



## **Statement on political interference in ARC grant allocation**

### **Asian Studies Association of Australia statement on political interference in Australian Research Council grant allocation.**

The Asian Studies Association of Australia joins other academic bodies in expressing our grave concern at recent revelations of political interference in the allocation of Australian Research Council grants. Late last week it was revealed that the Federal Education Minister in 2017 and 2018 rejected 11 grant applications that had been approved through the Council's process of peer review.

One of the applicants whose research grant was vetoed by the Minister was a highly respected former president of the ASAA, with a world-leading reputation for her scholarship on history, culture and gender in China.

The Australian Research Council uses a rigorous process of peer review to allocate its grants. Academics compete through this process, and devote time to assessing applications voluntarily, on the understanding that applicants compete on a level playing field and that their applications are assessed purely on the basis of scholarly merit. This process contributes greatly to the excellence and international reputation of research in Australia.

It is very disappointing to learn that 11 applications were vetoed, not as a result of scholarly review, but by arbitrary exercise of political discretion. Such interference undermines the integrity and transparency of Australia's system of peer review, and harms Australia's international reputation for research excellence.

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On behalf of the Executive, 29 October 2018