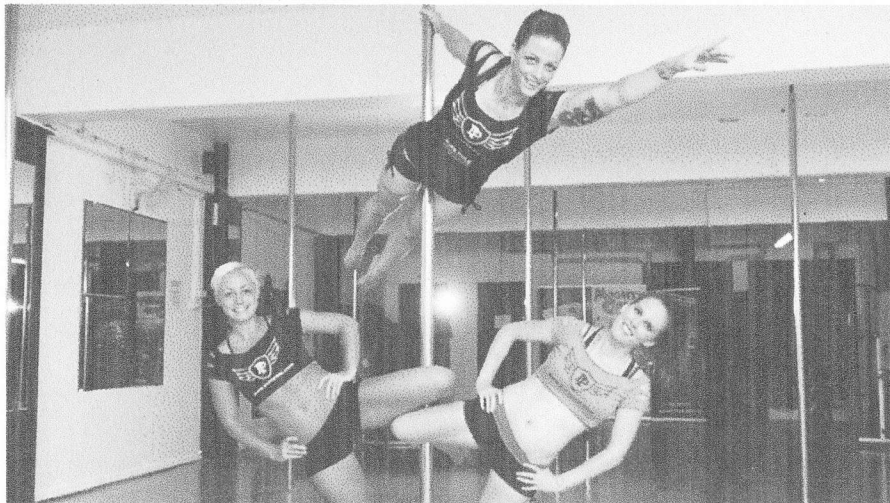


## THE AUSTRALIAN

# Science calls election bluff on funding

ANDREW TROUNSON THE AUSTRALIAN AUGUST 08, 2013 12:00AM



Federal research policy is poles apart from what's needed, according to the Academy of Science, which wants a more gymnastic approach to spending. Picture: Paul Guy. Source: Quest Newspapers

**NOT intimidated by the election rhetoric about funding cuts, the Australian Academy of Science is demanding that spending on research and development rise to 3 per cent of GDP within five years, up from 2.2 per cent now.**

In its election platform the academy said at least half of that increase should come from government through increasing money to funding agencies and block grants. As a first move it wants the post-election government to restore the \$3.8 billion in university cuts and spending deferrals.

The academy slammed the "stop start" approach to research funding and called for a fresh 10 year commitment to funding major national research infrastructure.

The call comes after the Gillard government waited almost until the last moment before committing in the last budget to extend funding for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy, which funds major infrastructure. And it only provided funding for a further two years.

"Funding fluctuations, pauses, risks of pauses and ad hoc short term cuts or boosts to programs reduce efficiency and effectiveness," the academy said.

It is also calling for a special \$25 million a year fund to help finance international science collaboration, in place of the International Scientific Linkages program abandoned by the government in 2011 - a move that puts Australian science at risk of isolation, the academy warned.

"Without strategic national co-ordination, we are unable to integrate our research activities with the 96 per cent of high-citation research that occurs overseas," it said.

The wish list isn't all about money and the academy has echoed the chorus of calls for grant-making bodies to cut red tape for researchers. It noted that academics are currently spending 16 hours a week on activities other than research or teaching, primarily preparing and reviewing grant applications.

It wants the government to commit to reduce the time spent on administration and other activities to about 10 per cent.