



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

Media Release

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ARC peer review process paramount

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) is today pleased that the Minister for Education, Science and Training Ms Julie Bishop has endorsed the peer review processes of the Australian Research Council (ARC).

AVCC Chief Executive Officer John Mullarvey said that introduction of the *Australian Research Council Amendment Bill 2006* and its *Explanatory Memorandum* into the House of Representatives today was a positive affirmation of the importance of the peer review process in the awarding of ARC Grants.

"Ms Bishop has already signalled her intention to step away from interfering in the awarding of ARC grants," Mr Mullarvey said.

"Vice-Chancellors, however, remain concerned about the proposed change in governance arrangements, particularly the disbanding of the ARC Board.

"The setting up of an additional Advisory Committee to provide input on research matters to the ARC Chief Executive Officer is an interesting move, and it will remain to be seen whether the additional bureaucratic layer will have an impact on the grants process," he said.

"Irrespective of any new governance arrangements, it is imperative that the ARC peer review process is protected to ensure that the best research, in whatever field, is identified and funded.

"The AVCC is pleased to note that the Minister had indicated that the new Advisory Committee will not have jurisdiction to look at and review individual grant applications," Mr Mullarvey said.

"The AVCC is also concerned at the apparent removal of the ARC power to initiate inquiries or reviews without a direct request from the Minister. This limits the ARC's independence as a statutory body," Mr Mullarvey said.

The AVCC will now examine the Bill and provide details of concerns, if any, to Parliament.

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Media Inquiries: Callista Punch

Ph: 02 6285 8206

Mob: 0400 166 691

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