

**Senator Kim Carr**

**Labor Senator for Victoria**

*Shadow Minister for Industry, Innovation, Science and Research*

*Thursday, 15 November 2007 (58/07)*

**Building a strong future for Australian research**

Federal Labor's key research initiatives, announced during yesterday's Campaign Launch, highlight our commitment to a research revolution.

Australia is falling behind the rest of the world in investment in research and only a Rudd Labor Government will address this problem.

Labor has committed almost \$175 million to introduce a *Future Fellowships* program to support our best and brightest mid-career researchers and to strengthen Australia's position in the global research arena.

These fellowships will be worth \$140,000 a year for four years, with each researcher's institution to receive a \$50,000 grant to support the purchase of related infrastructure and equipment for their research project.

Labor has also moved to revitalise stagnating Australian Postgraduate Awards for postgraduate students by doubling the number of these awards by 2012.

These are the first steps in Labor's commitment to deliver Australia's first sustainable national innovation strategy, underpinning future economic growth and social prosperity.

Labor has a ten point plan that places research and researchers at the centre of a national innovation system. This plan includes:

- Strengthened investment in creativity and knowledge generation.
- Focussed business R&D incentives to promote global competitiveness.
- Accelerated take-up of new technology, so that Australian firms have access to the best ideas.
- Support for international research partnerships and collaboration.
- Strengthened publicly funded innovation and research infrastructure.
- Improving industry access to the expertise of our universities and research agencies.
- Encouraging cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration.

A Rudd Labor Government will be committed to rebuilding the national innovation system and, over time, doubling the amount invested in R&D in Australia.

- Labor will bring responsibility for innovation, industry, science and research into a single Commonwealth Department.

- Labor will develop a set of national innovation priorities to sit over the national research priorities. Together, these will provide a framework for a national innovation system, ensuring that the objectives of research programs and other innovation initiatives are complementary.
- Labor will abolish the Howard Government's flawed Research Quality Framework, and replace it with a new, streamlined, transparent, internationally verifiable system of research quality assessment, based on quality measures appropriate to each discipline. These measures will be developed in close consultation with the research community. Labor will also address the inadequacies in current and proposed models of research citation. Labor's model will recognise the contribution of Australian researchers to Australia and the world.
- Labor will give priority to the training of the next generation of researchers, and nurture the talents of researchers at all stages of their careers. Labor is committed to attracting and retaining high-calibre researchers in Australia.
- Labor will reinvest in research infrastructure, establishing a "hubs and spokes" model of research cooperation between universities and other research agencies to promote excellence while providing access to the best possible facilities for the greatest number of researchers. Labor will reduce the fragmentation of our national research effort, will build on our research strengths and encourage greater collaboration between researchers and research institutions.
- Labor is committed to the concept of peer review; to funding compacts with universities, to the guarantee of academic freedom; to the independence of the Australian Research Council, the National Health and Medical Research Council and other research grants agencies; and to reducing red tape and unnecessary interference in university research matters. Labor has long recognised the need for research funding agencies to coordinate their efforts more closely, in order to deliver the best research outcomes in areas of critical public need, such as Indigenous health and climate change.
- Labor will revitalise our public research agencies and replace the culture of short-term commercialisation with an emphasis on public research and support for long-term sustainable economic growth.
- Labor will bring forward the statutory review of the Cooperative Research Centre program and remove the restrictions imposed by the Howard Government that the Productivity Commission has identified as a brake on the effectiveness of CRCs.
- Labor recognises the importance of basic research in the creation of new knowledge, and also the value and breadth of Australian research effort across the humanities, creative arts and social sciences as well as scientific and technological disciplines.

The Howard Government has allocated \$87 million for the implementation of the RQF. Labor will seek to redirect the residual funds to encourage genuine industry collaboration in research.

**Related Launch Material**

Speech: Kevin Rudd Campaign Launch  
<<http://www.alp.org.au/media/1107/speloo140.php>>

Media Release: Keeping Our Best And Brightest In Australia - Labor's Future Fellowships  
<<http://www.alp.org.au/media/1107/msloo142.php>>

Media Release: Scholarships For A Competitive Future - Federal Labor's Plan For Improved And Expanded Commonwealth Scholarships  
<<http://www.alp.org.au/media/1107/msloo144.php>> )