



Council for the
humanities, arts
& social sciences

21 February 2011

Mr. Russell Campbell
Principal Adviser
Budget Policy Division
Department of the Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

E: prebudgetsubs@treasury.gov.au

Dear Mr Campbell

Submission from the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences regarding Federal Budget 2011-12

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to ensure it is part of the range of government priorities for determining the Federal Budget 2011-12.

The Council was established in 2004 to promote the interests of the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) community in Australia. Representatives promote the contribution of the HASS sector to government, industry and the public through discussion forums and engaging in the public policy space. CHASS is building up the innovative capacity of Australia through better linkages between the HASS sector and science, engineering and industry. Further information in relation to the organisation can be found at www.chass.org.au.

CHASS has been fortunate to receive government support from the Higher Education Research Promotion program which provides grants under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* to foster an understanding of the importance of, and/or promote research and scholarship in, science, social science or the humanities in Australia. The Council is funded on a calendar year basis via a special appropriation under HESA. The level of renewed funding for CHASS is determined through the Federal Budget process.

In 2008 CHASS was evaluated as part of the government grant-in-aid process and found to remain an effective organisation, with its activities recognised as providing a unique contribution to Australia from a cultural and scientific perspective. A sustainability project funding agreement exists between the Commonwealth and the Council to promote the importance of science and research in addressing important national and global issues; engage with business and the broader community; and develop and implement a sustainability plan. Council is funded until 31 December 2011.

The Council notes that renewed support for programs delivered through the Higher Education Research Promotion program was a core election commitment by the Gillard Government. Specifically, the Gillard Government's agenda for science is to invest in Australian science engagement and scientific research and to: *increase awareness of science in the Australian community, build skills in science and technology, and support the efforts of Australia's outstanding scientists to produce solutions for this country and the world. The pursuit of knowledge in all its forms - including in the social sciences and humanities - is the key to ensuring that Australia remains a high-tech, high-value producer paying good wages and*

*offering a good standard of living. It will give us the savvy, creative and adaptable workforce we need to compete in a global economy increasingly demanding new technologies and ideas.*¹

Consistent with this agenda, in October 2010 the Government released *Inspiring Australia*, a national strategy for communicating science in Australia which proposed national strategic initiatives to help realise the Government's goals outlined in *Powering Ideas: An Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century*. In this strategy science, or the sciences, refers to the traditionally recognised natural and physical sciences such as biology, physics, chemistry and geology; but also the social sciences and humanities which are deemed critical to the interface between science and society. Together they are known as the 'knowledge of the world'.

In a speech to the National Press Club on the 3 September 2008, the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator the Hon Kim Carr emphasised the importance of this interface to drive innovation, and raise the standard of scientific and technical innovation. Through critical analysis and enabling discussion on the impact of science from ethical, historical and cultural perspectives provision is enabled for Australians to consider the cultural consequences from any scientific activity. Thus, the humanities, arts and social sciences, act to empower individuals and communities to deal with change either by adapting to it, or by asserting their own view of how it should happen. In this speech he stated that:

the CSIRO has found that many of the problems it is working on cannot be solved by focusing solely on the biophysical dimension—problems like water scarcity, resource management and climate change. If we want to find solutions to these problems, we have to understand the social, behavioural and institutional dimensions as well. That's why the CSIRO is relying more and more on economists, human geographers, planners, sociologists and other specialists in the humanities and social sciences to provide the answers.

Therefore, as Minister Carr pointed out the social sciences are considered essential for problem-solving in a societal context, while the humanities and the arts have the potential to connect with the public in ways that traditional science communication cannot.

Australia is currently facing complex and challenging times with respect to climate, the environment, recovering from recent natural disasters, in addition to competing within the global economy. CHASS exists to connect the sciences and if adequately funded, can assist Government to realise its objectives as our members are specialists in the knowledge and skills of their disciplines and professions.

Council members engage in research and professional practice in disciplines from education, history, languages and philosophy, to demography, journalism, geography and sociology. Leading universities, discipline associations, peak bodies and collecting institutions are represented in the Council's membership body. The performing and visual arts areas are well represented through art form groups and research and training institutions, as are media arts and design and publishing.

The inclusion of the social sciences and humanities as part of the sciences is especially relevant in Australian public policy development where, for Australia to progress, contributions will be required not only from the natural and physical sciences but also the social sciences, arts and the humanities. Indeed, recently the Minister stated that "the Australian government demands great things of our researchers" but that he expects "researchers to interpret the world and help all of us to change it."²

¹ <http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/more---policies/science-for-australia-s-future/>

² <http://minister.innovation.gov.au/Carr/pages/Speeches.aspx>

It is that expectation which the Council, through its membership and activities can assist government to achieve. The Council's membership reflects an emerging focus on trans-disciplinary research and collaboration, with its members engaged in new projects tackling the major challenges before Australia in partnership with traditional science areas and industry groups.

A practical example of how the Council works to assist in interpreting scientific research is the convening of the HASS-On- The- Hill program on March 22 and 23 this year. This program acts as a forum for research communication and exchange which will highlight the sector's contribution to Australian society in cultural, economic and social areas.

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences is building programs to support the new *Ahead of the Game* blue print for public sector reform and its recommendation for new links between policy makers and the academic and research institutions. Indeed the Secretary of Prime Minister and Cabinet will address Hass-on-the-Hill especially on this topic.

In order to ensure the continued viability of the Council, and its ability to contribute to Australian society in cultural, economic and social areas renewed support for CHASS delivered through the Higher Education Research Promotion program is necessary. I therefore urge you to prioritise a continued level of appropriation under the 2011-12 Federal Budget process.

On behalf of the Council I would be pleased to discuss this submission in further detail should this be required and can be contacted on telephone

Yours sincerely,

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

Professor Linda Rosenman
President
Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences