

2010

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL AMENDMENT BILL 2010

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

(Circulated by authority of the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research,
Senator the Honourable Kim Carr)

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL AMENDMENT BILL 2010

GENERAL OUTLINE

The purpose of the *Australian Research Council Amendment Bill 2010* (the Bill) is to make funding adjustments in the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (the Act) that will allow the Australian Research Council to implement its Budget Initiatives, an Australian Government Initiative resulting from the 2020 Summit and apply indexation against existing schemes.

This funding supports three funding initiatives in particular, they are: the *Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology* Initiative, *Super Science Fellowships* scheme and continued funding for *National ICT Australia* (NICTA).

These initiatives foster high quality research activity as part of Australia's national innovation system.

The *Super Science Fellowships* scheme consists of 100 three-year early-career fellowships, which will be awarded to Australia's most promising young researchers allowing them to continue to have opportunities to work in areas of national significance during the global recession.

The *Research in Bionic Science and Technology Initiative* was developed in response to the Australia 2020 Summit. It delivers on the Australian Government's promise, as part of its 2020 Summit response, to implement a long-term national health strategy. This Australian Government investment will help to give and restore sight to thousands of people around the world.

NICTA plays an important role in building Australia's research and skills base and is a key national innovation asset. It enhances Australia's ability to fully capture the social and economic benefits that ICT capability can deliver across all sectors of the Australian community, ranging from security and transport management to health and environmental issues.

Specifically the Bill will alter three existing financial year funding figures and extend the forward estimate period to 2013, resulting in additional spending of \$889.6 million over the four financial years.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Bill will increase spending by approximately \$889.6 million over four financial years. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to increase funding to fully implement: the new *Super Science Fellowships* scheme and *Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology* Initiative; provide continued funding for *National ICT Australia* (NICTA); and apply indexation against existing schemes and create an additional out year.

The proposed amendments only impact on administered special appropriation; they do not alter the substance of the Act or increase departmental funds.

NOTES ON CLAUSES

Clause 1 – Short Title

This clause provides for the Bill, once enacted, to be cited as the *Australian Research Council Amendment Act 2010*.

Clause 2 – Commencement

This clause specifies the commencement date for the Bill. This means that the proposed amendments set out in Schedule 1 will commence on the day the Bill, once enacted, receives the Royal Assent.

Clause 3 – Schedules(s)

Clause 3 provides that the proposed amendments to any Act specified in Schedule 1 to the Bill, and any other items in a Schedule, are amended or repealed as set out in the applicable items in the Schedule concerned. Any item in a Schedule to this Act has effect according to its terms.

SCHEDULE 1 – AMENDMENTS

Item 1 – At the end of Subsection 48(2)

The proposed amendment in Item 1 provides for a new paragraph (i) at the end of subsection 48(2).

The proposed amendment makes reference to a new financial year of financial information, commencing 1 July 2012.

Item 2 – Paragraphs 49(j), (k) and (l)

The proposed amendment in Item 2 provides for the repeal of current paragraphs 49(j), (k) and (l) of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

In place of the repealed paragraphs 49(j), (k) and (l), new paragraphs 49(j), (k), (l) and (m) are substituted.

The proposed amendments of this section of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* update the existing special appropriation amount administered by the Australian Research Council to include an additional out year, indexation and provide funding for the *Super Science Fellowships* scheme, *Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative* and continued funding for *National ICT Australia* (NICTA).