

STATES GRANTS (RESEARCH) BILL 1965

SECOND READING SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR ROBERT MENZIES, K.T., C.H., Q.C., M.P.,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 12TH NOVEMBER, 1965

The purpose of this Bill is to establish machinery which will enable grants to be made to the States for the benefit of individual research projects of particular merit. Under the authority of this measure the responsible Minister will have power to approve Commonwealth grants to selected research workers in the States, within the limits of the amounts of money appropriated by the Parliament from time to time.

The Australian Government believes that in order to obtain the best possible use of the funds which it, and where appropriate the State Governments also, will provide for scientific research, grants should be made for the direct benefit of selected research activities which are judged most likely to make a significant contribution to the advancement of science and of scientific knowledge in Australia. These special research grants will be available to research workers in the universities and other institutions, but not to those employed by government authorities. However, the adoption of this method does not mean that other forms of research will no longer receive Government support. For instance, the Australian Universities Commission will be free to provide for the needs of research in the sense of the training of postgraduate students within its general recommendations for the support of the universities.

To decide which research project should be supported is clearly a difficult task and one requiring expert knowledge. Therefore, we established the Australian Research Grants Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor R.N. Robertson to receive applications, assess their relative merits, and select the most worthy projects. The Committee, which comprises distinguished representatives of the major fields of learning, has considered a large number of applications and has recommended research grants in various branches of science and learning, including in the humanities and the social sciences.

Within the limit of the total sum of £2million nominated for it, the Committee has recommended grants during 1965 and the whole of 1966 to a total value of £1,848,875 of which the Commonwealth will pay £932,214, assuming that each State provides half of the amounts recommended for research workers in the universities in that State. The distribution of these grants among research workers in the various States is set out in a table which, with the concurrence of Honourable Members, I will have incorporated in Hansard.

My colleague the Minister in Charge of Commonwealth Activities in Education and Research has released the details of the Committee's recommendations and has announced that the Australian Government accepts these recommendations. A statement setting out the details has been distributed to Honourable Members.

The sum of £2million which was nominated for the Australian Research Grants Committee, is the balance of a sum of £5million which the Australian Universities Commission in its Second Report recommended should be provided by the Commonwealth and the States for research in State universities during the 1964-1966 triennium. By agreement the Commonwealth and the States are providing the other £3million for general research training purposes during the triennium.

On this occasion almost all of the grants recommended are for the benefit of research workers in State universities and the Commonwealth stands ready to meet half the cost of such grants. It is, of course, the prerogative of each State Government to decide whether and, if so, to what extent, it will join with the Commonwealth in matching the grants. While the States have known for some time about this programme of support for special research projects and of its financial implications, they could not know until the Australian Research Grants Committee had framed its recommendations what the financial commitment of each State would, in fact, be.

I am pleased to inform the House that the Governments of five States have agreed to support the Committee's recommendations in full. The Government of New South Wales is still considering its position.

This Bill gives general authority for the payment of special research grants to research workers in the States who will be selected under the procedures I have outlined. The Appropriation Bill (No.2) 1965/66 includes provision under Division No.945.1 for the estimated expenditure of £750,000 during the current financial year, on the first series of special research grants.

I commend the Bill to the House.

States Grants (Research) Bill, 1965

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE

Grants recommended for research workers in institutions in the States:

October, 1965

	£
University of Sydney	352,362
University of New South Wales	190,988
University of New England	91,684
Newcastle University	28,825
Macquarie University	3,250
Total for New South Wales	<u>667,109</u>
University of Melbourne	266,303
Monash University	144,001
Walter and Eliza Hall Institute	15,003
Private project	550
Total for Victoria	<u>425,857</u>
University of Queensland	121,518
Townsville University College	18,550
Total for Queensland	<u>140,068</u>
University of Adelaide	249,249
University of Adelaide at Bedford Park	47,810
Total for South Australia	<u>297,059</u>
University of Western Australia	<u>189,833</u>
University of Tasmania	<u>101,949</u>
	1,821,875
Provision for Contingencies	27,000
	<u>1,848,875</u>