

26 October 2016

To: The Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100, Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee regarding the Australian Crime Commission Amendment (Criminology Research) Bill 2016 [Provisions]

Dear Sir/Madam

I am forwarding this submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for the purposes of the inquiry into merging the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). I am writing this submission in opposition to the proposed bill and its consequences.

I am currently studying a Bachelor of Criminology at The Australian National University (ANU), and have a keen interest in the workings of criminologists and researchers throughout Australia.

This proposed bill would have several severe consequences to the AIC as a statutory agency. In particular, by merging the AIC with the ACIC, the commission of criminological research would be hindered significantly. Indeed, this merger would effectively 'gag' researchers, and only allow positive or highly regarded research to be made publicly available. This would be disastrous for the future of criminological research in Australia. In short, the possibility of the AIC to disseminate unbiased, unprejudiced research would be incredibly hindered and significantly reduced under the proposed merger.

This bill, if passed through parliament, would negatively impact the learning of criminological based subjects, as well as the teaching of said subjects. In particular, this merger would make it extremely difficult to gather information and assess relevant articles regarding the undertaking of criminological research in Australia. In addition, the merger would make the gathering of statistics and data surrounding, including but not limited to, crime rates, victimisation rates, and incarceration rates impossible, given the secretive nature of the ACIC. This data and research is essential to the next generation of aspiring criminologists, and would negatively impact their learning and employment outcomes.

The AIC would benefit from change and evaluation; however, I question whether this proposed merger is the correct route to achieve this. Indeed, it is imperative the AIC remain a statutory agency, with the purposes of creating, distributing and evaluating policy-led interventions and research. This is essential for the development of strong, evidence-based policy, which would not be realised under the ACIC.

Yours Sincerely,

Cameron Langfield