



## Australian Academy of Science

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Secretary Science Policy Professor Les Field AM FAA

12 March 2015

Senator Chris Back  
Chair  
Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Back

### **Ongoing scrutiny of the implementation of the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012**

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the *Ongoing scrutiny of the implementation of the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*. To assist the inquiry enclosed is a copy of the Academy's submission to the Department of Defence consultation on the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act Bill 2014*. In accordance with the Committee's request the Academy would like to make the following additional points.

### **Finding effective solutions to shortcomings in the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012**

The Strengthened Export Controls Steering Group has consulted widely with industry and research stakeholders to test how the Act will work in practice. This has allowed the Steering Group to identify areas where the Act can be improved, leading to the development of the Amendment Bill. Should the Bill be passed the Act will strike a better balance between the need to meet Australia's international obligations and national security requirements, whilst not unduly hindering scientists, research organisations and industry. In this regard, the Academy is satisfied that the substantive issues of concern within the sector, including those raised in the previous inquiry reports, have largely been resolved through the implementation and consultation process.

The Academy is pleased that the Amendment Bill includes the provision for the Steering Group to continue their work and that there will be subsequent reviews of the Act to improve its effectiveness.

### **Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2015 Consultation**

Whilst the timeframe for this consultation was relatively tight, the Academy was satisfied with the consultation process, and notes that this took place following the lengthy and extensive consultation undertaken by Steering Group with industry, scientists and research organisations. In addition to this, the oversight from this Senate inquiry over the last two years has provided the sector with ample opportunity to identify areas where the Act can be further improved.

During the Amendment Bill consultation the Defence Export Control Office (DECO) provided multiple avenues in which to comment on the Act, and were willing to listen to stakeholders to find ways to improve the Act further or provide further clarity where necessary. The Academy appreciated participating in the stakeholder workshop and notes that every substantive point raised in the consultation process was discussed in detail. At the workshop it was clear there was widespread stakeholder support for the Amendment Bill, as well as strong appreciation for the work of the Strengthened Export Controls Steering Group and the DECO secretariat managing the Amendment Bill consultation.

Yours sincerely



Professor Les Field AM FAA  
**Secretary Science Policy**