



New inquiry announced

Research training in Australia

The House of Representatives Industry, Science and Innovation Committee is to conduct an inquiry into the contribution that Australian universities make to Australian research training, and the challenges those universities face in recruiting, training and retaining quality research staff.

Committee Chair Maria Vamvakinou welcomed the referral of this inquiry by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr.

“Australian universities play a key role in driving innovation through the research projects they undertake. Finding creative solutions to problems, advancing our technological and productive capacities and generating new and innovative ideas are crucial across all disciplinary fields. But attracting new graduates to research, and keeping hold of our best and brightest researchers here in Australia, has become a challenge for many Australian universities”, Ms Vamvakinou said.

“This inquiry focuses on current university research training programs and some of the challenges universities face in this area”.

“This includes the adequacy and effectiveness of current research training schemes, the factors that determine whether new graduates pursue a career in research, and the opportunities for career advancement for research graduates and staff”.

The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research requested that the committee inquire into and report on Australian research training, with particular reference to:

- The contribution of research training programs to Australia’s competitiveness in the areas of science, research and innovation;
- The effectiveness of current Commonwealth research training schemes;
- The adequacy of current research training schemes to support Australia’s anticipated future requirements for tertiary-qualified professionals in a wide range of disciplines;
- Adequacy of training and support available to research graduate students in Australia;
- Factors for graduates that determine pursuit of a career in research;
- Opportunities for career advancement for research graduates and staff;
- Factors determining pursuit of research opportunities overseas;
- Australia’s ability to compete internationally for high quality researchers; and
- Whether Australia’s academic workforce is ageing, and its impact on research capacity.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry by **Friday 30 May 2008**. Further details, including the full terms of reference, membership of the committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the committee’s website at www.aph.gov.au/isi.

For media comment: contact the Committee Chair Ms Maria Vamvakinou at her electorate office on (03) 9309 3655.

For further information: contact the Committee Secretary on (02) 6277 4594, or isi.reps@aph.gov.au.