

31 March 2023



Mr Duncan McIntyre  
Deputy Secretary, Science and Technology Group  
Department of Industry, Science and Resources  
GPO Box 2013  
Canberra, ACT, 2601

Email: [priorities@industry.gov.au](mailto:priorities@industry.gov.au)

Dear Mr McIntyre,

**Re: Developing Australia's Science and Research Priorities and National Science Statement**

The University of Melbourne welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's Science and Research Priorities and National Science Statement. Given the importance of the research sector and other stakeholders having input into this process, we commend the consultative approach taken to refresh the priorities.

The University broadly supports the seven principles identified in the consultation document, which provide a good basis for developing the priorities. Australia is home to world-renowned universities and other research institutions which produce excellent research across all disciplines. The challenge is to identify national priorities while ensuring the full potential of this diversity is realised through appropriate system level support. The priorities should recognise and support a sustained commitment to basic and fundamental research as the foundation for much of the applied research that leads to commercialisation and societal benefits.

The development of priorities needs clarification of the role they are to play in shaping investment in research and research behaviour, drawing from an assessment of the effectiveness and application of the 2015 priorities. Similarly, there is a need for clarity in how the new priorities will interface with those identified in other Australian Government programs – including the National Manufacturing Priorities, National Reconstruction Fund, the Trailblazer Universities Program – and how the priorities will affect schemes such as the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS).

The University supports the development of research priorities that encompass the contributions of humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) to national agendas that span discovery and applied research. New knowledge generated through HASS disciplines is vital to growth areas such as the cultural industries sector and often integral to the design and impact of multi-disciplinary STEMM research (e.g. research on vaccine hesitancy or the social licence for technological uptake). While the University acknowledges the value of science priorities, there would be much to gain from a more holistic statement of national research priorities of which science priorities were one component.

The renewal of our national research priorities provides an opportunity to reform research funding rules to create a global mechanism for international collaboration that is more flexible, efficient, and impactful. It also presents an opportunity to enhance local and international partnerships and collaborations that reflect commonly held priorities. Such collaborations will not only facilitate the development of a comprehensive and inclusive research agenda but also ensure the sustainability of the Australian research sector in a global context.

Finally, the University commends the acknowledgement of the value of Indigenous knowledge systems and the need that they be appropriately recognised in the priorities. We endorse the submission made by the University of Melbourne's Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous to

this consultation, which outlines opportunities to harness the depth and breadth of Indigenous knowledge to tackle issues facing Australia and the world.

We look forward to working with Australia's Chief Scientist and with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources in the coming months, throughout the development of the priorities and the parallel Accord process. We would be very happy to host a roundtable or to otherwise assist with further engagement on this issue.

For further information, or to discuss the submission, please don't hesitate to contact me at [dvc-research@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dvc-research@unimelb.edu.au)

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James McCluskey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Professor James McCluskey AO  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)  
Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor  
The University of Melbourne