

# Research Training Implementation Working Group

## Terms of Reference

January 2017

### Background

On 14 April 2016, the Minister for Education and Training launched the *Review of Australia's Research Training System* by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). The review concluded that the Australian Higher Degree by Research (HDR) training system performs well in the areas of academic outputs, but identified a range of areas for improvement, including:

- entry pathways into HDR training—by developing more flexible regulatory and funding arrangements for HDR training
- collaboration and engagement with industry—by increasing industry training opportunities for HDR students
- standards and consistency of HDR training supervision—by moving toward professionalisation of HDR training supervision
- Indigenous HDR student participation—by amending funding arrangements to better support Indigenous students.

The review noted that improvements to Australia's HDR training system would need to be delivered by the higher education sector in collaboration with government, industry and community stakeholders. The review made 11 key findings that articulate areas for improvement and six recommendations for Government action.

On 4 November 2016, the Australian Government announced it had accepted all the review recommendations and that work in response to them was well advanced. This included measures such as changes to research block grant arrangements under the National Innovation and Science Agenda and expansion of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute industry training placement scheme for PhD students (AMSI Intern).

The Government also announced the Department of Education and Training will work with representatives from the university sector, industry and community stakeholders to establish a working group to support implementation of the review's findings.

The final report of the review is available at: <http://acola.org.au/wp/saf13-rts-review/>.

The Australian Government response to the review is available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/review-australia-s-research-training-system>.

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As recommended by ACOLA, the working group will develop a specific and actionable implementation plan that will outline measures relating to the three broad categories of reform identified by the review:

- regulation and policy
- university cultural change
- industry incentives/cultural change.

In particular, the working group will:

- investigate options for reform to further strengthen Australia's HDR training system in response to the review's findings
- identify further actions for the higher education sector to address the review's findings
- identify options for better integration of government, industry and higher education sector efforts to support an improved HDR training system

- monitor and provide advice on implementation of the measures that constitute the Government's response to the review, namely changes to research block grant arrangements and expansion of the AMSI Intern program
- meet with and seek the advice of other stakeholders as required from time to time.

Within six months of its first meeting, the working group will deliver its implementation plan to the Minister for Education and Training.

The membership of the working group will include high-level representatives from relevant stakeholder groups, including universities, industry bodies, research organisations and institutes, government and HDR candidates. The working group will have an independent Chair.

Secretariat functions for the working will be provided by the Department of Education and Training and Universities Australia.

## Membership

### **Professor Robyn Owens (Chair)**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of WA  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group Chair

### **Professor Pat Buckley**

Dean of Graduate Studies, University of South Australia

### **Professor Jennifer Corbett**

Distinguished Professor, Crawford School of Public Policy, College of Asia & the Pacific, Australian National University

### **Professor Denise Cuthbert**

Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research Training and Development), RMIT University  
Convenor, Australian Council of Graduate Research

### **Mr Peter Derbyshire**

President, Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations

### **Ms Virginia Hart**

A/g Group Manager, Research and Economic Group, Department of Education and Training

### **Professor Jim McCluskey**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Melbourne

### **Mr John McGagh**

Chief Digital Officer, Snowy Hydro

### **Professor Geraldine McKenzie**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Southern Cross University  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group

### **Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson**

Distinguished Professor and Dean, Indigenous Research and Engagement, Queensland University of Technology

**Professor David Morrison**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Murdoch University  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group

**Professor Warren Payne**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Victoria University  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group

**Professor Geoff Prince**

Director, Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute

**Professor Frances Shannon**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Canberra  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group

**Dr Peter Thomas**

Director of Policy and Operations, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes

**Ms Jane Urquhart**

Head of Division, Science and Commercialisation Policy Division, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

**Professor Glenn Wightwick**

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Technology, Sydney  
Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group

**Ms Anne Younger**

General Manager, Education Training and Training Services, Australian Industry Group