

MEDIA RELEASE

ARC REFORMS STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S RESEARCH FUTURE

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Science & Technology Australia (STA) has welcomed the Australian Research Council's (ARC) proposed reforms to the National Competitive Grants Program, saying the final review reflects many of the priorities identified by Australia's science and technology sector.

The review adopts major reforms [long advocated by STA](#), including simplifying Australia's competitive grants program, strengthening support for early-career and First Nations researchers, reducing unnecessary administrative burden and reaffirming the ARC's central role in supporting discovery research.

STA President Jas Chambers said the report also commits to working with the sector to design and implement the new funding schemes.

"This review recognises what Australia's scientists and technologists have been saying for years. A strong, streamlined and well-supported competitive grants program is essential to Australia's future prosperity," Ms Chambers said.

"As the Government works to implement recommendations from the *Ambitious Australia* report, we're particularly pleased to see renewed support for discovery research – the starting point for all future innovation and development. The new schemes also deliver a good balance between investigator-led research and flexibility for Government to identify key national research priorities."

STA is also pleased to see stronger investment in emerging researchers, an increase from one to five per cent of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, and a commitment to designing the new system in partnership with the sector."

Ms Chambers said the proposed reforms would help reduce unnecessary complexity while preserving the ARC's unique role in funding Australia's best early-stage research.

"Researchers should spend more time pursuing breakthrough ideas and less time navigating unnecessary administration. A simplified grants program means more time for discovery and innovation."

STA also welcomed the review's recognition that competitive grants must operate as part of a connected national research system.

"The review acknowledges that Australia's research funding system works best when programs are connected and researchers have clear pathways to build ideas from discovery through to application. That's an important step toward the broader vision outlined in *Ambitious Australia*."

Ms Chambers said successful implementation is critical and welcomes the ARC's commitment to closely monitor implementation.

“The proposed changes are a major reorganisation for Australia’s university research funding system – and could have ripple effects across the entire system. For example, it will be important to ensure that shifting support away from delivering salaries for mid-career and senior researchers does not have unintended consequences and place further strain on a system that is already under severe pressure on multiple fronts.”

"We look forward to working closely with the ARC as these reforms are implemented. Continued consultation will ensure the new program delivers on its promise while maintaining Australia's world-class research capability."

About Science & Technology Australia

Science & Technology Australia is the nation’s peak body representing more than 235,000 scientists and technologists. We’re the leading policy voice on science and technology. Our flagship programs include [Science Meets Parliament](#), [Science Meets the Economy](#) and [Superstars of STEM](#).

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