



Mr Ken O'Dowd MP
Chair
The Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth

10 February 2016

Dear Mr. O'Dowd and Committee Members

Re: ABDC Response to Senate Inquiry into Australia's Future in Research and Innovation

On behalf of the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), I am writing to you to confirm our support for including research and innovation as a central component to Australia's international competitiveness agenda. We however also recommend ensuring leadership development, innovation and commercialisation management as well as business engagement are key elements of any strategic public policy to ensure Australia's ongoing global competitiveness.

About ABDC

The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) is the authoritative and collective voice of pro vice-chancellors, executive deans and heads of all university business faculties and schools in Australia. In 2013, ABDC member schools graduated one-in-three university students in Australia (corresponding to over 100,000 graduates).¹ One-in-five Australian business schools are listed in the top two percent of universities worldwide in business and economics.² Australian business schools also contribute significantly to the largest export service industry (and fourth largest export industry) in Australia.³ In 2013, Australian business schools graduated three-in-five international university students in Australia. These Australian business school students contribute an estimated \$5.3 billion in export earnings to the Australian economy per annum – equal to Australia's eleventh largest export.⁴

ABDC's mission is to advance and promote excellence in business education and research through engagement across universities, industry, government and the community.

ABDC's Position

ABDC commends the Federal Government on its commitment to investigating how the research and innovation sector can better assist in overcoming Australia's geographic, economic, and labour challenges, with a focus on commercialisation, including how technology imports and exports could be better facilitated. ABDC wholly supports policies and initiatives that are of vital importance to Australia's economy and global competitiveness.

The Australian business school community is however very interested in seeing stronger links between business and universities, especially with respect to ensuring effective leadership and management of research commercialisation, innovation, export development and technology transfer.

ABDC is concerned not just with the training of future business academics and students, but also the ability of Australian businesses to pursue innovation, increased competitiveness and growth within Australia and internationally. Government initiatives and policies should focus on how to encourage

research that is not only academically excellent but addresses industry concerns in an economically meaningful manner.

We suggest further examination of the current research priorities to ensure that they are enabling both wider collaboration and increased application of innovative business models and practices that increase global competitiveness and economic prosperity. It is important that research priorities acknowledge the innovative and industry-relevant research occurring in the business management field and the need to support greater industry and university collaboration and knowledge exchange in this area to drive Australia's productivity and competitiveness.

Countries like Australia can also achieve important productivity increases through clever adoption of innovations, rather than their production. This effect is particularly noticeable with service industries, such as finance, and with the adoption of information technology (IT). Some of the most economically productive innovations have resulted from new business models, design and business systems integration and high performance workplace and management practices. Not only is technological and scientific research vital, but non-technological innovation and economic prosperity needs to be an increasingly important element of our national strategic policy - therefore ensuring Australia's long-term development, productivity and global competitiveness.

Summary

To ensure a truly globally competitive Australia based on an effective research and innovation system, enhanced university-industry collaboration and successful commercialisation, it is critical that business schools are involved in further consultation on this topic. ABDC welcomes the opportunity to offer our assistance and to be involved in further consultation into how Australia can develop its research and innovative system to be a more internationally competitive nation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I Palmer', written in a cursive style.

Professor Ian Palmer
President, Australian Business Deans Council
*(and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business) and Vice-President
RMIT University)*