



historycouncilnsw

31 October 2018

The Hon. Dan Tehan  
Minister for Education  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

**History Council of NSW's response to political interference in the peer review process of awarding Australian Research Council grants**

The History Council of NSW (HCNSW) is writing to echo the statement by the Australian Historical Association that expresses strong opposition and objection to political interference in the peer review process of awarding Australian Research Council grants. The news that former Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, intervened to obstruct the funding of 11 research grants that had been approved through the rigorous peer review process undermines the independence of high quality Australian research and the integrity of the peer review process. It represents an unacceptable act of arbitrary interference on political grounds, and is one that has damaged Australia's international research reputation.

The HCNSW recognises and expresses outrage at the disruption to the careers and lives for those scholars, including historians, and especially early career researchers, whose projects and careers have been severely impacted upon by this alarming and direct political attack on humanities projects.

In order for confidence to be restored to the research sector the HCNSW supports AHA demands that the previously rejected grants be fully funded. We call on the Morrison government to demonstrate its belief in the value of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences research by confirming a commitment to independent and transparent funding processes.



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The HCNSW also believes that the just-announced National Interest test for research grants will be difficult to implement, as by its very nature outstanding research draws from, reflects and intersects with global concepts, issues and practice. We fear that the application of this test will relegate Australia to a research backwater and undo decades of international research progress that has been achieved by this country.

The HCNSW urges you to reconsider your position about research funding and investigate and implement internationally relevant research policies in relation to research grants that will further the careers of our finest minds and contribute to global research practice.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tanya Evans'.

A/Prof Tanya Evans  
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History Council of NSW  
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