

Higher Education, Research and International

Hot Topic Briefs

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| 1 | Accord ATEC | SB24-000195 |
| 2 | Accord Final Report - Students with Disability - Disability stakeholders' response | SB24-000196 |
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Higher Education, Research and International 2024–25 Budget Estimates

| Response/Facts |
|---|
| <p>SB24-000195 - Accord ATEC</p> <p>The Government has committed to establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) to oversee and steward the tertiary education system.</p> <p>An ATEC will have a long-term vision, a coordinated strategic plan and the power to implement the Accord reforms. An ATEC will drive growth through equity and meet our national skills needs. An ATEC will ensure a high quality, cohesive and diverse tertiary education system through funding and performance monitoring. An ATEC's power will be set out in legislation. An ATEC will work with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training, and the states and territories on VET matters.</p> <p>The Government will consult more on the role of an ATEC and its commissioners.</p> |
| <p>SB24-000196 - Accord Final Report - Students with Disability - Disability stakeholders' response</p> <p>The department is aware some disability stakeholders are concerned how the Australian Universities Accord (Accord) Final Report represented issues relating to students and staff with disability.</p> <p>The Final Report recognises there are challenges in disability data collection and quality, making direct comparison between cohorts difficult and acknowledged this cohort could still be under-represented in higher education.</p> <p>On 8 April 2024, the department convened a meeting with representatives of disability stakeholders to discuss concerns. A further meeting was held on 20 May 2024 to discuss the Government's announcements as part of the 2024–25 Budget.</p> |
| <p>SB24-000197 - Accord New Funding Model</p> <p>The Government has announced a target to have 80% of working-age people with a tertiary qualification by 2050. An Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) has been formed to advise on the implementation of the new funding system.</p> <p>A new Managed Growth Funding system for Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) will be introduced from 1 January 2026 to meet Australia's skills needs and increase opportunity for students from under-represented background.</p> <p>The Government is introducing Needs-Based Funding contributions as a core part of the new funding system from 1 January 2026. A Needs-Based Funding contribution will be a core part of the new system to support more students from under-represented backgrounds to succeed and complete their degrees.</p> <p>The Government will provide \$350 million of additional Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS) funding over 4 years from 1 January 2025 to fully-fund FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses. Additional places provided are expected to result in 30,000 students by 2030 studying in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses, an increase of 40%.</p> <p>There will be a dedicated cluster rate replacing the current arrangement of mixed cluster and loading funding. The cluster rate for these places will be \$18,279 per EFTSL in 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under current arrangements, universities receive CGS funding for each enabling place based on the discipline the student is studying (ranging from \$1,236 to \$30,395 per place in 2024) and if the university has been allocated places for the Enabling Loading Program, they would receive an extra \$3,886 per place. |

Higher Education, Research and International 2024–25 Budget Estimates

SB24-000198 - Accord Response

The Government has responded to 29 of 47 recommendations from the Accord Final Report, investing \$1.1 billion over the forward estimates.

The Government's response to the Accord Final Report in the 2024-25 Budget includes:

- \$350.3m of additional CGS funding over 4 years for FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses.
- \$427.4m over 4 years for a Commonwealth Prac Payment (\$369.2m for teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work students in higher education, and \$58.2m for eligible VET students) from 1 July 2025.
- Lowering the indexation of HELP debts to the lower of CPI or WPI – reducing indexation by more than \$3b for around 3 million people.
- \$27.7m for tertiary harmonisation measures.
- \$24.6m over 4 years for CDU to establish and operate a medical school in the Northern Territory, providing up to 40 new medical CSPs.
- Establish a study into the prevalence of antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and the experience of First Nations people at universities.
- Requiring that higher education providers must allocate a minimum of 40% of Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) revenue collected to student-led organisations.
- Undertake a strategic examination of R&D to strengthen alignment with Australia's priorities.

SB24-000199 - Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence and National Code

Education Ministers released an Action Plan on 23 February 2024 to address gender-based violence in higher education. The plan includes the establishment of a National Student Ombudsman and a National Higher Education Code. The National Code will commence from 1 January 2025 pending the passage of legislation. Compliance activities will commence from 1 January 2026. The National Code will set mandatory standards for providers to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

The National Code will be administered by a new Unit in the department with responsibility for ensuring higher education providers' ongoing compliance. The Government is providing \$18.7 million over 4 years from 2024–25 to establish the Unit as an ongoing function.

The Action Plan aims to enhance the oversight and accountability of standalone student accommodation providers, which are currently not regulated by TEQSA or the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. The Action Plan will work to identify opportunities to ensure legislation, policies and regulations prioritise victim survivor safety.

The Action Plan will increase data transparency and scrutiny to demonstrate improvement by higher education providers, student accommodation providers and governments. This will include collecting and publishing data on gender-based violence incidents, complaints and outcomes, and conducting regular reviews of progress against the Action Plan.

Higher Education, Research and International 2024–25 Budget Estimates

SB24-000200 - Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce

The Australian Government will provide \$24.6 million over 4 years from 2024–25 for Charles Darwin University (CDU) to establish a new medical school for the Northern Territory with 40 new commencing medical students per year from 1 January 2026.

Funding is contingent on the outcome of the Government's investment of \$2.8 million to support CDU's exploratory work on the new medical school. Pending a successful outcome, CDU will be invited to apply for an ongoing allocation of 40 commencing medical Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) each year, supporting high quality medical training for up to 200 students by 2030.

Funding includes support for related capital, establishment and recurrent costs.

The investment aims to develop and retain a locally trained medical workforce that can address the NT's unique health challenges, such as the high proportion of First Nations people and the low population density.

The Government will continue to support the NT Medical Program (NTMP) operated by Flinders University and CDU, and will work with both universities to ensure the new medical school complements the existing training arrangements.

SB24-000201 - Commonwealth Prac support payments

The Government will launch a Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) from 1 July 2025 for students in teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work courses to help them with the financial burden of unpaid practicums.

The CPP will be available to about 68,000 domestic higher education students (and 5,000 VET students) each year who are receiving income support or working more than 15 hours per week while studying. The payment will be equivalent to \$319.50 per week during their practicum.

The CPP will be delivered through higher education providers for higher education students, and through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for VET students.

SB24-000204 - Making HELP Simpler and Fairer

Indexation of HELP loans is intended to ensure that the value of outstanding balances is maintained in real terms. The 1 June 2023 HELP indexation rate of 7.1% CPI on outstanding HELP loans drew into question the fairness of the current indexation methodology.

The Government will introduce changes to cap indexation at the lower of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Wage Price Index (WPI).

The proposed changes will retrospectively address the 7.1% CPI indexation, taking practical effect from 1 June 2023.

- For 2023 an indexation credit will be applied to an individual's account calculated by the difference between the 7.1% CPI rate and the WPI figure of 3.2%.
- For 2024, an indexation credit will be applied to an individual's account calculated by the difference between the CPI rate of 4.7% and the WPI calculated figure of 4%.

The total indexation credit for 2023 and 2024 is expected to be more than \$3 billion.

The Australian Taxation Office will automatically apply the indexation credit to people's HELP accounts after the passage of legislation. The Australian Taxation Office plan to apply the credit, progressively over a three-month period.

Higher Education, Research and International 2024–25 Budget Estimates

SB24-000205 - Migration Strategy and Integrity in International Education

The Australian Government has taken actions to address serious integrity issues in the international education sector, such as strengthening the fit and proper provider test, prohibiting agent commissions for onshore student transfers, and developing risk indicators for compliance.

The Government has also paused the application and assessment of registration applications for new international education providers and new courses from existing providers for up to 12 months and has given itself the power to limit or cease the ability of providers to deliver courses that have quality and integrity issues or limited value to Australia's critical skills needs.

The Government is aware of the sector's views about the impacts of its integrity focused approach to the student visa program, which has resulted in uneven financial impacts across the sector and some providers ceasing recruitment from certain countries, such as India. The Government will continue to work with education providers and India to ensure quality and integrity in Australia's education system and to support efficient and timely visa processing.

SB24-000206 - National Skills Passport

The Government committed to consult widely on the concept of a National Skills Passport as part of the Employment White Paper in 2023 and allocated \$5.6 million to the Department of Education (the department) and \$1.9 million to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to prepare a business case by 2024.

The department, in collaboration with DEWR and 2 external vendors (Meld Studies – stakeholder engagement, and Accenture – business case), has engaged with various stakeholders, including individuals, industry, unions, tertiary institutions and governments, through a public consultation paper, co-design workshops and meetings.

Next steps will be determined once Government has considered the business case, and will include further engagement with stakeholders including employers, unions, the tertiary sector, and state and territory governments.

A National Skills Passport could support lifelong learning, skill development, recognition of prior learning, and workforce mobility for Australians, as well as help fill critical skills gaps and meet labour market needs.

SB24-000207 - National Student Ombudsman

The Ombudsman Act 1976 will be amended to establish the National Student Ombudsman, and states and territories will pursue changes to their ombudsman acts to avoid duplication. The OCO will receive \$19.39 million over 2 years from 2024–25 to set up the function, and the Government will examine cost recovery arrangements for the providers. Funding from 2026–27 is held in the Contingency Reserve.

The National Student Ombudsman will be able to review student complaints about various aspects of their providers' actions, such as student safety, welfare, course and student loan administration, and reasonable adjustments for students. The National Student Ombudsman will also be able to make recommendations to the providers, and share information with relevant regulators.

The Department of Education is leading further consultation on the implementation of the National Student Ombudsman, involving higher education stakeholders, peak bodies, advocacy agencies, state and territory departments and ombudsmen. The department will also consult on potential charging arrangements for the providers in 2025.

Higher Education, Research and International 2024–25 Budget Estimates

SB24-000208 - Strengthening university governance – governance and industrial relations

Education Ministers agreed to establish an expert governance council within the University Chancellors Council and issue 10 governance priorities for action to improve university governance.

The expert governance council will develop new 'Australian University Governance Principles and Recommendations' by the end of 2024, and universities will publicly report on their compliance with them.

The Australian Government agreed actions to ensure universities meet enterprise agreements and industrial obligations, such as new guidance from TEQSA, engagement of an independent expert, and improved staff data collection.

SB24-000209 - University Study Hubs

The Australian Government has committed over \$87 million since 2022–23 for the Regional University Study Hubs Program, which provide facilities and support for students in regional and remote areas. This includes \$31.9 million (2023–24 to 2026–27) for up to 20 (noting funding for 22 have been announced) additional Regional Hubs in response to Priority Action 1 of the Accord Interim Report (\$34.4 million if departmental included.) This also includes \$55.7 million for 8 Regional Hubs in Cohort 3, and continuation of funding for Regional Hubs in Cohorts 1 and 2.

The program was expanded in response to the Accord Interim Report, which recommended creating more Regional Hubs and establishing Suburban Hubs for outer urban areas with low tertiary education participation. The Government announced funding (\$66.9 million) for up to 20 additional Regional Hubs and up to 14 new Suburban Hubs.

A competitive application process for Suburban Hubs will run from 22 May – 29 July 2024. Applications will be assessed by a panel of senior departmental staff. Successful applicants to be announced in September 2024 and commence operations during the first semester of 2025.

Regional University Study Hubs support almost 4,000 students as of November 2023, with a high proportion of first in family and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. The hubs provide campus-style study spaces, internet access and academic skills/wellbeing support for students studying at any Australian tertiary institution.

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|-------------------|--------------------|
| Issue: | Accord ATEC |
| PBS Pg No. | NIL |
| Contact: | Ben Rimmer |
| | Ph: s 22 |
| | Deputy Secretary |

Key Points

- The Government has committed to establishing an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) as an independent steward of the higher education system and to promote a more integrated tertiary education system.
- This Budget announcement responds to the recommendation from the Australian Universities Accord (Accord) Panel that an ATEC be established as a statutory national body reporting to the Minister for Education and Minister for Skills and Training (see [Attachment A](#)).
- The plan for the implementation of an ATEC will be informed through consultation with the sector.

Australian Tertiary Education Commission

- The Accord Review found that an ATEC is needed to steward the tertiary education and research system to deliver improved governance, policy, coordination and administration of the sector and plan for the changing shape and expectations of the tertiary education system.
 - An ATEC will have the ability to exercise long-term vision, undertake coordinated strategic planning and deliver on the reforms proposed through the Accord package.
 - An ATEC will offer a pathway to drive growth through equity and make sure our national skills needs are met. An ATEC will foster a high quality, cohesive and diverse tertiary education system through funding stewardship and performance monitoring.
 - An ATEC will have its power set out in legislation which will determine the decisions and actions an ATEC can take.
 - An ATEC will work closely with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training, in addition to the states and territories on VET matters, reflecting the shared responsibility of all jurisdictions in VET.

Consultation on the ATEC

- The Government will consult further with the sector and the community on the role of an ATEC in the new tertiary system, including the role and powers of commissioners in:
 - Funding allocations, system planning and pricing
 - Tertiary harmonisation
 - Strengthening First Nations representation and self-determination
 - Policy coordination and development, stewardship and engagement
 - Whole of Government policy alignment.
- The Government will also consult with states and territories about an ATEC's role in tertiary education.
- This will build on the consultation undertaken by the Accord Panel over the past 12 months, including on their interim report which proposed the establishment of a Tertiary Education Commission. Over 320 responses were received with 107 related to system governance. These submissions broadly supported establishing an ATEC.

Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – Recommendation 30, Accord Final Report

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| Date Last Cleared | 22 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

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Attachment A

The Australian Universities Accord Final Report

Recommendation 30

Establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission

That to deliver on the National Tertiary Education Objective and establish a public sector steward for the tertiary education system, the Australian Government establish an Australian Tertiary Education Commission as a statutory, national body reporting to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Training.

- a. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission would:
 - i. convene ongoing collaborative engagement about the future of the tertiary education system
 - ii. foster a high quality and cohesive tertiary education system, that encourages diversity and student choice
 - iii. advise on meeting skills and equity targets
 - iv. ensure that regulatory burden is monitored and minimised in the sector
 - v. provide expert advice to the Government and tertiary education system.
- b. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission would have the following functions:
 - i. policy coordination and development for higher education and university research, and joint development of policy initiatives on tertiary education with the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council
 - ii. system planning
 - iii. negotiating mission-based compacts for universities
 - iv. pricing authority for the higher education sector
 - v. funding allocation for the higher education sector
 - vi. facilitating wide engagement with the tertiary education system
 - vii. strengthening First Nations representation and self-determination
 - viii. advising the Minister on regulatory frameworks within the higher education sector
 - ix. overseeing and monitoring of the Australian Qualifications Framework
 - x. accountability, quality and performance
 - xi. improving data and metrics
- c. The majority of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission's functions will start in higher education with additional priorities aimed at achieving higher levels of tertiary education system alignment, focused on student pathways, credit recognition and the Australian Qualifications Framework. The Australian Government should also negotiate with states and territories to expand the Australian Tertiary Education Commission's role to focus on the whole tertiary education system, with governance arrangements reflecting the ongoing role of all jurisdictions in its future, and with expansion to take effect in the context of the next National Skills Agreement

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- d. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should be reviewed every 5 years of operation 245 Australian Universities Accord - Final Report
- e. To ensure the Australian Tertiary Education Commission has a comprehensive view of the whole tertiary education system, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Research Council should form part of the Commission, as independent statutory bodies under its umbrella, with each Chair becoming a dedicated Commissioner and retaining their legislated roles
- f. Governments should also consider the desirability and timing of bringing the Australian Skills Quality Authority into the Australian Tertiary Education Commission in order to reduce regulatory duplication
- g. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should be governed by a Board comprising the Chief Commissioner as Chair, 2 Deputy Commissioners, the TEQSA Chief Commissioner, the ARC Board Chair, a First Nations Commissioner, an Equity Commissioner and the Regional Education Commissioner. Most commissioners would be fractional or part-time. The day-to-day administration of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission would be handled by a full-time CEO
- h. The Australian Tertiary Education Commission should seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the tertiary education system, through:
 - i. an ongoing Advisory Board, with representatives from tertiary education providers, all Australian governments, students, staff, employers (including business and industry representatives), unions, alumni and civil society organisations
 - ii. a First Nations Council
 - iii. a Learning and Teaching Council
 - iv. regular engagement with representatives from key stakeholders covering learning and teaching, research, equity, regional issues, and private tertiary education providers
- i. Through the pricing authority function, the Australian Tertiary Education Commission should develop a deep understanding of the true costs of delivery of the range of activities across the tertiary education system, with a priority on pricing issues in higher education related to learning and teaching, additional support for underrepresented students, regional delivery, and the full economic cost of research.

Issue: Accord Final Report - Students with Disability - Disability stakeholders' response
Contact: Ben Rimmer
Ph: s 22
Deputy Secretary

Key Points

Points of some concern from some advocates

- The Department is aware some disability stakeholders are concerned how the Australian Universities Accord (Accord) Final Report represented issues relating to students and staff with disability.
- This included that, while new targets to improve participation rates were set for other educationally under-represented groups, the report recommended maintaining participation rates of students with disability at the current (minimum) benchmark of 11.6%.
- The Final Report recognises there are challenges in disability data collection and quality (see explanations at [Attachment A](#)), making direct comparison between cohorts difficult and acknowledged this cohort could still be under-represented in higher education.

Accord consultation

- On 19 October 2023, the Accord Panel held a virtual roundtable on disability with stakeholders (attendees at [Attachment B](#)). Themes discussed included funding, support and accessibility, and teaching, learning and working.

Department action

- On 8 April 2024, the department convened a meeting with representatives of disability stakeholders ([Attachment C](#)) to discuss concerns.
- A second meeting was held on 20 May 2024 to discuss the Government's announcements as part of the 2024–25 Budget.
- The Equity in Higher Education Panel (EHEP), a group of senior academic administrators (membership at [Attachment D](#)) established to provide high-level strategic advice to the department on student equity in higher education, will also provide advice and recommendations on improving outcomes for people with disability in higher education.

Current government investment*The Higher Education Disability Support Program*

- As part of the 2023–24 Budget, an additional \$17.7 has been invested in the Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP) over 2023–24 to 2026–27.
- Provided on a calendar year basis, the DSP has increased from \$8.0 million in 2022 to \$10.2 million in 2023 and \$13.4 million in 2024.
- Total DSP funding for the 2024 calendar year is \$13,343,418.
- The DSP is currently delivered across two specified programs: the Disability Support Fund (DSF) and the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET).
 - Total DSF funding for the 2024 calendar year is \$12,752,594.
 - The DSF provides supplementary funding to universities to assist them to attract domestic students with disability to participate in higher education, and to assist universities deliver appropriate support.
 - Total ADCET funding for the 2024 calendar year is \$175,224.
 - ADCET is an online clearinghouse, hosted by the University of Tasmania, that promotes inclusive teaching and learning practices for students with disability.
- Under the 2023–24 Budget, the Government also committed to providing \$200,000 (indexed) per year, to commission Curtin University's Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (then the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education) to lead cross-sector implementation of more targeted and impactful initiatives that support students with disability to transition into higher education and subsequent employment.
 - As per this commitment, the department will seek Ministerial approval of amendments to the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022 to create a third specified program under the DSP named the Capacity Building Fund (CBF).

Australian Centre for Student Equity and Access (ACSES) — expansion of disability support work

- Separately, the department has funded Curtin to deliver ACSES since 2013. It is a research and public policy centre engaging in translation of evidence-based research to support equity in higher education.
- In October 2022, the department executed Conditions of Grant (CoG) with Curtin to continue to fund ACSES, including the allocation of 2022 National Priorities Pool Program (NPPP) funding of \$20.5 million over 4 years.
- Under the latest variation to the ACSES CoG, and separate from any funding under the DSP, \$700,000 of ACSES' existing NPPP funding has been sequestered for sector capacity building in disability practice support.
- Through part of this investment, ACSES is providing transitional funding for existing disability practice support and resources for higher education through a subcontract with the University of Tasmania until 31 January 2025.

Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – Disability data in higher education

[Attachment B](#) – Disability Roundtable attendees 19 October 2023

[Attachment C](#) – 8 April 2024 and 20 May 2024 meeting attendees

[Attachment D](#) – Membership of Equity in Higher Education Panel

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| Date Last Cleared | 24 May 2024 |
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Explanation of Data

Data about students with disability:

- Data on people with disabilities are collected from Higher Education providers through the Higher Education Statistics Collection (HESC) - student collection.
- The department relies on higher education providers to provide accurate data about students with disability.
- Disability status is self-identified and is mostly captured when a student enrolls in a course for the first time. This may lead to underestimating the number of students with disability.

Population reference values for disability:

- The equity targets in the Australian Universities Accord final report were recommended by the Accord panel but were informed by the population reference value which is derived by the department.
- The department derived the population reference value using Australian Bureau of Statistics – Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2018 data.
- To accurately reflect the age profile observed in higher education, these ABS-SDAC data are reweighted based on the age distribution of higher education students. Since disabilities increase with age, this reweighting lowers the population reference value in comparison to the ABS / AIHW reported proportion of the population with a disability.
 - The terminology 'profound disability' comes from the categories in the ABS-SDAC data.
 - The exclusion of persons with a profound disability is a historical practice and we recognise this may not be an appropriate method.
 - Following concerns about the exclusion of persons with a profound disability, we recalculated the reference value to include persons with a profound disability.
 - The reference value increased from 8.4% to 9.6%.

Attachment B - Australian Universities Accord Panel roundtable on disability attendees – 19 October 2023

Accord Panel members

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Professor Mary O’Kane | The Hon. Fiona Nash |
| The Hon Jenny Macklin | Professor Barney Glover |

Participants

| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Australian Law Students Association | s 47F | Vision Australia |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Australian Disability Clearinghouse for Education and Training (ADCET) | s 47F | Western Sydney University |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Australian Tertiary Education Network on Disability (ATEND) | s 47F | University of Tasmania |
| s 47F | Centre for Research in Equity and Advancement of Teaching and Education (CREATE), Central Queensland University | s 47F | University of Technology Sydney |
| s 47F | Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University | s 47F | National union of Students |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Department of social Services | s 47F | University of Queensland |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education | s 47F | Centre for disability studies |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Autism CRC | s 47F | University of Queensland |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | Autism Centre of Excellence | s 47F | Children and young People with a Disability (CYDA) |
| s 47F | | s 47F | |
| s 47F | , Children and young People with a Disability (CYDA) | s 47F | Speak My Language |

Attachment C

8 April Meeting Attendees

Attendees:

s 47F

Apologies:

s 47F

20 May Meeting Attendees

Attendees:

s 47F

Apologies:

s 47F

Attachment D – EHEP Membership

- **Mr Ben Rimmer**, Chair (*ex officio*), Deputy Secretary - Higher Education, Research and International Group, Department of Education
- **Professor Leanne Holt**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), University of New South Wales
- **Professor Denise Kirkpatrick**, President, Nan Tien Institute
- **Professor Nick Klomp**, Vice-Chancellor and President, Central Queensland University
- **Professor Adam Shoemaker**, Vice-Chancellor and President, Victoria University
- **Dr Guinever Threlkeld**, Head of Campus (Albury-Wodonga), La Trobe University
- **Professor Denise Wood AM**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Futures), University of the Sunshine Coast
- **Professor Alex Zelinsky AO**, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Newcastle
- **Professor Harlene Hayne CNZM**, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University
- **Professor Attila Brungs**, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of New South Wales
- **Professor Shamit Saggar CBE FAcSS (*ex officio*)**, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success, Curtin University
- **Dr Andy Johnston (*ex officio*)**, Branch Manager - Education and Youth Policy Branch, National Indigenous Australians Agency

Issue: Accord New Funding Model
PBS Pg No. 12 to 15
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget – Commonwealth Grant Scheme

| Financial year | UCB (\$m) Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses | 350.3 |
| Managed Growth Funding System | - |
| Needs-based Funding System | - |

Key Points

- The Government has committed to a tertiary attainment target of 80% of working-age people by 2050. This will require the university funding system to support a growing number of students with different needs.
- A new Managed Growth Funding system for Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) will be introduced from 1 January 2026 to meet Australia's skills needs and increase opportunity for students from underrepresented background.
- A Needs-Based Funding contribution will be a core part of the new system to support more students from under-represented backgrounds to succeed and complete their degrees.
- An Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) has been formed to advise on the implementation of the new funding system.
- The Government will provide \$350 million of additional Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS) funding over 4 years from 1 January 2025 to fully-fund FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses to provide more students with an enabling pathway into higher education.

Managed growth funding for universities

- The Government has committed to implementing a new Managed Growth Funding System for CSPs from 1 January 2026.
- The new system will support long-term growth in the number of CSPs to reach the Government's tertiary attainment targets and meet Australia's future skills needs.
- The Department of Education will consult with the IAC to finalise policy design and inform implementation of the new funding system.

- This measure responds to recommendations 40, 41 and 46 of the Australian Universities Accord.

Needs-based funding for better equity outcomes

- The Government has committed to introducing Needs-based Funding contributions as a core part of the new funding system from 1 January 2026.
- Per-student funding contributions will be provided to universities for:
 - Students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, First Nations students, and students with disability.
 - Students studying at regional campuses.
- The Department will consult widely with students, universities and the wider community to inform implementation of Needs-based Funding.
- The Government will consult with First Nations representatives and the Coalition of the Peaks to ensure their views are reflected in system design and implementation.
- This measure responds to recommendations 13, 39(a), 40 and 41(g) of the Australian Universities Accord.

Fee-Free Uni Ready courses

- FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses will be consistently funded at a rate that better reflects the cost of delivering quality courses from 1 January 2025. The courses will remain free for students.
- The additional places provided will result in 30,000 students by 2030 studying in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses, an increase of 40%.
- There will be a dedicated cluster rate replacing the current arrangement of mixed cluster and loading funding. The cluster rate for these places will be \$18,279 per EFTSL in 2025.
 - Under current arrangements, universities receive CGS funding for each enabling place based on the discipline the student is studying (ranging from \$1,236 to \$30,395 per place in 2024) and if the university has been allocated places for the Enabling Loading Program, they would receive an extra \$3,886 per place.
- This responds to recommendation 12 of the Accord Final Report.

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|-------------------|-------------|
| Date Last Cleared | 06 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

Issue: Accord Response
PBS Pg No. 12-15
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget – Australian Universities Accord First Stage Response

Education only

| UCB Impact (\$m) | 2023– 24 | 2024– 25 | 2025– 26 | 2026– 27 | 2027– 28 | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Payment measures | | | | | | |
| Spends | - | -42.0 | -161.7 | -193.0 | -221.8 | -618.6 |
| Saves | - | +7.6 | +15.3 | +20.3 | +22.1 | +65.2 |
| Net impact | | -34.4 | -146.5 | -172.7 | -199.8 | -553.4 |
| Receipt measures | | | | | | |
| HELP indexation | -18.9 | -90.7 | -17.0 | -29.4 | -35.3 | -191.3 |

Key Points

- The Accord recommended an ambitious plan for Australia's tertiary education system over the next decade and beyond, with the Final Report containing 47 recommendations.
- Through the 2024–25 Budget, the Government is responding in full or in part to 29 of the 47 recommendations, investing \$1.1 billion over the forward estimates.

2024–25 Budget

FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses

- The Government will provide \$350.3 million of additional Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS) funding over 4 years to fully fund FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses (previously enabling courses) and provide more Commonwealth supported places.
- This measure will increase places in FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses by 40%, from around 22,000 students in 2022 to around 30,000 students by 2030.

Commonwealth Prac Payment (refer SB24-000201)

- The Government will provide \$427.4 million over 4 years for a Commonwealth Prac Payment, including \$369.2 million to teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work students in higher

education, and \$58.2 million for eligible students in VET from 1 July 2025.

- Around 68,000 eligible domestic higher education students and 5,000 VET students each year will be able to access a payment equivalent to \$319.50 per week during their time on practicum.
- Eligible students include those accessing Commonwealth income support payments, or those who need to work more than 15 hours per week during their normal university academic study.

Lowering the indexation of HELP debts (refer SB24-000204)

- The Government will reduce indexation by more than \$3 billion for around 3 million people by improving the way the HELP indexation rate is calculated, based on whichever indexation rate is lowest – either CPI or WPI.
- The measure will take practical effect from 1 June 2023, retrospectively lowering the HELP indexation rate from **7.1% to 3.2%**, with a resulting indexation credit to be applied to individual's accounts. This will also see an indexation credit applied for the reduction in HELP indexation from **4.7% to 4.0%** for 1 June 2024.
- Associated funding for this measure is \$239.7 million over 5 years from 2023–24 (\$191.4 million Education only).

Tertiary harmonisation

- The Government will provide \$27.7 million over 4 years to improve tertiary harmonisation through a range of actions to support better student pathways between VET and higher education, including:
 - improving regulatory approaches for dual sector providers (including TAFEs),
 - enhancing tertiary data to provide better insights into how students interact with and move throughout the tertiary education system, and
 - better supporting TAFEs to become self-accrediting organisations in VET and higher education and piloting delegating of course accreditation in VET.

Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce (refer SB24-000200)

- The Government will provide \$24.6 million over 4 years for Charles Darwin University to establish and operate a new medical school in the Northern Territory from 2026, subject to the completion of preliminary exploratory work on the establishment of the new medical school.

- This will provide up to 40 new commencing medical CSPs and funding to support capital, establishment and recurrent costs.
- In December 2023, the Government announced \$2.8 million to support CDU through the AMC accreditation process.

Combined Pass Business Case – digital and ICT capability

- The Government will provide \$3.0 million in 2024–25 to develop a business case to assess the required investment in digital and ICT capabilities to support the ATEC's proposed functions.

National Student Ombudsman (refer [SB24-000207](#))

- The Government will provide \$19.4 million over 2 years from 2024–25 to establish a new National Student Ombudsman.

National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) (refer [SB24-000208](#))

- The Government will provide \$18.7 million over 4 years from 2024–25 to develop and implement a National Code.

Establishing a higher education racism study

- The Government will undertake an inquiry into antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism and the experience of First Nations people in the higher education sector.
- The inquiry will be led by the Race Discrimination Commissioner, with support from the Australian Human Rights Commission, and will examine the prevalence and impact of racism in universities and develop recommendations to ensure a culturally safe environment for students and staff.

SSAF allocation to student-led organisations

- The Government will require that higher education providers must allocate a minimum of 40% of student services and amenities fees (SSAF) revenue they collect to student-led organisations on an annual basis.
- This will help to improve services that student-led organisations are able to provide to students.

Strategic examination of Research and Development (R&D)

- The Government will undertake a strategic examination of R&D to strengthen its alignment with Australia's priorities and improve innovation and research and development outcomes.

International education (refer [SB24-000205](#))

- The Government will provide \$2.6 million in 2024–25 to implement changes to the Department of Education's Provider Registration and International Student Management system.

- The Government will provide \$2.1 million over 4 years from 2024–25 for the Department of Education to develop and implement regulation to require universities to establish new supply of student accommodation to support increases in student enrolments over initial allocations.

Additionally, the Government has committed to further reform to be developed in consultation with the sector:

Establishing an Australian Tertiary Education Commission

- The Government has committed to establishing an Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) as a steward of the tertiary education system.

Setting targets to grow the tertiary education sector to meet Australia's skills needs

- The Government has set an overall tertiary attainment target of 80% of working aged people by 2050.
- Both higher education and VET will contribute towards this target.
- The Government will also set targets for higher education participation for students from underrepresented backgrounds, which are expected to set the sector on a trajectory required to achieve parity by 2050.

Managed growth funding for universities

- The Government has committed to developing a new Managed Growth Funding System for Commonwealth supported places to meet student demand and Australia's skills needs as well as increase opportunity for people from underrepresented backgrounds.
- A Managed Growth Funding system is intended to commence from 1 January 2026.

Needs-based funding for better equity outcomes

- The Government has committed to making Needs-Based Funding a core component of funding for higher education teaching and learning to ensure more students are supported to access, participate and succeed in higher education.
- Needs-Based Funding would implement per-student funding contributions to better support students from underrepresented backgrounds and those studying at regional campuses to help them succeed in and complete higher education.

- A Needs-Based Funding system is intended to commence from 1 January 2026.

Redirects

- The cost of this measure will be partially met from savings identified in the Education Portfolio, including:
 - \$57.2 million over 4 years from 2024–25 by ceasing new scholarships for domestic and international students under the Destination Australia program
 - \$8.0 million over 4 years from 2024–25 by reducing funding for the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching program.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Date Last Cleared | 24 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

Underlying Cash Balance Impact by Measure

*Measure includes other agency costs

| FEE-FREE Uni Ready | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Department of Education | - | -22.3 | -50.3 | -62.2 | -71.4 | -206.3 |
| Total (including Enabling Loading Program Redirect) | | | | | | -350.3 |

| Commonwealth Prac Support* | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Education | - | -3.6 | -104.1 | -121.3 | -140.1 | -369.2 |
| Total | | | | | | -427.4 |

| Lowering Indexation of HELP Debts* [^] | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Education | -18.9 | -90.8 | -17.0 | -29.4 | -35.4 | -191.4 |
| Total | | | | | | -239.7 |

[^]includes receipt measure

| Tertiary harmonisation* | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Education | 0.0 | -3.1 | -2.6 | -3.1 | -2.5 | -11.3 |
| Total | | | | | | -27.7 |

| Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Education* | 0.0 | 0.0 | -0.7 | -2.1 | -3.6 | -6.3 |
| Total | | | | | | -24.6 |

| National Student Ombudsman* | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | Total |
| Education | - | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.0 |
| Total | | | | | | -19.4 |

| National Higher Education Code to Prevent Gender Based Violence | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | | -7.0 | -3.9 | -3.9 | -3.9 | -18.7 |

| Combined Pass Business Case | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | 0.0 | -3.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -3.0 |

| Changes to PRISMS to improve integrity in the international education sector | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | - | -2.6 | - | - | - | -2.6 |

| Student housing | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | - | -0.6 | -0.5 | -0.5 | -0.5 | -2.1 |

| SSAF Allocation to student-led organisations | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| Strategic examination of R&D | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Redirects

| Ceasing the Destination Australia Program | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | - | 5.8 | 13.2 | 18.2 | 20.0 | 57.2 |

| Reducing funding from the Quality Indicators of Teaching and Learning program | UCB (\$m) | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
| Education | - | 1.7 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 8.0 |

Attachment A

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

(..) Not zero but rounded to zero

Budget Measures and Australian Universities Accord Final Report Recommendations

| Reform | Contributes to delivery of recommendation # |
|--|--|
| <i>2024-25 Budget Measure</i> | |
| FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses | 12 |
| Commonwealth Practicum Support | 14 |
| Lowering the indexation of HELP debts | 16(d) |
| Tertiary harmonisation | 4, 36, 38 |
| Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce | 3(a) (in part), 39(b) (in part) |
| Establishing a higher education racism study | 33 |
| SSAF Allocation to student-led organisations | 19 |
| Strategic examination of R&D | 24 |
| <i>Announced, further consultation</i> | |
| Establishing an Australian Tertiary Education Commission | 30 |
| Setting targets to grow the tertiary sector to meet Australia's skills needs | 2 |
| Managed growth funding for universities | 40, 41, 46 |
| Needs-Based Funding for better equity outcomes | 13, 39(a), 40, 41(g) |

Issue: Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence and National Code
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget – Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence and National Code

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| National Code | 0.0 | 7.02 | 3.90 | 3.87 | 3.92 | 18.72 |
| National Student Ombud | 0.0 | 8.84 | 10.55 | * | * | 19.39 |
| Total Budget allocation | 0.0 | 15.86 | 14.45 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

*Funding relates to the establishment costs for the Department of Education for the National Code and Commonwealth Ombudsman for the National Student Ombudsman. Funding for the Ombudsman from 2026–27 is provisioned in the Contingency Reserve.

Key Points

- Education Ministers agreed to and released the Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education (Action Plan) on 23 February 2024.
- The Action Plan proposes a multi-pronged approach with 7 actions to strengthen the performance and accountability of the higher education sector to address gender-based violence, including:
 1. establishment of a National Student Ombudsman as a new primary escalated complaints mechanism for all domestic and international higher education students
 2. a requirement for all higher education providers to embed a whole-of-organisation approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence
 3. introduction of a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) as a new form of regulation for higher education providers
 4. enhanced oversight and accountability of standalone student accommodation providers
 5. work to identify opportunities to ensure legislation, policies and regulations prioritise victim survivor safety

6. increased data transparency and scrutiny to demonstrate improvement by higher education providers, student accommodation providers and governments
 7. regular consultation, coordination and review of progress against the Action Plan.
- The Australian Government will immediately implement the National Code and National Student Ombudsman. It will introduce legislation to establish these functions later in 2024. **Refer to SB24-000207 for details on the National Student Ombudsman.**

The National Code

- The National Code will set mandatory standards for providers to embed a whole-of-organisational approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- It will apply to all higher education providers registered with TEQSA.
- The National Code will be administered by a new Unit in the Department with responsibility for ensuring higher education providers' ongoing compliance.
 - The Government is providing \$18.7 million over 4 years from 2024–25 to establish the Unit as an ongoing function.
 - Funding supports new resources for the Department and regulation, education, and communication activities. Funding will also support the Unit to gain expert regulatory and legal advice as required.

Consultation on the development of the National Code

- The Department is leading a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process to develop the National Code. This includes:
 1. An Expert Reference Group to provide advice on the development of the National Code.
 2. A public consultation process.
 3. Targeted consultations with key stakeholder groups including students, staff, victim-survivors and their advocates, First Nations people, people with disability, LGBTQIA+ people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, university and non-university providers/groups and student accommodation providers.
 4. Ongoing consultations with Commonwealth agencies and State and Territory governments, including Commonwealth agencies leading work on domestic, family and sexual violence (Department of Social Services, Office for Women, Attorney-General's Department,

Department of Defence, and the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission).

5. Ongoing consultations with regulatory and complaints agencies to explore operational considerations including interactions and required arrangements with other complaints handling bodies.

Expert Reference Group

- The Expert Reference Group is comprised of victim-survivor advocates, student leaders, staff, higher education leaders, subject matter experts and student accommodation providers. Members of the Expert Reference Group are at [Attachment A](#). Terms of Reference for the group are at [Attachment B](#).
- Members were identified by the Department based on their subject matter expertise, and/or as representatives of key stakeholder groups. Members were not appointed by the Minister.
- The first meeting of this group was 30 May 2024.

Attachments

- [Attachment A](#) – List of Expert Reference Group members
- [Attachment B](#) – Expert Reference Group Terms of Reference
- [Attachment C](#) – SB24-000199 Background

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Date Last Cleared | 28 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

HERI - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Expert Reference Group - National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence

| | Name | Organisation | Title | Details | Member of the Stakeholder Reference Group? | ERG membership accepted? Yes/No/Delegate | First meeting invite accepted? Yes/No/Delegate |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Victim-survivor advocates | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Ms Sharna Bremner* | End Rape on Campus (EROC) | Founder | Founded in 2016, EROC Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that provides direct support to students impacted by sexual assault/harassment. EROC brings expertise about the victim-survivor experience with response and complaints investigation within universities. | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2 | Ms Camille Schloeffel* | The STOP Campaign | Founder | The STOP Campaign is an advocacy organisation aimed at ending sexual violence in university communities, with a particular focus on residential colleges. s 47F | Yes | Yes | |
| 3 | Ms Renee Carr* | Fair Agenda | Executive Director, Co-Founder | Fair Agenda is an advocacy organisation, working closely with EROC, to advocate for stronger accountability of the university sector to address gender-based violence and ensure the safety of students. | Yes | | Yes |
| Student leaders and staff representatives | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Ms Ngalre Bogemann* | National Union of Students | President | The National Union of Students is the peak representative body for Australian higher education students and an important stakeholder to represent student voice. | Yes (represented by previous NUS President Bailey Riley) | Yes | Yes |
| 5 | Ms Yegenah Soltanpour* | Council of International Students | President | The Council of International Students Australia is the peak representative body for international students in Australia. | Yes | | Yes |
| 6 | Dr Alison Barnes | National Tertiary Education Union | President | Dr Barnes provided significant input to the Draft Action Plan and is fully supportive of the direction of the final Action Plan. | Yes | Yes | |
| Frontline student services | | | | | | | |

HERI - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Expert Reference Group - National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|------------------------------------|-----|
| 7 | Ms Stephanie Taylor | Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSAA), Director Student Success and Wellbeing, Bond University | President | ANZSAA is the peak body representing student services staff. As the representative of those with responsibility overseeing the provision of student support – including counselling, academic support, referrals to other therapeutic services – Ms Taylor has significant expertise on appropriate service-level standards and trauma-informed practices. | Yes | | |
| Gender-based violence experts | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Ms Nicole Lambert* | National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) | Chair, and CED of Allambee Counselling | Response expertise: NASASV is the national peak body for sexual assault services and would provide crucial input on response service standards and expertise on how to support victim-survivors. NASASV's members run prevention programs across schools and community groups and is represented on the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships Expert Group. NASASV is also a member of the National Plan Advisory Group, which provides expert advice to the Australian Government on implementation of the <i>National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032</i> . | No | Yes | Yes |
| 9 | Ms Cara Gleeson/ Ms Claire Talyzo | Our Watch | Direction, Prevention in Action (currently acting CED) | Prevention expertise: Our Watch is Australia's national organization to prevent violence against women and children. Our Watch produced Australia's framework on prevention, called <i>Change the Story</i> , which underpins the <i>National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032</i> . | Yes, through Patty Kinnersly, Expert Adviser to crossjurisdictional Work Group | Yes—alternating with Claire Talyzo | |
| 10 | Dr Lisa Warren* | Code Black | Director | Perpetrator expertise: Dr Warren is a forensic clinical psychologist and is engaged by a range of organisations, including universities, to conduct safety and risk assessments relating to perpetrators of gender-based violence and other forms of violence, and assist organisations to manage. Her clinical expertise is in the fields of complex patients, perpetrators and victim-survivors of family | No | | |

HERI - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Expert Reference Group - National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|--|-----|-----|--|
| | | | | Violence and coercive control, and those who cause repeated harms such as stalkers and persistent, unreasonable complainants. Dr Warren also works with police. Following the PM's recent speech on GBV, OIW and DSS have advised the need to ensure a focus on perpetrator interventions. | | | |
| Regulation experts | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Dr Allison Henry* | Australian Human Rights Institute at UNSW | Postdoctoral Research Fellow | Regulation expert and co-author of How Australian Universities are Responding to Campus Sexual Violence | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 12 | Professor Kerri-Lee Krause | Avondale University | Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor | Professor Kerri-Lee Krause was the Deputy Chair of the Higher Education Standards Panel and can provide whole-of-sector perspectives on the interactions and alignment of the National Code with current sector regulations, such as the Threshold Standards and Support for Student Policy. | No | Yes | Yes |
| Higher education sector | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Professor Carolyn Evans | Universities Australia/ Griffith University | Universities Australia Board member, Vice-Chancellor | Professor Carolyn Evans is the Universities Australia lead for sexual assault and sexual harassment, and has undertaken significant work to address gender-based violence at Griffith University. Professor Evans has a strong legal and regulatory background and supported the development of the Action Plan. | No | Yes | Yes but will need to leave early and may connect late due to UA VC Plenary meeting |
| 14 | Professor Sharon Pickering | Monash University | Vice-Chancellor and President | Professor Sharon Pickering has undertaken significant work to address gender-based violence in their university and its student accommodation services. Professor Pickering is a criminologist and was a key member of the SRG and advocate of the Action Plan. | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 15 | Professor Jessica Vanderlelie | La Trobe University | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic | Professor Jessica Vanderlelie has whole-of-organisation responsibility for La Trobe's work on sexual violence and contributed significantly to the Draft Action Plan. She has expertise | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Expert Reference Group - National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence

| | | | | In disciplinary processes that would be of critical importance to the development of the National Code. | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|---|-----|-----|---|--|--|
| 16 | Dr Eve Ollerenshaw | NextEd Group Limited, IHEA Board member | Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive General Manager Quality, Accreditation and Compliance | Dr Ollerenshaw has led IHEA's work to address gender-based violence and support for students and has provided strong support for the Action Plan through consultations. S 47F | No | Yes | Tentative – would like to provide comments in absentia if not able to attend. | <p>* To be paid. Sitting fees will be provided to individuals who are not financially supported by their employer to contribute to this work, as well as student representatives.</p> <p>Members are a mixture of organisational representatives and individual representatives.</p> <p>A representative from ITECA is not proposed given its membership includes a number of standalone VET providers who are not in scope of the National Code. ITECA would be engaged by through sector consultation processes.</p> | |
| Student accommodation peak bodies | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Ms Marlon Grey | Asia-Pacific Student Accommodation Association (APSAA) | President | APSAA is a peak body for student accommodation providers. Its members include standalone student accommodation providers – including purpose-built student accommodation – as well as residential colleges and residences owned and operated by higher education providers. | Yes | | | | |
| 18 | Ms Lisa Sutherland | University Colleges Australia | President | UCA is the peak body representing residential colleges. | Yes | Yes | Yes | | |
| Potential First Nations representatives | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Professor Braden Hill | Edith Cowan University | Deputy Vice Chancellor Students, Equity and Indigenous | Professor Braden Hill is a Nyungar (Wardandi) man from the south-west of Western Australia and has significant experience in Aboriginal education and leading a range of equity initiatives. Professor Hill is heavily involved in Edith Cowan's work to address gender-based violence. | No | | | | |

HERI - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Expert Reference Group - National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence

Observers: Mary Russell (CEO, TEQSA), Rochelle White/^{S 22} (Office for Women), Lara Purdy/^{S 22} (Department of Social Services).



Australian Government
Department of Education



National Higher Education Code Expert Reference Group

Terms of Reference – May 2024

On 23 February 2024, Education Ministers agreed to and released the Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education (the Action Plan). The Action Plan outlines 7 key actions to drive change in the higher education sector, including the introduction of a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (the National Code) to strengthen provider accountability.

The National Code will set best practice standards and requirements for preventing and responding to gender-based violence by higher education providers. It will form part of the regulatory ecosystem for the higher education sector as a new legislative instrument. It will be administered by a dedicated unit in the Department of Education (the Department).

The National Code will set rules for higher education providers covering, but not limited to:

Governance and a whole-of-organisation approach

- reflection of the whole-of-organisation approach in providers' strategic documents and governance arrangements

Prevention measures

- embedding evidence-based primary prevention activities and respectful relationships education in student activities and staff induction and development

Support and response standards

- service-level standards for student and staff support and response, including established referral pathways to therapeutic and other relevant services
- management of disclosures, and reports regarding gender-based violence
- provision of student support and academic adjustments

Required expertise

- proposed expertise to undertake effective prevention, management, support, investigations and disciplinary processes

Transparency, data collection and reporting

- whole-of-organisation data collection and reporting to the Australian Government
- regular and transparent public-facing reporting of prevalence of gender-based violence, and prevention and response activities

- publicising providers' plans on how they intend to action the National Code and measure progress

Intersectionality

- requirements to explicitly consider and address the needs of different student and staff cohorts and the intersectionality of these needs, including LGBTIQ+ people, international staff and students, culturally and linguistically diverse people, First Nations people, people with disability and higher degree research students.

Section 1. Role

The Department will lead development of the National Code in consultation with stakeholders.

The National Higher Education Code Expert Reference Group will be established to provide perspectives and advice to the Department on the design and implementation of the Code, including regulatory, policy, operational and subject matter considerations.

While it will not be a decision-making body, its role will be to ensure that a diverse range of issues are considered, and to identify and advise on any opportunities, issues, or risks to implementation.

Key considerations of the Expert Reference Group may include, but are not limited to:

- operationalising a whole-of-organisation approach
- the regulatory and performance framework underpinning the National Higher Education Code
- how to incorporate existing and emerging evidence into providers' prevention and response work
- how to enable providers to tailor activities to their size and scale while maintaining a commitment to the evidence base and best practice
- aligning new reporting requirements with existing reporting requirements
- gender-based violence considerations related to the National Student Ombudsman
- how to improve data collection and transparency.

Section 2. Membership

The Expert Reference Group will be chaired by a First Assistant Secretary from the Department of Education.

The Expert Reference Group will be comprised of victim-survivor advocates, student leaders, staff representatives, subject matter experts, the higher education sector and student accommodation providers, determined by the Department. Membership will comprise organisational members (representatives of their organisation and/or sector body) and individuals who bring subject matter expertise and lived experience.

At times, representatives from the Australian, State or Territory Government or regulatory agencies may attend as observers.

Members may arrange a proxy if they are unable to attend a meeting, in consultation with the Department.



A member can stand down from the Expert Reference Group at any time, in consultation with the Department. Where an organisational member ceases to hold their position within their organisation, their continuing role will be considered in the context of their individual subject matter expertise.

Section 3. Priorities

The Expert Reference Group will provide input on key areas being considered for the Code, including:

- governance and leadership
- policies for prevention and response
- training and targeted programs
- procedures for responding to incidents of gender-based violence
- complaints and appeals
- support services
- transparency, data and reporting requirements
- student accommodation.

Section 4. Meetings

The Expert Reference Group will meet between May and July 2024. The meetings will be conducted virtually. Meeting outcomes and discussions will not be published by the Department.

Further consideration will be given to the continuation of the Expert Reference Group for implementation once the National Code has been finalised for tabling in the Australian Parliament.

Section 5. Remuneration

Sitting fees will be offered to individuals that are either appointed for their subject matter expertise or are considered by the Department to have inadequate organisational support to participate. Select members will be able to claim a half-daily sitting fee per meeting.

Remuneration aligns with Part 2 General Provisions, Section 12 Other holders of part-time public office, Table 2A Other office holders of Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part time Public Office) Determination 2023.

| | Less than 2hrs | Between 2-4 hours |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| GST exclusive | \$179.20 | \$268.80 |
| GST inclusive | \$197.12 | \$295.68 |



Section 6. Secretariat

The Expert Reference Group will be supported by a secretariat within the Australian Government Department of Education. The secretariat will determine agenda items and circulate items for discussion prior to each meeting. Members may delegate tasks to the secretariat.

Section 7. Acceptance

I accept the offer to join the National Higher Education Code Expert Reference Group and agree to the Terms of Reference above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



BACKGROUND

- Priority Action 5 from the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report recommended the Australian Government immediately commence engagement with the states and territories to strengthen university governance.
- The Minister for Education established a Working Group of Commonwealth, state and territory officials with responsibility for higher education to lead the development of an Action Plan, based around 3 core themes:
 - as an urgent priority, ensuring student and staff safety particularly addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment
 - positioning universities as exemplary employers through strengthened responses to workplace rights and
 - ensuring contemporary and responsive governance of university councils.
- The Minister appointed CEO of Our Watch, Ms Patty Kinnersly, as an Expert Adviser to the Working Group to provide advice on efforts to strengthen accountability for the prevention of gender-based violence.
- Ms Kinnersley was supported by a Stakeholder Reference Group comprising victim-survivors, subject matter experts, higher education and student accommodation stakeholders.

Release of the final Action Plan

- Education Ministers released the Draft Action Plan on 22 November 2023 for further consultation. The Department of Education led this process on behalf of Education Ministers. Consultations took place over December 2023 and January 2024, including with:
 - student leaders and victim-survivor advocates
 - higher education peak bodies
 - accommodation providers
 - student services staff
 - union representatives
 - A range of individual meetings with key stakeholders.
- Public feedback on the Draft Action Plan was invited via the Department's website until 31 January 2024, with more than 81 responses received.

Issue: Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce
PBS Pg No. 14
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget - Building a strong and self-sufficient medical workforce

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Budget Allocation (Education) | - | - | -0.683 | -2.086 | -3.551 | -6.320 |
| Budget Allocation (Health) | - | -9.555 | -5.167 | -1.466 | -2.055 | -18.243 |
| Committed | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Uncommitted | - | -9.555 | -5.850 | -3.552 | -5.606 | -24.563 |

Key Points

- The Australian Government will provide \$24.6 million over 4 years from 2024–25 for Charles Darwin University (CDU) to establish a new medical school for the Northern Territory (NT) with 40 new commencing medical students per year from 1 January 2026.
- Funding is contingent on the outcome of the Australian Government's investment of \$2.8 million to support CDU undertake exploratory work on the establishment of a new medical school.
- Pending a successful outcome from this exploratory work, CDU will be invited to apply for an ongoing allocation of 40 commencing medical Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) each year, supporting high quality medical training for up to 200 students by 2030.
- Funding includes support for related capital, establishment, and recurrent costs.
- New medical students are expected to commence at CDU from 2026.

Reason for investing in CDU and the NT

- This investment will help develop and retain a locally trained medical workforce equipped to deal with the NT's unique health challenges.
 - This includes the largest proportion of First Nations people and lowest population density of any jurisdiction.
 - The NT has experienced persistent challenges attracting and retaining a medical workforce.

- The Northern Territory Government supports CDU's proposal and has guaranteed to provide necessary placements and internships for the additional students.
- A new undergraduate medical school, with seamless end-to-end training in the NT, will increase the chances of students staying in the NT following graduation.
- Evidence shows that medical graduates who come from a rural background or who have a positive experience practising in rural areas are more likely to stay and practise in these areas.
- The measure demonstrates the Government's commitment to address the workforce challenges in the NT that it made at the NT Primary Health Care Workforce Summit in August 2023.

Impact on existing training through Flinders University (Flinders)

- The Government is continuing to invest in the Northern Territory Medical Program (NTMP), operated by Flinders in partnership with CDU.
- The Government is providing \$3.4 million over 4 years to add an additional 6 commencing medical places each year. This brings total commencements under the NTMP to 36 each year.
 - These places are co-funded by the NT Government and the Health portfolio. They are not CSPs under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme.
- The 12-year partnership between Flinders and CDU under the NTMP has produced 200 passionate and talented medical graduates which have taken up junior doctor positions in the NT and will go on to serve their local communities.
- The Government will work with CDU and Flinders to ensure the new medical school complements existing training arrangements. A continued partnership will deliver the best outcomes for Northern Territory communities.

Is the Government addressing the other Accord recommendations around medical CSPs and First Nations places?

- The Government released the Accord Panel's Final Report on 25 February 2024, and its first stage response to the report's recommendations is outlined in the 2024–25 Budget.
- The Government will work with the states and territories to determine the scope of the medical workforce shortages and what investments would be required to alleviate these.

- The Government will consult with First Nations stakeholders, medical schools, and student groups regarding medical places for First Nations students.

What does the Government's existing \$2.8 million investment do for CDU?

- The initial \$2.8 million investment in CDU was announced in December 2023 to support CDU's exploratory work on the establishment of a new medical school.
- Activities funded through this grant are limited to:
 - developing accreditation arrangements,
 - establishing a medical school curriculum,
 - community engagement,
 - establishing links with clinical training providers.

Background

- CSPs in medicine are designated by the Government.
- The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Aged Care work closely together to administer medical education and training policy.

| | |
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| Date Last Cleared | 23 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

Issue: Commonwealth Prac support payments
PBS Pg No. N/A
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget – Commonwealth Prac Payments

| Financial year | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total (\$m) |
|-------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Budget Allocation | \$3.63 | \$104.12 | \$121.34 | \$140.11 | \$369.19 |

Key Points

- The Government is introducing an ongoing Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) from 1 July 2025 for teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work students to address placement poverty.
- Around 68,000 eligible domestic higher education students (and 5,000 VET students) each year will be able to access a payment equivalent to \$319.50 per week during their practicum.
- Access to CPP will support current students to complete their study, as well as encourage prospective students to pursue careers in these priority sectors.
 - The measure will apply to students undertaking any year of practicum. For example, if a student started their degree in 2021 and 2025 is their 4th year of study, which has a mandatory practicum component, they will be eligible.
- This measure responds to Recommendation 14 of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, and outcomes from the 2023 Employment White Paper, which highlighted the financial impact unpaid practicums have on students and called for government funding to support nursing and teaching students.
- CPP will be developed in consultation with higher education providers, to ensure that it can be administered as simply as possible while remaining targeted to those students most in need.
- This is part of the first stage of reforms the Government will implement in response to the Universities Accord and builds on our reforms to make the HELP system fairer.

How will CPP be delivered?

- For higher education students, the Government will work with the higher education sector to introduce this new payment, to be delivered through higher education providers.
- For VET students, the Government will administer the payment through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Impact of unpaid practicums on students.

- Practicums are a critical component in teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work courses. However, they can place significant financial pressure on students as many have to put their lives on hold, stop working and, in some cases, move to get this essential experience.
- Key equity groups are disproportionately affected as they are more likely to choose to study in care and teaching fields of education, and more likely to experience placement poverty which acts as a barrier to completion.
- By offering sufficient places, funding and other assistance, students will be supported to complete their education and take up these essential roles in our communities.

CPP payments are targeted to those who require support.

- Domestic students undertaking Bachelor or Masters qualifications in teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social.
- Eligibility criteria will direct payments to domestic students receiving Commonwealth income support (e.g. Youth Allowance or Austudy) or students who would otherwise be supporting themselves with significant work while they study (i.e. greater than 15 hours per week).
- Students earning over \$1,500 per week (or a prorated \$78,000 per year) will not be eligible for CPP payments. Income limit tests will take into account other government incentives.

Priority action for care and teaching professions.

- As identified in the Employment White Paper released in September 2023, nurses and teachers are key enablers for the economy and there are significant shortages that we need to address.
- Teachers, nurses and social workers comprise the 3 largest student cohorts that predominantly work in the community or public sector.

- We will continue to work with tertiary education providers, state and territory governments, industry, business and unions to consider further support for those experiencing financial hardship and placement poverty caused by mandatory unpaid placements in other courses in due course.

Will the payment be enough to support students and prevent placement poverty?

- CPP is not expected to cover all living costs. The payments are intended to support learning outcomes and the rate of CPP will provide a level of support that will allow students to complete their studies, where the financial impacts of placement may otherwise have influenced them to defer or withdraw.

How will CPP impact students on income support payments?

- CPP will count as income and will count towards any income support a student may also receive.

Does this measure overlap with existing state and territory initiatives?

- The CPP offers a consistent, national approach to supporting students in critical teaching, nursing and social work workforces.
- It will operate alongside state and territory initiatives to support an overall education and training pipeline that can meet Australia's current and future skills needs.

What consultation did the Government undertake to develop the measure?

- As part of its scoping work, the Government consulted with students, unions, education providers, peak bodies, regulatory and accreditation bodies, and state and territory governments.

| | |
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| Date Last Cleared | 21 May 2024 |
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BACKGROUND

Placement requirements

- Placements can be for significant periods of time. For example, for higher education students:
 - nursing – at least 800 hours
 - midwifery – upwards of 1,000 hours
 - teaching – around 600 hours
 - social work – at least 1000 hours

Delivery and administration of payment

- Work will commence immediately to establish the CPP.
- The program will be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including higher education providers, to ensure that it can be administered simply, without placing any extra burden on students.
- The higher education component of this measure will be delivered through grants paid to higher education providers.
- Student payments will be available from 1 July 2025 following a program establishment phase which will include stakeholder consultation, legislative amendments, and program design and development.

Placements and the *Fair Work Act 2009*

- Section 15(1)(b) of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (FWA) excludes a person on a 'vocational placement' from the ordinary meaning of employee.
- 'Vocational placement' means a placement that is:
 - undertaken with an employer for which a person is not entitled to be paid any remuneration; and
 - undertaken as a requirement of an education or training course; and
 - the course is delivered by an institution that is authorised under a law or an administrative arrangement of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory.
- Students completing vocational placements that meet the definition under the FWA are not considered employees and are not entitled to minimum wages or other entitlements provided under the FWA. This means that such vocational placements are lawfully unpaid.

The vocational placement exemption has been in the FWA since its inception, and in preceding workplace relations frameworks.

Issue: Making HELP Simpler and Fairer
PBS Pg No. 13, 22-23, 57
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget – Lowering the indexation of HELP debts

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Total Budget Allocation | -22.080 | -105.271 | -26.659 | -39.780 | -45.875 | -239.665 |
| Education | -18.922 | -90.801 | -16.986 | -29.365 | -35.363 | -191.437 |
| DEWR | -2.899 | -13.763 | -9.639 | -10.415 | -10.511 | -47.227 |
| Services Aus | -0.259 | -0.247 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | - 0.506 |
| ATO | 0.000 | -0.460 | -0.034 | 0.000 | 0.000 | -0.494 |

Key Points

- The Government announced changes to the indexation of HELP and other income contingent loans on 5 May 2024.
- The changes will cap indexation at the lower of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Wage Price Index (WPI), with retroactive application from 1 June 2023, subject to the passage of legislation.
- For 2023 an indexation credit will be applied to an individual's account calculated by the difference between CPI of 7.1% and the WPI figure of 3.2%.
- The indexation credit applicable to 2024 will be the difference between the CPI rate of 4.7% and the WPI calculated figure of 4.0%.
- As at 30 June 2023, there are approximately 3 million individuals with \$78 billion in outstanding HELP amounts. All individuals with a HELP debt will be positively affected by this measure.
- The total indexation credit for 2023 and 2024 is expected to be more than \$3 billion.
- The estimated \$3 billion financial impact of the change in indexation will be disclosed in the Department's financial statements in accordance with accounting standards set by the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

Lowering the indexation of HELP debts

- Indexation of HELP loans is intended to ensure that the value of outstanding balances is maintained in real terms.
- The 1 June 2023 CPI-based HELP indexation rate of 7.1% on outstanding HELP loans drew into question the fairness of the current indexation methodology.
 - Indexation applied to outstanding HELP loans on 1 June 2022 was 3.9%.
 - Indexation applied on 1 June 2024 was 4.7%, based on the previous CPI methodology.

The Government's response

- The Government will cap indexation at the lower of the CPI or the WPI.
- This will mean that HELP debts will not be indexed at a rate higher than the growth in wages.
- This will take practical effect from 1 June 2023 and retrospectively address the 7.1% CPI indexation.
- The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will automatically apply the indexation credit to people's HELP accounts after the passage of legislation.
- The methodology will change for 1 June 2025 from the March quarter CPI to the December quarter WPI. This is because the March quarter WPI is not released until mid May each year (about 7 weeks after the end of each quarter) which is too late for the indexation event on 1 June each year, as such the preceding December quarter figure is used.
- This measure does not change that underlying principle, which has been in place since the establishment of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) arrangements in 1989.

Table 1: Total estimated indexation credit benefit

| HELP DEBT at 30 June 2023 | TOTAL ESTIMATED CREDIT FOR 2023 AND 2024* |
|----------------------------------|--|
| \$15,000 | \$670 |
| \$25,000 | \$1,120 |
| \$30,000 | \$1,345 |
| \$35,000 | \$1,570 |
| \$40,000 | \$1,795 |
| \$45,000 | \$2,020 |
| \$50,000 | \$2,245 |
| \$60,000 | \$2,690 |
| \$100,000 | \$4,485 |
| \$130,000 | \$5,835 |

Note: Benefit represents credit received in 2024 after legislation passes for retrospective reduction in indexation applied in 2023 and 2024.

Background

- The *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) prescribes the indexation on HELP debts, income repayment thresholds, and loan limits. Each has its own formula and date of indexation, currently based on the Consumer Price Index.
- Indexation applied to HELP debts is not interest. Indexation maintains the real value of the debt so that a person repays the same amount, in real terms, regardless of how long they take to repay their loans.
- The rate of indexation (7.1%) applied on 1 June 2023 to HELP debt was determined on 26 April 2023, when the March 2023 quarter CPI figure was released.
 - An average HELP debt as at 30 June 2023 of \$26,500, includes an indexation amount applied on 1 June 2023 of \$1,757.
- CPI indexation applied on 1 June 2024 was 4.7%.
- Indexation applied to HELP debts on 1 June each year is currently based on annual movements in CPI for the March quarters, and the 3 quarters immediately preceding the March quarter in each of the last 2 years.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics releases CPI data 4 weeks after the end of each quarter, whereas it releases WPI data about 7 weeks after the end of each quarter. For example, March quarter CPI is release in about April and March quarter WPI is released in about mid May.

| | |
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| Date Last Cleared | 30 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

Issue: Migration Strategy and Integrity in International Education
Contact: Ben Rimmer
Ph: s 22
Deputy Secretary

Key Points

- Amendments to the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (the ESOS Act) will:
 - Strengthen the fit and proper provider test for international education providers.
 - Support transparency by increasing access to education agent information for providers.
- A change to the National Code 2018 will prohibit the payment of commissions by providers to education agents for onshore student transfers.
- The department is lead on a cross-government project to develop international education risk indicators. This work will inform a whole-of-system approach to risk that will support and drive targeted compliance action by ESOS agencies.
- These actions address serious integrity issues in the sector identified in the *Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System* (the Nixon Review).
- Further amendments to the ESOS Act that support the quality and integrity of the sector include:
 - Making it possible to pause the application and assessment of registration applications for new international education providers and new courses from existing providers for up to 12 months.
 - Requiring new providers to demonstrate a track record of teaching domestic students for minimum of 24 months before they can deliver to international students.
 - Cancelling the registration of providers who have not delivered training to international students for a consecutive 12-month period.
 - Strengthening provisions to suspend the enrolment of new international students by providers under serious regulatory investigation.
- These measures complement earlier action by Minister Clare to close concurrent enrolment loopholes being used by some providers to facilitate students' access to work in Australia.

- Further amendments to the ESOS Act will enable implementation of Government's intent, as outlined in the draft *International Education and Skills Strategic Framework*, to take an active role in supporting a managed system to deliver sustainable growth over time by allowing the Minister for Education to:
 - determine limits on enrolments at a provider level, including within specific courses or locations.
 - limit ability of providers to deliver courses that have persistent integrity and quality issues or have limited value to Australia's critical skills needs.
- The department established an Integrity Stakeholders Forum as one of the consultation mechanisms on the integrity measures.
- Six meetings of the Integrity Stakeholders Forum have been held (a full list of stakeholders is at [Attachment A](#)).

Impact of changes to student visa processing

- The department is aware of sector views about the impacts on education providers of its integrity focused approach to the student visa program.
- The department is closely monitoring the impact of student visa processing on the international education sector.
- The department is working with education providers to underscore the importance of quality and integrity in Australia's education system and in support of efficient and timely visa processing.
- The department is aware the Minister of Home Affairs has issued warning letters of possible suspension under Section 97 of the ESOS Act to a select group of providers.

Impact on students from India

- The department is aware of media reports that some international education providers are ceasing recruitment from certain countries, including India, due to concerns about visa refusals.
- Providers make their own decision around which students they will recruit, including which markets to target.
- Education is a key pillar of Australia's strong bilateral relationship with India.
- The Government is working with India to deliver on *A Partnership for the Future: Australia's Education Strategy for India*, released in November 2023.

- The Strategy focusses on opportunities for continued education engagement, including through existing mobility partnerships and diversifying options for delivery of education.

Attachments

- [Attachment A](#) – List of stakeholders for the Integrity Forum

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Date Last Cleared | 30 May 2024 |
|--------------------------|-------------|

ATTACHMENT A

Stakeholder consultation

- An International Education Stakeholder Integrity Forum (Integrity Forum) was specifically established to discuss and gather sector feedback on integrity issues and responses, including proposals to change legislation.
- The Integrity Forum includes expert members of the Council for International Education, education peak bodies, and Commonwealth, state and territory agencies.
- The participants are:

Peaks

- International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)
- Universities Australia (UA)
- Group of Eight (Go8)
- Council for International Students Australia (CISA)
- Regional Universities Network (RUN)
- Australian Technology Network (ATN)
- Innovative Research Universities (IRU)
- Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA)
- Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA)
- TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)
- English Australia
- International Student Education Agents Association (ISEAA)
- Student Accommodation Council
- Australian Government Schools International (AGSI)
- Independent Schools Australia (ISA)

States

- Study Adelaide
- Study NSW
- New South Wales, Department of Education, International
- International Education and Study Melbourne/Global Victoria
- Department of Education and Training Victoria
- TAFE Queensland
- Study Queensland
- Department of Education International (Education Queensland International)
- Department for Trade and Investment (South Australia)
- Study Perth
- Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (Western Australia)
- Study Canberra
- ACT Education Directorate

- o Study Tasmania
- o Department of State Growth (Tasmania)
- o Study NT/Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade

Providers

- o The University of Melbourne
- o Haileybury
- o Academia International Institute
- o Western Sydney University

Issue: National Skills Passport
MYEFO Pg No. 12
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

MYEFO 2023-24 – National Skills Passport

| Financial year | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | Total |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Measure | | \$7.5m | | | | \$7.5m |
| <i>Department of Education Allocation</i> | | \$5.6m | | | | \$5.6m |
| <i>Committed</i> | | \$5.6m | | | | \$5.6m |
| <i>Uncommitted</i> | | \$0.0m | | | | \$0.0m |

Source: MYEFO 2023–24, p12.

Key Points

- On 25 September 2023, as part of the Employment White Paper (EWP), the Government committed to consulting widely to explore the concept of a National Skills Passport.
- The Department of Education (the department) received \$5.6 million in 2023–24 (the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) received \$1.9 million) to support preparation of a business case to define the scope, outcomes, benefits, options, costs and timeframes and sequence to implement a National Skills Passport, ahead of further consideration by Government in the second half of 2024.
- The department is working with DEWR to develop the business case.
- The project is a discreet, complex and time critical piece of work. To complement existing capabilities, and in line with Australian Government procurement guidelines, an approach to market for support with stakeholder engagement and business case development activities was undertaken in December 2023. The successful vendors Meld Studios (stakeholder engagement) and Accenture (business case) were engaged in February 2024.

Overview

- A National Skills Passport aims be a practical tool, available throughout life to all Australians who choose to participate, that enables them to view, share and assess their skills and qualifications through a trusted, seamless, and integrated digital system.

- It could support ongoing lifelong learning by helping individuals identify opportunities for skill development and provide verified recognition of prior learning to help streamline the transition between education and employment.
- The department, in collaboration with DEWR, Meld Studios and Accenture, have been engaging widely with individuals (such as learners, jobseekers, employees), industry, unions, tertiary institutions and across governments.
- This engagement has included a public consultation paper that received 188 responses, 93 co-design workshops with 277 attendees, and 15 meetings with 94 representatives from key stakeholder groups.
- Next steps will be determined once Government has considered the business case, and will include further engagement with stakeholders including employers, unions, the tertiary sector, and state and territory governments.

Demand

- For many years education peak bodies and industry have been calling for a platform that allows Australians to build and share a digital education and skills portfolio to help fill critical skills gaps and meet Australia's labour market needs.
- Recommendation 4 of the Australian Universities Accord final report supported the concept of a National Skills Passport so Australians could have their full range of qualifications, skills and experience recognised across the education and training system and in the employment market, to support lifelong learning and workforce mobility.
- The EWP identified the importance of a flexible, adaptable higher education and training system that meets present and future skills needs, promotes lifelong learning and workforce mobility, including through a new Skills Passport.

Interactions with other government initiatives

- Stakeholder consultation will consider the implementation of the National Skills Agreement (NSA), which commenced on 1 January 2024, the work of the Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) and the broader role of Jobs and Skills Australia.

Consultation

- The National Skills Passport Public Consultation Paper was open from 17 January 2024 to 18 February 2024. The department received 188 unique submissions.

- Feedback from the Australian public was largely positive and highlighted the ability for a National Skills Passport to enhance credential verification, increase transparency and trust in the hiring and verification of skills and qualifications process, and potentially improve workforce mobility.
- Feedback also identified several issues that will require further consideration. These include information integration complexities, costs, and the broad adoptability of an National Skills Passport. Ongoing communication and collaboration among key stakeholders will be key to address these issues.
- As part of the stakeholder engagement activities, roundtables, co-design workshops and end-user research have also been undertaken to further inform the development of the business case.

BACKGROUND

- An approach to market for support with stakeholder engagement and business case development activities was undertaken in December 2023, with successful vendors engaged in February 2024.
- Meld Studios was engaged at a cost of \$807,675 to undertake extensive consultation with individuals (such as learners, jobseekers, employees) and stakeholders (such as businesses, unions, tertiary institutions and across state, territory, and local governments) to understand the needs and demands of different parties by May 2024.
- Accenture was engaged at a cost of \$2,109,029 to work in conjunction with Meld Studios and the department to deliver a comprehensive Combined Pass Business Case by July 2024.

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| Date Last Cleared | 23 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

Issue: **National Student Ombudsman**
 PBS Pg No. 47
 Contact: **Ben Rimmer**
 Ph: s 22
Deputy Secretary

Budget – National Student Ombudsman

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | Total |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Budget Allocation | 0.0 | 8.84 | 10.55 | * | * | 19.39 |
| Committed | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Uncommitted | 0.0 | 8.84 | 10.55 | * | * | 19.39 |

* funding is provided to the Office of Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO).

Key Points

- The National Student Ombudsman is the first action of the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education* (the Action Plan) and Recommendation 18b of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report. **Refer to SB24-000199 for more information on the Action Plan.**
- The National Student Ombudsman will establish a single national escalated complaints mechanism for all higher education students enrolled with Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) registered providers.
- It will be established as a new ongoing statutory function within the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO) and is proposed to commence taking student complaints from 1 February 2025.
 - Legislation to amend the *Ombudsman Act 1976* will be introduced as soon as possible.
 - States and territories have committed to pursue changes to their ombudsman acts to reflect the role of the National Student Ombudsman and avoid duplication.
- Funding of \$19.39 million over 2 years from 2024–25 will be provided to the OCO to establish the National Student Ombudsman as an ongoing function. Funding from 2026–27 is held in the Contingency Reserve.
 - The Government will examine cost recovery arrangements for the National Student Ombudsman in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Any charging would not occur until at least 2027.

Proposed function and scope of the National Student Ombudsman

- The National Student Ombudsman will have the power to:
 - Handle and investigate student complaints about the administrative actions of their providers, including in relation to student safety, welfare, course and student loan administration, and reasonable adjustments for students.
 - Consider whether the actions taken by providers are wrong, unjust, unlawful, discriminatory or unfair.
 - Investigate if a provider is acting unreasonably or there are unreasonable delays in responding to a student's complaint, or where the provider is otherwise failing to follow its own policies or meet regulatory expectations.
 - Make recommendations to a provider about the administrative steps that should be taken to resolve a complaint.
 - Share information with, and receive information from, relevant regulators to identify and respond to systemic risk, provide the basis for further compliance action if necessary, and ensure accountability.

Consultation on implementation of the National Student Ombudsman

- Public consultations on the Draft Action Plan (22 November 2023 – 31 January 2024) focused on the detailed design of the National Student Ombudsman. A summary of stakeholders' comments on the National Student Ombudsman is at [Attachment A](#).
- Building on this initial process, the Department is leading further consultation on implementation. This includes:
 1. Targeted consultation with higher education providers, higher education students, peak bodies and advocacy agencies jointly undertaken by the Department, Attorney-General's Department (AGD) and the OCO.
 2. A monthly state and territory Policy Forum, chaired by the Department, with representatives from the OCO, AGD and state and territory departments with policy responsibility for higher education and ombudsmen. The Policy Forum has met twice since 3 April 2024.
 3. Engagement with state and territory ombudsman and other jurisdictional complaints bodies regarding interactions and detailed operational considerations is being led by the OCO.

Proposed charging arrangements for the National Student Ombudsman

- The Minister for Education wrote to all higher education providers and peak bodies on 15 March 2024 to advise of the Australian Government's intention to examine charging arrangements as part of the ongoing establishment of the National Student Ombudsman ([Attachment B](#)).
- The Department will lead specific consultation during 2025 on potential charging arrangements, in line with the Australian Government Charging Framework.

Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – Summary of consultations - Nov 2023 - Feb 2024.

[Attachment B](#) – Example letter from the Minister for Education to higher education providers and peak bodies on 15 Mar 2024.

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| Date Last Cleared | 06 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

HERI - Hot Topics (June 2024) - Hot Topic Briefs

Summary of Consultations on National Student Ombudsman – November 2023 to February 2024

| Action | Stakeholder group | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| | Students and victim-survivor advocates | Higher education sector | Staff | Student services | Student accommodation providers | Women's safety sector |
| Consultation undertaken | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted consultation and regular meetings with End Rape on Campus, STOP campaigns, Fair Agenda, National Union of Students and other student leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted consultation with peak bodies and regular meetings with individual providers and sub-peak bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted consultation with National Tertiary Education Union and regular meetings with individual members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted consultation and individual meetings with student services directors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted consultation and individual meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with National Plan Advisory Group and Our Watch |
| National Student Ombudsman (NSO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supportive, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a need for ongoing outreach, consultation and engagement following implementation of the NSO it must have sufficient scope and resourcing to be effective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily concerned with ensuring traditional ombudsman model, as well as the need to reduce duplications with existing state/territory ombudsmen functions Requested more information to understand potential barriers to implementation across different providers and jurisdictions Some questioned the rationale for the NSO Importance of NSO must be clearly communicated to students and be as accessible as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supportive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supportive, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need for clarity regarding the ability of the NSO to hear historic cases considerations for dual-sector providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some providers requested scope of NSO to be broadened to include grievances from residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supportive |



The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Reference: MS24-000180

Mr Luke Sheehy
CEO
Universities Australia
s 47F

Dear Mr Sheehy

On 23 February 2024, Education Ministers agreed and released the *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* (Action Plan). The Action Plan recognises the unique role higher education providers can and must play in driving the broader social change needed to address gender-based violence, as well as the distinct responsibilities they hold in relation to creating safe study, work, social and living environments.

The Action Plan is a multi-pronged approach with seven key actions to drive change. The establishment of the National Student Ombudsman and the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) are key actions of the Action Plan and will positively impact higher education students, staff and the sector more broadly.

The National Student Ombudsman will provide all higher education students with access to a single, effective and trauma-informed mechanism for escalating complaints about the administrative actions of their higher education providers, including complaints about sexual harassment, assault and violence.

The Australian Government will immediately implement the National Student Ombudsman and the National Code, working closely with State and Territory Governments, relevant agencies and the higher education sector. The National Student Ombudsman is proposed to commence taking student complaints from 1 February 2025, subject to the passage of legislation.

In implementing the National Student Ombudsman, the Department of Education will be developing charging arrangements to support the costs of this new function, consistent with the principles of the Australian Government Charging Framework. This work will be informed by sector consultation. Any charging will not commence before the 2027 calendar year.

Further information about the Action Plan, the National Student Ombudsman and National Code can be found on the Department of Education website at www.education.gov.au/action-plan-addressing-genderbased-violence-higher-education.

I look forward to your continued engagement on this work and the important task ahead.

Yours sincerely


JASON CLARE
15/03/2024

Encl. – Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education

Issue: Strengthening university governance – governance and industrial relations
Contact: Ben Rimmer
Ph: s 22
Deputy Secretary

Key Points

Strengthening university governance

- On 26 April 2024, Education Ministers at Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) agreed to strengthen university governance to include:
 - Establishment of an expert governance council within the University Chancellors Council (UCC) to provide oversight on university governance.
 - Ensure the expert governance council meets Ministers' objectives for reform by:
 - Commonwealth and state and territory governments to appoint 3 experts, including an independent chair, to the council.
 - Ensure the council engages with relevant stakeholders.
 - Development of new 'Australian University Governance Principles and Recommendations' by the expert governance council, in line with Ministers' 10 priorities for action and best practice of public sector and corporate governance.
 - The Governance Principles and Recommendations to be provided to Education Ministers for endorsement by the end of 2024.
 - Universities to publicly report on their compliance with the new Governance Principles and Recommendations.
 - Ongoing consideration by Australian, state and territory governments regarding further legislative or regulatory change needed to strengthen university governance.
- The Department is working on the immediate next steps in partnership with states and territories and the UCC.

Improving workplace relations compliance

- The Australian Government agreed actions to improve university compliance with existing workplace relations requirements, include:
 - New guidance and reporting requirements from the TEQSA to ensure providers have governance and management processes in place to meet enterprise agreements and industrial obligations.

- Engagement of an independent expert to support the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), Universities Australia (UA) and the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA) in identification and resolution of priority issues to ensure universities are exemplary employers.
- Improved staff data collection by the Department on casual and fixed term employment arrangements.
- The Department engaged closely with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), Fair Work Ombudsman, and key stakeholders in the development of actions.
- The Australian Government will work to implement the workplace relations compliance actions in 2024 and 2025.

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| Date Last Cleared | 23 May 2024 |
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BACKGROUND

- The Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (Interim Report) included 5 priority actions which the Government agreed to progress ahead of the Accord Panel's Final Report.
- One of the priority actions was for the Australian Government to engage with state and territory governments to improve governance, with a priority focus on improving student and staff safety through prevention of gender-based violence, universities being good employers, and membership of governing bodies.
 - On governance, the Accord Panel found that universities were not engaging adequately with serious issues in relation to underpaying staff and addressing gender-based violence. The Panel also recommended changes to governing body composition, particularly the need for independent university expertise and First Nations representation on governing bodies.
 - On workplace relations compliance, the Accord Panel identified significant concerns with aspects of university workforce practices, particularly regarding staff underpayments and workforce casualisation.
- Led by the Department, a Strengthening University Governance Cross-jurisdictional Working Group (Working Group) was established in August 2023 to develop actions to address these issues. Further information about the Working Group is in SB24-000325.

Issue: University Study Hubs
Pg. No. PBS 2024-25, pp.55, MYEFO 2023-24 – p. 233.
Contact: Ben Rimmer
 Ph: s 22
 Deputy Secretary

Budget

Regional University Study Hubs Program

Total Program Allocation

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027-28 | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Total (inc. new hubs) (PBS) | 22.5 | 20.2 | 28.3 | 26.1 | 26.6 | 123.7 |

Funding allocation for new Hubs only (included in above)

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027-28 | Total |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| New Hubs (MYEFO) | 4.6 | 4.7 | 12.8 | 9.8 | 10.1 | 42.0 |

Note: New Hubs funding from 2023-24 to 2026-27 in MYEFO 2023. 2027-28 funding amounts for new Hubs not publicly available, as program funding shown as single line item in PBS.

Note: Departmental expenditure and Commonwealth Supported Places associated with the program are not included in PBS/MYEFO against the program and not included here.

Suburban University Study Hubs Program

| Financial year | 2023–24 | 2024–25 | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027-28 | Total |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| PBS Allocation | - | 11.8 | 8.2 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 36.9 |

Key Points

Recent Government policy and commitment

- Since 2022–23, the Australian Government has committed **over \$87 million** for the Regional University Study Hubs Program.
 - This includes **\$31.9 million** (2023–24 to 2026–27) for up to 20 (noting funding for 22 have been announced) additional Regional Hubs in response to Priority Action 1 of the Accord Interim Report (\$34.4 million if departmental included.)
 - This also includes **\$55.7 million** for 8 Regional Hubs in Cohort 3, and continuation of funding for Regional Hubs in Cohorts 1 and 2.
 - This **does not include** funding for up to 14 Suburban University Study Hubs in response to the same Priority Action 1 (a commitment of **\$28.3 million** (\$32.5 million inc. departmental).

- Priority Action 1 of the Accord Interim Report (July 2023) recommended extending visible, local access to tertiary education by creating more Regional University Study Hubs and to establish a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations.
- In response, on 18 July 2023, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced \$66.9 million to double the number of University Study Hubs, including expanding the concept to the outer suburbs of our major cities for the first time.

Regional University Study Hubs

- Regional University Study Hubs are community-based organisations in regional and remote locations that provide facilities, internet access and academic skills/wellbeing support for students studying at **any** Australian tertiary institution.
- Regional Hubs are established in:
 - areas defined as 'inner regional', 'outer regional', 'remote', and 'very remote' as per the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Classification
 - Darwin and Hobart as they are classified as 'inner regional', noting they are less competitive given their relative access to a greater number of education offerings. Darwin and Hobart are also eligible for Suburban Hubs (see below).
- Funding contributions from other sources (e.g. local and state government, industry/business etc.) for hubs is encouraged as it reflects broader community commitment to success and lowers Commonwealth funding requirements; meaning more Hubs can be funded.
 - NSW and QLD have provided funding to establish Regional Hubs.
 - Since 2017, NSW has announced \$16 million to support NSW-based Country Universities Centres. Funding has supported establishment (including capital) and some operational.
 - On 3 May 2024, QLD Government announced \$2 million to support establishment (capital funds for facilities) of 2 new Country University Centres in Clermont and Moranbah (Isaac).

Status of Regional University Study Hubs

- Across Australia (except ACT), **35** Regional University Study Hubs are currently operational.
- As of November 2023 (latest program data), Regional University Study Hubs were supporting **almost 4,000** students (based on students registered with the hubs to access the facilities and support at that time).
 - 43% identified as first in family
 - 12% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

- New hubs are being established across two cohorts in 2024 and 2025:
 - On 25 March 2024 Minister Clare announced 12 Regional University Study Hubs funded in response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (**Cohort 4**), including funding to support two existing Country Universities Centres in New South Wales. This takes the current total to 46 (refer [Attachment A](#)).

Suburban University Study Hubs

- Program aims to support underrepresented and disadvantaged students (low socio-economic status, First Nations, people with disability) from outer urban areas. Suburban University Study Hubs will:
 - provide campus-style study spaces, administrative and academic skills support for students undertaking tertiary study through **any** Australian institution.
 - be in areas with low tertiary education participation to support underrepresented and disadvantaged students who face increased barriers to access.
 - be in areas which meet the following requirements:
 - Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) locations classified as Quintile 1 or 2 in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
 - eligible geographic classifications of 'Major Cities of Australia' or 'Greater Hobart' / 'Greater Darwin' according to the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard.
- A competitive application process is currently open, running from 22 May – 29 July 2024.
- Applications will be assessed by a panel of senior departmental staff.
- Successful applicants to be announced in due course.

Attachments

[Attachment A](#) – New Regional University Study Hubs – Cohort 4

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Date Last Cleared | 23 May 2024 |
|-------------------|-------------|

BACKGROUND

Regional University Study Hubs

- A grants program under the *Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022*, under section 238-10 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

- To date, 4 competitive application processes held to select Regional Hubs:
 - Round 1 – between 30 May and 27 July 2018. 23 applications were received. 16 applications funded at a total cost of \$24,172,298 GST excl.
 - These Regional Hubs have been re-funded at an additional cost of \$25,403,790 for the period 2022–23 to 2025–26.
 - Round 2 – between 3 October and 13 December 2019. 13 applications were received. 9 applications initially funded at a total cost of \$9,485,728 GST excl.
 - These Regional Hubs have been re-funded at an additional cost of \$11,365,025 for the period 2023–24 to 2026–27.
 - In connection with Round 2 and an election commitment, a further Regional Hub, CUC Ovens-Murray in Wangaratta was awarded \$2,533,300 in funding over 4 years to 2023–24 (funding was delayed due to readiness issues).
 - Round 3 – between 28 February and 25 March 2022. 18 applications were received. 8 applications were funded at a total cost of \$9,304,756 GST excl. for the period 2022–23 to 2024–25.
 - Mt Isa is expected to commence operations mid-2024 once capital works fit outs are completed which have been delayed.
 - Round 4 – refer [Attachment A](#)

New Regional University Study Hubs - Cohort 4

- A competitive application process for Cohort 4 ran between 28 September and 15 December 2023 (approximately 11 weeks).
- Applications were assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in an Application Guide by a panel of senior departmental staff and the Regional Education Commissioner, the Hon Fiona Nash.
 - 34 applications were received from the following jurisdictions:
 - Queensland: 12 applications
 - New South Wales: 6 applications
 - South Australia: 3 applications
 - Victoria: 4 applications
 - Western Australia: 3 applications
 - Tasmania: 3 applications
 - Northern Territory: 2 applications
 - External Territory: 1 application
- On 25 March 2024, Minister Clare announced the 12 Regional University Study Hubs funded in Cohort 4, including funding to support two existing Country Universities Centres located in New South Wales.
- Successful hubs:
 - Garrthlala Bush University Study Hub (East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory)
 - Fleurieu Regional University Study Hub (Victor Harbor, South Australia)
 - CUC Southern Downs (Warwick, Queensland)
 - CUC Western Downs (Chinchilla, Queensland)
 - Innisfail Regional University Study Hub (Innisfail, Queensland)
 - CUC RAPAD Central West Queensland (Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall, Winton, Boulia, Bedourie, Birdsville and Jundah, Queensland)
 - Study King Island (King Island, Tasmania)
 - Katanning Regional University Study Hub (Katanning, Western Australia)
 - Ashburton Regional University Study Hub (Tom Price and Onslow, Western Australia)
 - Gippsland East Higher Education Study Hub Outreach (Mallacoota, Orbost, Omeo, Heyfield and Yarram, Victoria)
 - CUC Mudgee Region (Mudgee, New South Wales)
 - CUC Cowra Region (Cowra, New South Wales)
- Successful Hubs jurisdiction breakdown:

| State | Successful Hubs in Cohort 4 |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| QLD | 4 |
| NSW | 2 |
| WA | 2 |
| SA | 1 |

Attachment A

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| VIC | 1 |
| TAS | 1 |
| NT | 1 |
| Total | 12 |

- As of 23 May 2024, the department has established Conditions of Grant with 6 of the new hubs and is finalising budget details with the 6 remaining successful applicants.
- The two NSW-based hubs are open and supporting students. The remaining hubs are expected to be operational later in 2024 (depending on circumstances of each hub e.g. capital fit outs).
- Unsuccessful applicants were offered an opportunity for feedback on their application. Feedback has been provided to 17 applicants.