

21 February 2022

Senator James Paterson
Chair, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

pjcis@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Paterson,

Re: Submission to the Review of the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure Protection) Bill 2022

Universities Australia (UA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security on the Review of the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure Protection) Bill 2022.

UA would like to note the strong and productive engagement with the Department of Home Affairs on the development of the Bill. We also thank the Minister for Home Affairs for the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the sector at the 1 February 2022 roundtable on the Bill.

These consultations have resulted in the refinement of the definition of the higher education and research sector that has significantly improved the targeting of the Bill with respect to the university sector. UA is also encouraged by the recognition of the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) mechanism as the primary and existing mechanism for ensuring that risks are identified and managed in the university sector.

Formal recognition of UFIT in this context would further strengthen confidence and provide certainty to the sector.

UA also reiterates the importance of accurately estimating the regulatory impacts that provisions in the Bill and the new elements of the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 have on the sector. I encourage the Government to work with UA, at the appropriate time, to ensure that regulatory impacts are accurately identified.

Much work remains in the implementation of the Act and UA as always stands ready to work with Government to ensure that the policy settings are targeted to maximise the effectiveness of the Act.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Chesworth
Deputy Chief Executive