response) Bill 2023.

As the Associate Dean of Research at the faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice at QUT, I welcome the changes which are proposed in the Bill and are based on the Sheil review. I note in particular the important positive changes; the inclusion of an appropriately qualified chair, removal of ministerial vetoes and establishment of the ARC Board.

Ministerial intervention has had a damaging impact on the Australian research sector both here and on the world stage, and on behalf of my faculty, I am particularly concerned to see no repeat of the previous Ministerial vetoes, which targeted research projects within the humanities.

The ARC's responsibility for supporting and promoting equity must reflect all aspects of diversity. These include gender, career stage, Indigenous Australians, academic discipline, and impacts on opportunity such as illness, caring responsibilities or non-research roles. As such, the ARC Board should include diverse representation of the sector in all these aspects. I would also support a review of functioning of the Board within 12-18 months after establishment to ensure it is working as intended.

However, while the Bill is a positive step in implementing the recommendations of the review, research funding and funding success rates continue to decline across ARC programs. Any further reduction in program funding (e.g. to support the implementation of the Bill without increasing departmental budget), would impact Australia's research and undercut the intention of the Bill. I urge the government to ensure no further cuts are made to funding or resources that directly support research in Australia, and to work to increase research funding with an aim of achieving a percentage of GDP for research funding which is more aligned with other OECD members.

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely,

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