



MARCH FOR SCIENCE WELCOMES COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL SCIENCE STATEMENT AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Tuesday, 22 March 2017

March For Science Australia welcomed today's release of the National Science Statement by the Commonwealth Government - and called for the government to provide an annual implementation report to the Australian parliament to track its progress.

The National Science Statement aligns well with several of the the core mission components of the Australian March for Science. Specifically, the statement speaks directly to a long-term vision of improving science literacy, promoting knowledge sharing, stable support for scientific research as a public good, and consultation of scientific experts in the policy making process.

Molecular geneticist and Canberra March for Science organiser, Dr Erin Vaughn, said, the statement was timely.

"Scientists and science supporters around the globe are nervous and frustrated by the rise of fake news and support for science is declining," Dr Vaughn said.

"The statement goes a long way to reassure Australian science advocates. With the Statement rising from the successful 2017 Science Meets Parliament event, it is now time for parliamentarians to put the statement to work. The conversation must continue between scientists and the government but it must also involve the diverse people of Australia. We must ensure that all corners of society benefit from science and have equal access to science careers and science education."

Associate Professor Stuart Khan said while the strategy was a step in the right direction it would only lead to better research and real improvements in Australians' quality of life if the actions were fully funded and delivered.

"While we welcome this statement, too many government reports get forgotten in the bottom of someone's drawer, and don't lead to real, lasting change," Mr Khan said.

"Australia needs more than a science statement, we need a fully funded science strategy to help everyone live better lives - to improve our standard of living."

Mr Khan said the Australian community had become increasingly worried about the future of science and scientific research, along with communities across the globe.

He said March for Science Australia had been established this year due to those concerns and the group was now organising marches on Saturday, 22 April in 11 Australian cities to coincide with similar marches in more than 400 cities across the world.

"Funding cuts by successive governments and a lack of respect for science are holding Australia back from a better future," Mr Khan said.

"This statement didn't contain any new funding and we call on the Commonwealth to demonstrate its support for science in the May budget.

"We also call on all parties to work together in a non-partisan way to develop a detailed and long-term science strategy with support from all political sides that would put Australia's future first."

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