

1 September 2023

Australian Government
Department of Education
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Environment Institute
of Australia and
New Zealand Inc.

RE: Australian Universities Accord Interim Report Submission from the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ)

To whom it may concern,

The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) is pleased to have the opportunity to submit its views on matters canvassed in the *Australian Universities Accord Interim Report*.

EIANZ is the peak organisation representing the professional role of environmental practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. It supports practitioners throughout their professional careers, from students and early career professionals to experienced and certified environmental practitioners. Entry into the environment profession requires an environment-related university degree from fields such as environmental science, environmental management, environmental sustainability, environmental engineering, ecology, biology, botany, zoology, geology and geomorphology, geography and social science, archaeology, architecture, and cultural heritage management.

EIANZ is deeply connected to the education sector through our [Qualification Accreditation Scheme](#) (QAS), which oversees the accreditation of university courses for the environmental sciences. The QAS process ensures students are given the best opportunity to undertake relevant degrees, and that students have appropriate competencies and proficiencies to enter the workplace and meet employer expectations.

In addition, EIANZ has an ongoing framework [recognised in federal and New Zealand legislation, and that of multiple states](#), regulating the proficiency of environmental practitioners through our [Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme](#) (CEnvP).

Environmental practitioners work across the private sector in service, manufacturing, and resource industries; the public sector in environmental programs and in conservation and land management organisations; the academic sector; and the community sector. There has never been a more important time for the environment profession to contribute to the betterment of Australian society, and for that the nation needs well educated environmental practitioners.

EIANZ's key reflections on the Interim Report are outlined below.

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Meeting Australia's future skills needs

The EIANZ is well placed to assist the Universities Accord Review in articulating the needs of the environment profession and to contribute positively to shaping the Accord. The environment profession is deeply concerned about ongoing adverse changes to university funding for environmental science, environmental management, and environmental sustainability-related degrees and the flow-on implications including:

- the ongoing loss of essential foundational subjects from the content of environmental science degrees;
- the loss of opportunities for graduates to gain practical and field related experience as part of their studies;
- the shortages of well-trained environmental scientists in the sectors serviced by the environment profession; and
- the lack of a systemic approach to planning for the future knowledge and skills that will be required for the management of humanity's impacts in the environment.

EIANZ, on behalf of the environment profession, is looking for the proposed Universities Accord to deliver education for environmental practitioners that ensures they can enter and advance through the environment profession with:

- a broad knowledge and skill base that is the foundation of environmental practice;
- practical skills and field-based experience in the application of methods and technologies; and
- work readiness in terms of being on a pathway to recognition as a proficient environmental practitioner.

EIANZ recognises that an important consideration will be:

- the level of funding provided for university places allocated to environmental science, environmental management, and environmental sustainability related degrees; and
- a level of funding that allows for the attraction of skilled teaching staff and for the delivery of quality graduate outcomes.

Australia and the world face significant environmental challenges, and there has never been a more important time for supporting quality education for those entering the environment profession.

EIANZ's Qualifications Accreditation Scheme Board is meeting to further consider the matter in coming days, and a more detailed response will be provided shortly afterwards.

EIANZ looks forward to engaging further with the Universities Accord process over the coming months. The Institute's key contact is EIANZ Executive Officer Jonathon Miller (+ 61 3 8593 4141 or Jon@eianz.org).

Yours faithfully,



Vicki Brady,

President EIANZ