Sub-mission: A response to the Interim report of the Australian Universities Accord.

Submitted on behalf of the Ethics Working Party of the Australian Association of University Professors.

In the interests of enabling "lasting and transformative reform in Australia's higher education system" we, the undersigned offer this response to the interim report of the Australian Universities Accord. We fully support the intention to develop "a visionary plan for Australia's universities" and we offer the below as a unique and creative contribution to the discussion by focussing on a central issue that seems to have been largely overlooked in considerations up until now.

We are primarily concerned with chapter 3 and enhancing the role of academia in the governance of universities. While TEQSA acknowledges tension in university governance (TQSA 2019a; 2019c), it has paid little attention to the undermining of Academy as a serious risk factor in Australian Universities. Unfortunately, the Accord has also largely ignored this as an issue.

In the managerial university, this has occurred through the loss of prestige of academia and loss of protections such as tenure due to rampant casualisation and massification. While there is a pretence of shared governance, and shrill calls for academic freedom, there is unlikely to be any real change in our universities without genuine attempts to address the palpable power imbalance between the academic leadership and corporate leadership. Executive (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Hénard & Mitterle, 2010; Jolly 2005; Rowlands, 2015; Yielder & Codling, 2004).

The domination of the latter is endorsed by TEQSA and the detrimental outcomes for academics are clearly documented in the research (Sutton, 2017; Yeatman, 2018;). However, very little research has gone into how the Academy should fit into the managerial university in a way that genuinely protects and promotes the essence of academic work.

The Academy itself is partly to blame for this gap in the research as it has not done the necessary work to define itself professionally. The government policies over the last 30 years have introduced corporate managerial reforms into the sector without critical thought to their suitability to a university context and their impact on the autonomy and critical nature of academic work. A clash of values was inevitable.

As has been made evident in recent reports on the public service, politicisation, privatisation and the use of external management consultants have diminished the effectiveness and independence of the public service. Similarly, in universities, de-professionalisation of academia through casualisation, managerial control over decision-making, the imposition of inappropriate accountability measures and work intensification have reduced the power of academia to challenge and critically scrutinise decision-making within the universities.

To address these concerns, the Australian Association of University Professors (AAUP) have developed the *Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics (The Framework). The Framework* is published on the AAUP website and is accessible via the link above. It aims to restore the influence of Academia in our universities through its professionalisation.

The claims in *The Framework* are supported by extensive research and are presented in detail an academic paper which is currently under review (Kenny, Bird, Blackmore, Brandenburg, Nicol, Seemann, Wang & Wilmshurst, In review). A link is provided to the Framework in Appendix One and a pre-publication copy of the paper is provided as Appendix 2 but is not publishable until the review process is complete.

The Framework argues for the need for the professionalisation of Academia to provide fundamental protections lost in the corporatised university. It presents common values around which academics can unite and declares commitment to scholarship and joint leadership of universities as essential aspects of the academic role.

While the managerial universities may arguably have become more efficient, there are serious concerns about independence from government and their effectiveness in research and teaching, which are ultimately reliant on a trustworthy and autonomous Academy.

The Framework proposes the professionalisation of the Academy as a necessary step to genuine change in the sector and our universities. We are not arguing for a return the elite university of the past, but for a re-conception of the modern University in a way that does not kill the golden goose. Instead, through *The Framework*, we propose a higher education system that operates in a way that truly empowers academics and encourages universities to serve society in the best way possible. To take this initiative forward, we have proposed a research project designed to work with others in the sector to explore how this can be done most effectively (see Kenny, Bird, Blackmore, Nicol, Seemann, Wang & Wilmshurst, in review).

We implore the panel to seriously consider the re-invigorating and re-balancing of the sector through the re-empowerment of the academic profession. The approach is grounded in research and offers something unique to the debate.

John Kenny, Convenor of the AAUP Ethics working party.

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Appendix One
Links The *Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics*

A Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics

Preamble

In April 2021, the Australian Association of University Professors (AAUP) Council approved the formation of a working party to explore the development of a statement of professional ethics for academia. This followed strong (96%) support for the idea as a way to clarify and strengthen the ill-defined notion of academia as a profession. This statement is the result of the deliberations of the working party who saw this work as a vehicle to better describe what academics do and to be able to articulate the unique aspects of academic work to our colleagues, students, universities, government and the general public.

Drawing on extensive research literature, the initial step we took was to confirm the important role of the university in society and explore the changing context of universities and the impacts on academic work. This led to the development of a *draft Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics* which was presented to the AAUP Council for feedback in November, 2021. Further revisions followed with a second draft being developed and released to AAUP membership for feedback in April 2022 .

The second draft was strongly supported, and following further revisions, in response to the feedback, this current version of the Framework was presented to the AAUP Council and approved for release as version 1 of the *Professional Ethical Framework for Austrailian Academics* (*The Framework*) on (Date).

The working party proudly presents this version of the Framework for consideration by members of the academic profession The aim is to seek feedback from the broader academic and higher education community in Australia and internationally. The Framework is supported by a scholarly paper which elaborates on the claims (add citation)

Ultimately, we will seek feedback from the broader higher education community, including government, university management, TEQSA and other peak bodies and industry.
We are seeking ethical clearance to conduct research to ascertain the impact of and improve the Framework. We will seek feedback through a range of media including an online survey (insert link) and follow-up interviews and/or focus groups.

On behalf of the Ethics working party:

John Kenny (convenor), Michael Bird, Jill Blackmore, Robyn Brandenburg, Di Nicol , Kurt Seemann; Bing Wang and Trevor Wilmshurst.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Council of the Australian Association of University professors (AAUP) (hereinafter called the Council) has guardianship over this Framework on behalf of members of the academic profession. Through its members, the AAUP accepts the significant responsibilities that come with keeping its content relevant, while articulating and protecting the unique essence of academic work.

This professional ethical framework has been developed by a working party of the Council and the claims made are supported by published scholarly work [insert ref].

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Framework is to identify and articulate the uniqueness and value of the academic role and differentiate academic leadership from the managerial in the modern university. Such a distinction is needed to negotiate and set-up shared governance and appropriate power-relations to be able to jointly develop internal policies and processes for the university to work effectively to achieve its mission.

The Framework is also designed to communicate the essence of academic work to our academic colleagues, and other stakeholders in higher education including government, peak bodies, university management, students, the broader community and industry groups. It should assist all stakeholders to better understand the importance of universities in advancing our society, and the key role that academics play in ensuring that universities fulfil their mission.

Intended Audience

In recognising the importance of universities for National Development, we acknowledge that academics are the key to the delivery of their mission through high quality research and teaching.

The primary audience for the Framework is our academic colleagues. If it resonates with a sufficient proportion of academics, and they voluntarily commit to integrating the proposed practices in their professional lives, it will become a powerful platform for the academic profession.

The secondary audience for this Framework includes other stakeholders involved in higher education, academic peak bodies, unions, university management, government, industry and students. We hope it will help them better understand the important role academics play and enable more purposefully negotiated and designed university structures that ensure the voice of the academic staff is influential and instrumental in strategic decision-making and resource allocation.

The Framework sets the stage for academics and managers to work together for more effective universities, but this relies on a mutual understanding and acceptance of the important but different roles each plays and a willingness to find ways to work together that acknowledge this.

Structure

The structure of the AAUP Framework is based on a framework proposed by Ferman (2011), whose research study on academic work and the concept of "profession" drew on Freidson's (1999) model of professionalism. It contains four interacting themes that describe the essence of academic work in a modern university (Figure 1).
   1. Academics as co-leaders in the modern university
   2. The professional nature of academic work.
   3. The scholarly nature of academic work.
   4. The workplace conditions necessary to support academic work.

Each of these themes is expanded upon below and includes a range of suggested practical implications to guide our academic colleagues in their day-to-day practice.

Theme 1 Academics as co-leaders in universities.

This theme is based on research focusing on systemic structural change in Australian higher education including corporatisation, competition, external systemic accountability and reduced funding and their impact on the autonomy of universities and the academics who work in them.

Key documents identify the key role that universities hold in society, together with the importance of academic autonomy and freedom. They recognise the need for both academic and corporate leadership in the governance of universities and recognise that this can result in tensions when the priorities of these groups do ot align.

However, research indicates that, while corporate leadership tends to dominate in Australian universities, the effectiveness of universities is linked to their ability to develop governance structures and processes that balance academic and corporate (managerial?) leadership.

This the Framework is designed to acknowledge the vital, but fundamentally different roles, academic and corporate leaders play in the effectiveness of a university. Its design is based on an rebalancing the power between these two leadership streams to increase the effectiveness of universities. It also challenges organisations such as government and the *Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency* (TEQSA) to seriously examine the risks associated to university effectiveness due to reduced autonomy for academics.

The Framework challenges university managers and academic leaders to design university governance structures and decision-making processes that expect the inherent tensions to arise and enable them to be addressed through discussion and inclusive democratic practices.

It assumes greater academic leadership representation on the Governing Council of the University. Backed by a significant increase in the powers of Academic Boards (Senates), as the key body for academic leadership. It advocates for clear majority control by the elected membership from the academic body to balance executive decision-making power. It also assumes a more purposeful advisory role for the professoriate in the maintenance of academic standards and examination of proposals

In assuming the mantel of co-leaders, The Framework also challenges academics as a professional group, to take the responsibilities and accountabilities associated with academic leadership inn universities. It challenges managers in universities to be fully committed to the social purpose and autonomy of universities and have a thorough understanding of the nature of academic work and the professional needs of academics.

Theme 2 **The professional nature of academic work.**

This theme draws on the professional model put forward by Freidson (1999), to articulate the key features that support the conception of academia as a profession. These include:
1. Holding or working towards recognised qualifications in teaching and/or research in a specialised field
2. Applying their specialist expertise to serve society
3. Working with a high-level of autonomy to make professional judgements about their work, with guidance from more experience colleagues where appropriate
4. The expectation to continually develop their expertise and
5. A voluntary commitment to upholding the values of the profession.

Professional Values
The underpinning values of the academic profession are based on the nature of the work as articulated through the following professional values:

In all their professional dealing academics voluntarily commit to practising:
1. *Altruism:* by through a working for the advancement knowledge for the benefit of their society
2. *Academic freedom and intellectual integrit*y: by grounding their work in scholarship.
3. *Professional autonomy:* in making judgements about their work, with support and advice from more experienced colleagues as required.
4. *Collegiality:* From a recognition that their work is founded on the endeavours of many previous scholars, academics share their work with their peers and accept that informed critique and robust discussion is necessary to ensure rigour and advance knowledge in a field. Experienced academics are encouraged to share knowledge and mentoring less experienced colleagues.

Theme 3 The scholarly nature of academic work.

This theme aims to identifies the expectation to be scholarly as the key factor that distinguishes academia from other professions and unites all academics as a professional group, regardless of the discipline area. It aims to clarify the uniqueness of the academic role in society, and within their institutions and explains why the professional academic role is distinct from other professional roles.

Being scholarly means professional academics believe that free and open inquiry requires autonomy and academic freedom to:

1. Develop and maintain a deep theoretical understanding of the current state of knowledge, practices and issues in their field(s) of expertise
2. Take a collaborative and open-minded approach to learning and accept the possibility of a diversity of opinion
3. Take a rigorous and critical approach to exploring issues related to their work, and make informed decisions based on the available research evidence
4. Act with autonomy when making decisions and expressing judgements concerned with their area expertise and
5. May act as a public intellectual i.e., speak out on matters of public significance as a critic in and conscience of society

It explores in some depth the full scope of academic work as scholarly activities in one or more of research, teaching and service responsibilities and examines the realities of the modern university to identify the limits where interference in autonomy and academic freedom become counter-productive.

Theme 4 Academic working conditions

Research shows intensification and performativity pressures have reduced academic autonomy and can be counter-productive. Institutional policies and resources need to be purposefully designed to support professional scholarly work.

This theme is based on the reality that power is exercised in a university through the enacted policies, procedures and decisions on resource allocation. It outlines how the universities' managers and academics can co-develop that support the work of academics as professionals and contribute to the effectiveness of universities.

The academic body in a university is not a homogeneous group: some members face disadvantages in comparison with their established and on-going colleagues. To minimise this disadvantage, all policies that are likely to impact on academic work need to be developed and implemented in full consultation with the affected staff and adequately costed and resourced. This

may require a range of related policies to cater for the diversity of needs various groups such as women returning to work, indigenous staff, those with needs related to culture, disability, the needs of ECRs, child-care, indigenous staff and research students working conditions that undermine their ability to participate in scholarly activities.

It considers the principles which underpin the development of policies that demonstrate thoughtful application of the principles of equity, transparency, reciprocity fairness so o the diverse needs of various groups are met. These include but are not limited to sessional academics; care-givers returning to work; indigenous staff; those with needs related to culture; disability; the needs of ECRs; child-care, and research students working conditions that undermine their ability to participate in scholarly activities.

A Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics

This Framework challenges all stakeholders in the Australian Higher Education sector to adopt this conception of academic work. It presents a foundation for: our colleagues, government, university management, academic associations, and unions, to work towards shared governance structures and policy formation processes that will enable our universities to function effectively as independent academic institutions with a unique role in society. This Framework contains four inter-related themes that describe the essence of academic work in a modern university:

1. Academics as co-leaders in the modern university.
2. The professional nature of academic work.
3. The scholarly nature of academic work.
4. The workplace conditions necessary to support academic work.

Theme 1: Academics as co-leaders in the modern university

A university includes two forms of leadership: corporate and academic, and these bodies need to work together and manage tensions to ensure that universities effectively fulfil their role in society. This theme emphasises the need to enhance and rebalance the decision -making power afforded to academic leaders in universities.

The characteristics of academic leaders, their role and accountabilities are defined together with an identification of some of the key responsibilities and challenges faced in the modern university. It is recognised/acknowledged that some academic leaders assume formal roles in their university management structure which may lead to competing expectations.

While tensions are to be expected, managers and academic leaders need to find a way to work together to ensure the policies and processes in the university are designed to support the academic mission of the university and the explicit protection of academic freedom and autonomy.

Description	

The challenge for academics, as a professional group, is to accept joint responsibility for the effectiveness of their university through their academic leaders. This calls for great academic leadership representation on the Governing Council of the University and increased power of Academic Board (or Senate) as the key body for exercising academic leadership, with control by the academic leadership to provide balance to the executive power.	*To balance the decision-making power between the academic and corporate leadership, there needs to be:* • *Greater representation of academic leadership on the governing board of the University* • *Enhanced powers for Academic Board (Senate) to include active contribution to setting strategic goals, opportunity to put forward proposals, ability to critique proposals put forward by the executive, active participation in senior selection, active participation in decisions on resource allocation and policy* • *Clear majority control by the elected members, who represent the broader academic body and university community, to whom they are primarily accountable.*
Description	**Implications for practice**

1.1 Academic leaders
The primary role of academic leaders is to apply their expertise and experience in the sector to ensure the quality of research and teaching is maintained and that academic standards of rigour, ethics and evidence underpin university strategic decisions.
  The defining characteristics of academic leaders that distinguish them from corporate leaders is that they retain a significant and active involvement in teaching and/or research, even if they hold a formal leadership position in the university hierarchy.
• ensure decisions made will maintain academic standards in teaching and research
• ensure decisions will serve the interests of the university and wider community.
 	
  Academic leaders should ensure discussion on academic matters occurs through collegial discussion and democratic selection practices. Strategic decisions need to serve the academic mission of the university and to maintain high academic standards.
	Academic leaders use inclusive decision-making strategies to deal with expected tensions in universities based on:
	• *Participatory decision-making based on transparency, wide consultation, honesty and robust discussion at work group, faculty and institutional levels.*
	• *Ensuring evidence-based decisions are made by inviting questions and fostering respectful debate on any proposals that directly affect academic work.*
	• *Expecting an active and robust role for academics to contribute to strategic decision-making on issues which may have an impact on the ability of academics to fulfil their responsibilities within and beyond their institution.*
	• *Being open to a diversity of opinions, arguments, and provides genuine opportunities for staff to shape proposals to suit their context or offer viable alternatives.*

1.2 Academic leaders holding formal positions in the hierarchy
 	
Academic leaders often also hold formal roles in university management hierarchy which may present conflicting demands for them to deal with.
    Their challenge is to balance the external demands on, and viability of, the university, without compromising the underlying values of the profession.
    As academic leaders, their underlying professional values remain paramount. Their leadership practice, professional interactions with colleagues, peers and other stakeholders need to be based on respect for diversity of opinion, recognition and reciprocity, which may require more iterative and consultative decision-making processes.
	Academic leaders who hold formal positions in the University management structures:
	    Aim to understand and manage the multiple and often competing demands on academic staff flowing from systemic changes. *Aim to support academic colleagues so they can focus their energies on conducting high quality teaching, research and service roles as outlined in this document.* *Seriously consider the potential impacts of any decision on the workloads, health, well-being and career opportunities of staff.* *Accept that their obligations to society, their profession and field of discipline may transcend their personal ambitions or obligations to the organisation.*

Description	**Implications for practice**
1.3 Academic leaders in senior leadership or managerial roles Academic leaders holding senior roles in the university hierarchy have a particular responsibility to model ethical behaviour and protect the autonomy and integrity of the university. The performance of academic leaders should focus on their ability as leaders to set and enact policies that promote shared leadership to advance the academic mission of the university and support and protect the fundamentals of academic work.	*Academic leaders also holding senior leadership roles have a responsibility to protect the integrity of the university and the profession.* *Their performance as leaders should be judged on their ability to:* *Work with Academic Board (Senate) to moderate external accountability and other demands to protect the academic mission of the university.* *Ensure internal policies and processes are designed to support the scholarly nature of academic work.* *Protect autonomy and academic freedom.*

1.4 The Professoriate as academic leaders By definition, in Australia, the Professoriate consists of academic leaders in their field. Modern universities must develop role descriptions which better articulate the diverse range of ways in which the professoriate can contribute to and/or builds the prestige of their institutions and the sector other than securing research funding. 　　The relationship of the Professoriate the Academic Board (Senate) in the provision of academic leadership and the maintenance of academic standards needs to be clarified.	*As a professional group, the Professoriate can show academic leadership in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:* *Acting as an advisory body to Academic Board (Senate) on a range of academic matters* *Critically examine and advise Academic Board (Senate) on the potential of proposals internal or external to the university, or strategic decisions that impact academic autonomy and/ or academic freedom.* *Provide informed critique and robust advice on the potential of proposals to serve or undermine academic standards or the academic mission of the institution* *The provision of professional and disciplinary leadership through:* *Development and maintenance of national and international networks and collaborations and/or the mentoring younger colleagues.* *Provision of a strong voice of advocacy for less powerful colleagues and students* *.*

Theme 2: The professional nature of academic work
Theme 2 articulates how academia meets the "ideals of professionalism" (Freidson, 1999) including the form of their expertise and qualifications, the need for a high degree of autonomy and professional judgement and the professional values to which they adhere. As professionals, academics have a responsibility to serve the public good using their specialised disciplinary knowledge and expertise in a field or fields. They are expected to maintain currency in their field and contribute to its continued development and the maintenance of high professional standards. Academics are trusted to act ethically when making autonomous professional judgements and decisions regarding their area of expertise.

Description	Implications for practice
In their professional dealings Academics are expected to act with authority and autonomy in making professional judgements concerning their areas of expertise; to uphold the professional values and commit to using their specialised knowledge and skills in the service of their community, their profession, their discipline and their students. **2.1 Expertise** Academics hold recognised university qualifications and maintain disciplinary expertise in a specialised field or fields.	*Professional Academics:* • *Hold or are working towards recognised qualifications to conduct research and/or teach novices and practitioners within their specialised area or areas of knowledge.* • *Maintain currency and build their expertise in their discipline and draw on up to date knowledge to inform their teaching, research and/or service activities* • *Contribute to the advancement of their specialist discipline and/or the academic profession through their research, teaching and/or service.* • *As they gain experience and develop their expertise, provide intellectual leadership and/or mentor of less experienced colleagues in matters related to their areas of expertise.* • *Act with autonomy and independence when making decisions and judgements concerned with their professional work.*

Description	Implications for practice

2.2 *Professional ethical values*	*Professional academics accept that these values underpin their work and commit to upholding them in all professional interactions and dealings with peers, colleagues, students or other stakeholders. They commit to:*
Professional academics accept that their work ultimately should serve the public good and their role is the advancement of society through the development and sharing of new knowledge.	*1. Altruism in service*
In this work, academics commit to the ethical values below and to applying them in all their professional dealings and interactions.	*Academics work is primarily to advance knowledge in the service of society. In this work, they have responsibilities that go beyond their institutions in the service of their profession and the wider community.*
1. Altruism in service 2. Academic freedom and intellectual integrity grounded in scholarship 3. Autonomy 4. Collegiality	*2. Academic freedom and intellectual integrity are grounded in scholarship* *Academics speak with honesty and authority in relation to their area (or areas) of expertise. The role of an academic is to offer constructive critique, and to question when decision making is at odds with sound evidence. They:* • *Recognise and acknowledge the historical foundation of scholarliness on which their individual achievements and efforts are built.* • *Accept that informed critique is important in advancing understanding and developing knowledge.* • *Accept robust discussion may involve questioning, challenging and/or affirmation of proposals.*
Academics accept that these professional obligations transcend their allegiance to, or affiliation with, any given university, government, external organisation, political ideology or commercial imperative.	*3. Autonomy* • *Academics act as autonomous professionals who make and independent decisions and exercise professional judgement in relation to their work.* • *They maintain currency in their areas of expertise and may seek support and advice from more experiences colleagues as required.*
On occasions, academics may chose to speak out on issues of importance to society as public intellectuals which may involve the need to question or challenge those in authority.	*4. Collegiality* *Academics recognise, with humility, the historical foundation of scholarliness on which their individual work is built.* • *Where possible, academics share knowledge and collaborate with colleagues and peers and mentor less experienced colleagues and those with whom they work.*

	• *Recognise the importance of fostering these values in the development of emerging and early career scholars including post graduate research candidates and post-doctoral academics*

Theme 3: The scholarly nature of academic work

Theme 3 considers the expectation for Academics to be scholarly, regardless of discipline, and that this is a unifying characteristic of the academic profession. It is what distinguishes academics from other professionals. Being scholarly demands that academics work from a deep understanding of what is known in their field (or fields) of expertise with an openness to growth and learning and a respect for rigor and sound evidence to advance the field.

This theme also considers the relationship between academic freedom and autonomy and the practicalities of the modern university context which can place limits on these fundamental aspects of the work. From a professional academic point of view, it identifies the limits of compromise beyond which academic freedom in research and teaching are non-negotiable.

Description	Implications for practice
3.1 Scholarship Academics are expected to be scholarly in all aspects of their professional roles: research, teaching and/or service. This obligation transcends their allegiance to, or affiliation with, any given university, government, external organisation, ideology or commercial imperative. Scholarly work requires a high degree of ethical behaviour and autonomy and the freedom to inquire deeply into questions. It requires the freedom to report findings honestly and without fear of sanction or retribution. This is the essence and nature of academic freedom, which is fundamental to academic work. In reality, academic freedom and autonomy are impacted by the political and economic context in which academics work. As a professional	*As professional scholars, academics are expected to:* • *Develop and maintain a deep understanding of the current state of knowledge, practices and issues in their field(s) of expertise.* • *Take a rigorous and critical approach to exploring issues related to their field* • *Make informed decisions based on the available research evidence.* • *Act with autonomy when making decisions and expressing judgements within their area expertise.* • *If they choose to participate in debate on proposals, policies or practices relevant to their area of expertise, either within their institutions or in*

group, academics need to define the limits beyond which these impacts become counter-productive and undermine their work.	*more public fora, they shall do so with intellectual integrity and without fear of sanction.*

Description	Implications for practice

3.2 Research
 	
Research is a rigorous process to develop new knowledge for advance our understanding of existing knowledge for the benefit of society. It includes pure research to advance the frontiers of knowledge and the application of knowledge to address current issues of concern, find links across disciplines and/or find new and creative ways of applying knowledge to solve problems.
    Research is a complex and systematic process based on sound methodology and the ethical collection and use of evidence. The outcomes are often contestable, so research is both reflective and forward thinking, building on what we know, yet open to a diverse range of perspectives and outcomes.
    Research relies on academics having autonomy and freedom to explore questions and problems, draw on pertinent literature, and examine and/or interpret available evidence.
    While it is appropriate for researchers to be funded or commissioned by external bodies to undertake their work, there can be no outside interference in the research process by powerful interests, be they government, commercial or managerial.
	As research scholars, when undertaking research activities academics:
	
	• *Aim to acknowledge and understand diverse ontological, epistemological and political perspectives but not necessarily agree with them.*
	• *May make a pragmatic decision to adjust their research agenda to suit the realities of internal priorities and external funding bodies.*
	• *Once a research proposal has been agreed upon and ethically approved, the researchers must be free to conduct it with the utmost professional integrity*
	• *Employ sound methodological approaches to minimise bias.*
	• *Develop findings based solely on the best available evidence and the body of research in the field.*
	• *Ensure their findings are reported honestly, and untainted by external economic, commercial, institutional or individual imperatives or influences.*

3.3 Teaching Academics teaching In the modern university are expected to comply with quality assurance requirements related to course structure and templates designed to communication important information to students. Typically, there may also be limitations related to accreditation, course design and delivery (e.g., online teaching platforms). Beyond these administrative constraints, as experts in their field, academics must have the academic freedom and autonomy to develop and design their teaching program. They have an obligation to be scholarly in their teaching.	*As teaching scholars, professional academics in teaching roles:* • *Within limited guidelines, have academic freedom and autonomy to make decisions on the design of a unit or course including choice of content, the pedagogical approach and assessment tasks.* • *Model ethical behaviour in all their professional dealings to guide their students as the next generation of professionals.* • *Maintain a nexus between their teaching and current research in their field (or fields)*

	- *Regularly engage in scholarly activities such as Professional Development and/or conferences to develop their expertise as teachers in their field as research informs teaching*

Description	Implications for practice

3.3 Service
 	
Service is a fundamental and legitimate component of professional academic work and involves the ethical application of their specialised knowledge and skills in the service of others.
 	
    In addition to formal leadership roles mentioned above, there many informal ways academics fulfil their professional obligation to serve such as contributing to committees, working parties and other activities to support their institution (e.g. open days).
 	
    Service can also involve both formal and informal activities outside of the university that are crucial for the maintenance of scholarly standards, including supporting the academic profession through professional or disciplinary bodies, working for the advancement of their profession, discipline and/or institution.
 	
    Service may include acting as an advocate through professional organisations, on behalf of public universities, the profession, their discipline and as critical intellectuals.
	As professionals, academics are expected to engage in activities that link to their expertise and serve the needs of others, such as the academic profession, their discipline, society and/or their institution.
	
	Typically, service activities amount to a minimum of around 20% of an academic's workload.
	
	Service includes a broad range of activities, both formal and informal, that can be legitimately included within this aspect of their role. These include:
	
	• *Formal roles within their institutions (see leadership above, e.g., Head of School)*
	• *Formal roles external to their institutions (e.g., editing journals, leadership roles in professional bodies, etc.).*
	• *A wide range of informal activities that support engagement with the community or serve their profession, discipline and/or institution. (e.g., peer review, serving on professional bodies or working parties, editing a journal; organising a conference, attending a confirmation of candidature, etc.)*

Theme 4: Working conditions in Universities

Theme 4 recognises that power is exercised in a university though the policies, processes and decisions about the allocation of resources. This theme focuses on the centrality of academics for a university to be able to fulfill its academic mission, which requires that the professional needs of their role are acknowledged and fully supported in universities.

Recent research emphasises that management and academics need to work collaboratively to establish trust and develop trustworthy policies and processes that recognise and support the essence of academic work and embody the principles of equity, fairness, transparency, autonomy and academic freedom, and to minimise possible disadvantage for any individual in relation to their gender, ethnicity or experience.

These policies must be congruent with, and recognise all aspects of the role, so academics are able to pursue the blend of Research, Teaching and/or Service activities undertaken in a professional, scholarly and ethical way. They must also ensure equity and access and address the diverse needs of different groups within the academy including those with caring responsibilities, sessional academics, early career researchers, and those with needs related to culture, religion, disability and sexuality to ensure full participation.

Description	Implications for practice
To ensure the essence of academic work is protected, the development, implementation, maintenance and evaluation of policies that may impact on academic working conditions must be conducted in full consultation with affected staff, fully costed and adequately resourced. **4.1 Equity and Fairness** Policies and procedures may need to be developed and/or revised to ensure all staff have a chance to plan their career and succeed. These policies should be designed to explicitly cater for the diverse of needs various groups including those from Indigenous or different cultural backgrounds, those with a disability, those with caring responsibilities, early career researchers and sessional academic staff.	*Policies which are likely to impact on academic work should* - *Embody the principles of equity and fairness to minimise disadvantage to any groups.* - *Be collaboratively designed with the affected staff to ensure they provide real opportunities and support their career aspirations of academic staff at different stages of their career. This includes sessional academics, early career researchers and higher degree research students.* - *Explicitly address the specific needs of staff from diverse groups including those from Indigenous or different cultural backgrounds, those with a disability those returning to work from illness, injury or family leave, carers returning to work, etc*

Description	Implications for practice

4.2 Academic workload and performance policies
Academic workload and performance policies directly impact on the ability of academics to undertake their work in accordance with this Framework.
 	
     Recent research indicates academic workload and performance policies in a university should adhere to the following principles:
 	
The academic workload allocation process must be transparent, trustworthy and justifiable. This will be achieved when the institutional policies for workload allocation and performance:
 	
1. Are developed, documented and implemented in full consultation with academic staff.
2. Are based on an acceptance of the intrinsically motivated and self-managed approach that academics are expected to take to their work.
3. Are adequately resourced, adopted across the institution and directly linked to other institutional processes such as budgeting and performance management.
4. Ensure any associated processes and tools are clearly visible and readily available to academic staff and their performance managers, to facilitate genuine negotiation about career goals, workload and performance expectations.
5. Ensure all staff and managers receive training in the application of the policies as required.
 	
To be trustworthy at the level of the individual academics, these policies need to:
6. Be applied in a fully transparent manner, in terms of process and outcome.
7. Provide a holistic estimate of an individual's workload, based on realistic time allocations for <u>all</u> key tasks they are expected to undertake in their teaching, research and service roles.
8. Be sufficiently flexible to cater for justifiable variations associated with differences in discipline, career stage and workload category
9. Enable individual academics to negotiate reasonable workload and performance expectations that reflect their agreed work commitments.
	This Framework must be embedded in the enterprise agreement of a university and used as a basis to develop and implement appropriate policies that are congru with the professional and scholarly nature of the work as described herein.
	
	In accordance with shared governance, these policies should be developed by a joir committee of management and elected academic leaders. This committee should consult with the affected academic staff, to ensure the policies:
	  • *Support the professional, scholarly conception of their work*
	  • *Are implemented in a fair, transparent and equitable manner and*
	  • *Are implemented so that they are properly funded and resourced.*
	
	Each institution should make available an estimation tool so an individual academi and their performance manager, can prospectively obtain an accurate and credible estimate of the number of hours expected to be worked in a given year, which includes their research, teaching and service activities.
	
	  • *All staff and managers should receive training in its use.*
	
	This estimate should be used as a basis for negotiating performance expectations. The negotiation process should also:
	  • *Enable prospective exploration of different scenarios as they work towards agreement on a reasonable workload outcome*
	  • *Ensure career development and welfare issues are considered*
	  • *Enable retrospective discussion on what was achieved and consideration of and agreement on justifiable adjustments to workload and performance expectations for the following year.*

Description	Implications for practice
4.2 Addressing under-represented and less powerful academics. While all professional academics are expected to aspire to these professional values and standards, academics in a University, are not a homogenous group. Certain individuals lack power compared to their on-going and established colleagues. They, along with other less powerful academic sub-groups, should also have a representative voice within the academic leadership bodies and process within their university. For example, a high proportion of teaching is done by sessional academics. While as academics they are expected to act in accordance with the values and standards of the profession, they are not always compensated for the time to stay current and may have little or no opportunity to be involved in scholarly activities, or research or discussions about the strategic direction of the university. Many casuals working in research are expected to work beyond their contracted hours. Institutional policies should recognise that sessional academics undertaking teaching or research are expected to be professional and act in accordance with the values and standards of the profession as outlined in this document and they should be compensated accordingly.	*Sessional academics are expected to meet similar professional standards as their academic colleagues in on-going positions. This means their working conditions must acknowledge and recompense them for the requirement to be scholarly and rigorous.* *Their pay for undertaking research and/or teaching roles should be based on the application of their hourly rate for these activities using the same work standards as their academic colleagues in on-going positions.* *In addition, similar calculations should apply to:* • *Maintaining currency in their field of expertise* • *Engaging in scholarly activities* • *Attending professional development and information sessions associated with their work*

Appendix Two:

Included with this submission is a pre-publication copy of the supporting paper which has been sent to an international journal and is currently under review.

NOTE: This paper is NOT for Publication until the Review process is complete.

Kenny, J., Bird, M., Blackmore, J., Brandenburg, Nicol, D., R. Seemann, K., Wang, B. & Wilmshurst, T. (In review). Academia in the modern context: A professional ethical framework for Australian Academics

Academia in the modern context: A professional ethical framework for Australian Academics

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Abstract
This paper examines the impact of systemic changes over the last 30 years on universities and Academia in Australia, driven by a neo-liberal agenda and focussed on efficiency and increased external accountability. An extensive review of the research reveals severe impacts on the governance and autonomy of universities and academic work. We argue for the professionalisation of Academia to restore protections lost due to the dominance of managerial practices.
The _Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics_ (_The Framework_) is proposed as our re-conception. It offers protection for Academia through recognition of common professional values and leadership as inherent to their role. As an expectation to be scholarly applies to equally to all academics, regardless of discipline, experience or employment status, it is proposed as the unique characteristic that both distinguishes Academia from other professions and unifies it as a profession. _The Framework_ aims to guide and empower all academics and communicate to other stakeholders the value of the academic role for the effectiveness of universities, so they will support and protect academic freedom and autonomy. Although derived for the Australian context, it should have strong relevance to our academic colleagues more globally and we seek feedback from academic colleagues world-wide.

Key words:
Academic profession; academic freedom; autonomy; ethical framework; academic leadership, academic work.

Introduction

Higher education policy documents around the world typically claim that universities are important for national development. In Australia, both conservative Liberal and more progressive Labour governments, have imposed external accountability and audit mechanisms on universities, especially in relation to research (Jolly, 2005; Kwok, 2013). Universities adopted managerial practices that focussed on efficiency and accountability (Hénard & Mitterle, 2010; Kenny, 2008b) and this more "instrumentalist approach" led to the commodification of knowledge and the casualisation of academic work (Roberts, 2013; Ryan et al. 2013). This reduced the influence of academics within their institutions and "added significantly to workloads" (Roberts, 2013, p.35-36). An emphasis on research productivity led to "gaming" strategies that devalued many scholarly activities academics undertake as a part of their role (Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Houston et al. 2006; Jolly 2005; Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b). After 30 years of neoliberal policy in Australia, the situation has reached a point where the foundations of academic work are under severe threat and the academic role has become "almost untenable" (Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012, p.877).

Marginson (2011) called for a "re-grounding," to free universities from "the intrusive" marketing and state driven "steering mechanisms" that have captured them and for the reconfiguring of universities "in a larger democratic setting" (p.430). He described this "re-grounding" as a "challenging double act," adding "the communicative aspect of universities is centrally important" (p.430).

The fact is, however, that "Higher Education" cannot ground itself; a "University" cannot communicate, these tasks are done by individuals with authority or representatives of stakeholder groups, often academics. Thus, any re-grounding process must include not only a re-commitment to the social purpose of universities, but, as Coates and Goedegebuure (2012) observed, also a re-conceptualisation of Academia, as arguably the major contributors to a university achieving its academic mission, within the modern context.

While Coates and Goedegebuure (2012) called for opening-up the academic profession by providing more diversified career options to attract and retain staff, Marginson (2011) was more concerned with Academia as a source of "critique and challenge." In this paper, we explored an extensive research base covering the rise of managerialism and the impact of these systemic changes on universities and academic work. We sought to identify the fundamentals of academic work and explore the tensions and contradictions that have arisen for Academia due to the corporatisation of universities.

We synthesised this research to develop _The Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics (The Framework)_ as our re-conceptualisation of Academia in the Australian context. We argue the Academy needs a document, such as _The Framework,_ to protect the fundamentals of their work in the managerial university and we use research to justify these claims. We finish with a discussion of the significance of _The Framework_ for the Academy, universities and other stakeholders in higher education and our plans for further research.

The purpose of universities in the modern higher education context

The Bologna Declaration (1999) was established by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to ensure consistency in qualifications and teaching quality across Europe, so higher education could more effectively deal with the demands and challenges of the 21st Century. It emphasises the

importance of universities for national development and their mission to serve the advancement of society. It has promoted structural reform and adoption of common principles across national boundaries such as "academic freedom and autonomy of higher education institutions" as well as "student and other stakeholder participation in the democratic governance and management of higher education" (European Commission, 2018, p.16).

Similarly, the *Magna Charta Universitatum [MCU]* (2020) affirms "the fundamental principles upon which the mission of universities should be based." It acknowledges the "global nature of what universities do and the wider range of local responsibilities which they have." Its 960 signatories from 94 countries, including 10 Australian universities, declare that both society and governments should recognise that moral autonomy and academic freedom are fundamental principles for universities to fulfil their mission. It argues strongly that the independence of universities from government should be "vigorously defended." Salient to this is a report of the European Commission, EHEA (2018), pointing out that, in many countries, these principles are difficult to implement in practice, so there is a "continuing need to be vigilant" (p.46).

Similarly, in Australia, there have been numerous instances where government policy and the exercise of ministerial discretion have impacted on the independence of universities. For example, the imposition of targeted funding designed to 'encourage' students to choose industry-based courses and develop skills linked to "job-readiness". This policy resulted in increased fees for Liberal Arts Courses, perceived by the Government as less useful for employment (DESE, 2022). Additionally, on numerous occasions, Federal ministers intervened in the 'independent' peer review process for competitive research grants awarded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), to favour grants in disciplines more closely aligned with industry and government priorities (Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021).

Without disputing a Government's right to set priorities, as major funders of research, these actions impact the independence and autonomy of universities and academics. This highlights the need for a better understanding of the academic role in the managerial university, to determine at what point such external manipulation of research and teaching agendas begins to undermine academic autonomy (Francis & Sims, 2022; Huber, 2005; Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021; Kidd et al., 2021; SIFAC, 2022).

Aside from Indigenous knowledge, which, in Australia, reaches back over 65,000 years, universities are the oldest repositories of knowledge. The MCU (2020) recognises the continued credibility and distinctiveness of universities, as trusted organisations, relies on their highly ethical approaches to teaching and research, the integrity and expertise of their staff and their capacity to nurture and share multiple perspectives and forms of knowledge. A major aim of this paper is to explore, from the perspective of Academia, the translation of these principles into practice.

In Australia, the *Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency* (TEQSA), is the national body that monitors the quality of higher education providers and their adherence to the Higher Education Standards (TEQSA, 2021). These Standards require universities to demonstrate systematic support for scholarship.

Consistent with the above documents, both TEQSA (2019a; 2019) and Yielder & Codling (2004) noted that "corporate governance" and "academic governance" are inherent to universities, and that this is likely to lead to tensions. Similarly, in the US, Benjamin (2010) recognised the potential for conflict between the "authority of professionals" and "administrative authority" linked to "official positions in a bureaucratic hierarchy" (p.8).

This expectation of tensions in governance suggests a need for ethically guided behaviours to ensure trust and mutual respect are retained between the different leadership groups in a university. It also suggests active participation in decision-making by all leadership groups with a clear understanding and acceptance of the different perspectives and roles of each (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Hénard and Mitterle, 2010, p. 26).

Shared governance in the University

This principle of shared governance makes universities unique as organisations (MCU, 2020; TEQSA, 2021). Indeed, TEQSA (2019a) recognises the "pervasive and critical nature of academic leadership" and that the interplay between these leadership groups is critical for proper functioning of a university. Although emphasising that "failures in the leadership system may have far reaching effects on the quality of education", TEQSA (2019a) clearly views academic leadership as subordinate to the corporate leadership (p.5).

Our contention is that this subordination is likely to undermine academic leadership and lead to domination by the corporate leadership. Indeed, research in Australia supports this claim (Rowlands, 2015; Yeatman, 2018), but the Standards, (TEQSA (2021), appear not to have considered this as a possible risk factor to the effectiveness of universities.

In developing *The Framework,* we aimed to understand the reality of the interaction between academic and corporate forms of governance and how this power imbalance impacts on the ability of academics to do their work.

Origins of the Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics

In late 2019, the *Australian Association of University Professors* (AAUP) was formed primarily to articulate and defend the fundamental independence and social purpose of the University. The AAUP Council developed the "Ten Pillars of a University" to articulate the foundations upon which a university should be based. This was followed in 2021, with the establishment of a working party to develop a *Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics* (*The Framework*). The authors of this paper were members of that working party. Our aim was to better articulate the fundamentals of the academic role so they could be recognised, communicated, resourced and better protected in the context of the managerial university.

In developing *The Framework*, we synthesised evidence from a wide-range of Australian and international literature related to managerialism, neo-liberalism, university governance, professionalism, academic leadership, academic identity, academic freedom, academic workload and accountability. Although designed for an Australian context, we believe *The Framework* will be of interest to academic colleagues in other countries, as many of the issues are also evident the international literature.

After two years and three iterations, a vote indicated 96% of the AAUP membership supported *The Framework* and it was published on the AAUP website in July 2022. This paper is designed to introduce *The Framework* to a wider audience, explain its significance and seek feedback from a broader range of academic colleagues.

The structure of The Framework

The structure of *The Framework* was based on a study by Ferman (2011), who drew on Freidson's (1999) theory of professionalism, which describes professionals as entrusted by society to act with a

high degree of integrity and autonomy. Ferman's (2011) case study involved the development of a theoretically and empirically informed framework based on data generated in interviews and focus groups involving 20 academics from two Australian universities.

In defining Academia as a profession, she argued that an ethical dimension to the work arises naturally. This leads to a set of common values such as autonomy, altruism, service, integrity, honesty, collegiality. These imply certain "ethical practices" which all members of the profession are expected to follow and which outline "what is considered by society or by a profession to be right or wrong" (p.54).

With the above discussion of shared governance and the importance of academic leadership in mind, we revised and generalised Ferman's original themes to include leadership as one of four interrelated themes below:

1. *Academics as leaders*
2. *The professional nature of academic work*
3. *The scholarly nature of academic work; and*
4. *Working conditions required to support academic work.*

In the remainder of the paper, we consider these themes in more detail. For each, we identify possible tensions and contradictions from the literature and explore how *The Framework* might help to deal with them, without sacrificing the fundamentals underpinning the academic role.

Theme 1: Academics as leaders

If shared governance and academic freedom are inherent features of a university and tensions are to be expected (Benjamin, 2020), particular attention must be paid to how academics and management interact as joint decision-makers (Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Hénard and Mitterle, 2010). TEQSA (2023) expects the corporate governing body (the University Council), acting through the Vice-Chancellor (VC) and senior executive, to "develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of intellectual inquiry is upheld and protected, students and staff are treated equitably, the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered…" (p.14). The Standards also require that processes and structures are established to "achieve effective academic oversight" of the quality of teaching and learning, research and research training, and to enable "academic leadership" to "provide competent advice" on "academic matters" (TEQSA 2021, p.15).

While the Standards stipulate students should "have opportunities to participate in the deliberative and decision-making processes of the higher education provider" (p. 16), there is no such stipulation for the academic staff. Presumably this is expected to occur under the existing academic governance structures, based on the establishment of an Academic Board (also commonly known as Academic Senate). For TEQSA (2019a), academic leadership focuses primarily on "academic matters" including teaching, learning, research, scholarship and related matters, but is considered "a subset of the overall institutional or corporate leadership" (p.1). Unfortunately, this implies a sub-ordinate role for academic leaders. So, it appears TEQSA (2019b) did not foresee, and has not considered, the possibility of the corporate leadership dominating the academic leadership nor the associated risks.

Research indicates, however, that through their control over key financial, strategic and management decisions, the vice-chancellor and the executive management team "dominate academic board meetings" (Rowlands, 2015, p.1024; Yielder & Codling, 2004). Thus, Rowlands (2013) argues the key body for academic leadership in Australian universities, the Academic Board (or Senate), has been reduced to a "substantially symbolic," role largely serving to fabricate versions

of the truth "aimed at external quality assurance agencies" and to legitimise decisions by senior managers by providing a source of apparent academic credibility (p.154). This enables a sub-ordinate form of collegial governance to continue, where actual power is exercised by "management rather than by the professor," as in more traditional universities (Rowlands, 2015, p.1018; Yeatman, 2018).

Bolden Petrov and Gosling (2009) called for a deeper understanding of how leadership should be exercised in Higher Education institutions, particularly through "an appreciation of the dynamics of power and influence within and beyond institutions" (p.272). Yielder and Codling (2004) also argued that many of the problems faced by universities relate to governance structures which invest primacy of authority and status in corporate leadership, warning that "if managers do not value and incorporate the expertise of their academic leaders within their management practices" overall leadership "will not be effective" (p.321).

TEQSA (2019b) takes a risk management approach to monitoring adherence to the *Higher Education Standards* (the Standards), so this research, suggesting a link between the domination of corporate leadership and reduced effectiveness of universities, should be of major concern to TEQSA and other stakeholders in Higher Education.

Typically, an Academic Board (Senate) consists of a mix of ex-officio members, usually academics appointed to formal positions in the hierarchy (e.g., Deans of a Faculty, or Heads of School) and elected representatives from the broader academic staff and student bodies.

Harman (2003) noted that, in the 20 years between 1977 and 1997, positions such as Dean and Head of School changed from elected to appointed positions, and gradually came to be regarded as "members of senior management." Harman (2003) also noted a shift in their attitudes and perspectives on key issues, such as national higher education policy and "institutional governance and management," from alignment with their colleagues to closer alignment with the views of "senior management" (p.65).

Harman (2003) noted increasing "gulfs developing between Deans and Heads on the one hand, and their colleagues on the other" (p.69) and thought this might be explained by their having access to more information than their colleagues. While plausible, this view is also naïve, as it does not consider the influence of other factors, such as power. Brenneis et al. (2005) described how power associated with the "audit culture" can change what counts as scholarly work, through a process of "normative compliance."

Indeed, Rowlands' (2015) observations, published twelve years later, that both ex-officio and elected academic members of Academic Boards seemed to be "aware and accepting" of a loss of academic power in their institutions (p. 1025) presents evidence of an erosion of academic leadership. More recently, Salinas (2023) noted a similar process occurring in the UK.

This underscores our call for an enhanced leadership role for Academia in the shared governance of universities. Bolden Petrov & Gosling (2009) suggested a balance between "devolved" and "emergent leadership", where devolved leadership works top-down through formal leadership roles, emergent leadership operates bottom-up, through more collaborative and informal forms of leadership.

One obvious way to achieve a balance of power is for elected academic leaders to hold majority control of Academic Board (Senate) and for the scope of Academic Boards (Senates) to be expanded beyond quality assurance. The power of Academic Board (Senate) would be significantly enhanced by having the ability: to contribute to strategic goal-setting; to initiate university policy; to critique and modify proposals put forward by executive management; to critique and moderate how

external accountability demands on the university are implemented internally: to participate in appointments to senior positions; and the budgets development and approval process.

Those elected to Academic Board and the Governing Council, would represent and give voice to their professional colleagues and the wider university community and would primarily be accountable to this constituency. Along with the managerial leadership group, they would be jointly responsible for shaping and advancing the academic mission of the university and the maintenance of professional standards.

Role of the Professoriate

The professoriate is one sub-group of the Academy that has undergone considerable loss of influence in the managerial university. Macfarlane (2011) pointed to a mismatch between the expectations professors have of themselves and what they perceive the university wants from them. Where professors see their role primarily as leaders in their fields, as researchers and mentors, they perceive their universities mainly value their ability to bring in external funds.

Evans (2017) called on universities to provide more clarity around the leadership expectations of the Professoriate and more guidance for those taking on these roles, which prompts the question: "What role should the Professoriate, as an experienced and prestigious sub-group of the professional academic body, play in the academic leadership structure of a university?"

Some universities have developed statements intended to clarify the professorial role, but these documents tend outline a long and unrealistic list of expectations of professors, as individuals, and say little about how they should contribute to academic leadership of the university as a professional group. Further, as many in the professoriate also hold formal leadership roles within the institutional hierarchy, there is no guidance how to deal potential tensions between their institutional role and their academic leadership role. Additionally, as universities struggle to meet diversity obligations, extra burdens can fall on individuals such as women or indigenous professors.

Also, given the observations by Harman (2003) noted earlier, we lament the growing practice, in Australian universities, of awarding the title "Professor" to individuals who take up a position in the management hierarchy, without demonstrating a sufficiently distinguished academic record to justify this title (PUA, 2023). In our view, this practice diminishes the eminence associated with the title and tips the balance of power further towards managerial control, and we urge universities to find alternative titles for these individuals.

In summary, while high level policy documents identify autonomy and shared governance as key elements of universities, in the managerial university in Australia executive management tends to dominate. This presents a serious risk to the effectiveness of universities.

By contrast, *The Framework* identifies a need for a strong academic voice in decision-making. This challenges TEQSA and university management to work with Academia so that governance structures ensure a balance of power between academic and managerial (corporate) leadership. It also challenges academic leaders to take joint responsibility for strategic decision-making and a commensurate share of responsibility for the effective functioning of their university, while also ensuring academic standards are maintained.

Further research is needed into effective governance structures and processes in universities which can deal with these tensions; how the professoriate should specifically contribute to the academic leadership; and how this should relate to the Academic Board (Senate)?

A closer look at the impact of systemic change on university and academic autonomy

Since 1990, Australian government funding for universities, as a proportion of operating costs, has been reduced to the point where universities rely heavily on cross-subsidisation and entrepreneurial activities to operate (Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021; Macfarlane, 2012). The autonomy of universities has been reduced by increasing use of tied-funding, external accountability and productivity measures (Blackmore, 2020; Brenneis et al., 2005; Sutton, 2017; Yielder & Codling, 2004). The fragility of this business model was exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic when Australian universities suffered an estimated loss of 10.4% in operating revenue over 2020-21 and led to the shedding of thousands of jobs (Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021; Universities Australia, 2021).

Between 1997 and 2018 in Australian Universities, the emphasis on "competition and performance-based accountability" led to a greater "proportion of senior and middle management" in an attempt "to strengthen their institutional leadership at various organizational levels" (Croucher & Woelert, 2021, p.13). While creating more opportunities for students, these changes have directly impacted on the work-life balance and careers of many academics through the massification and internationalisation of tertiary education (Lyons & Ingersoll, 2010). Increased technology-based blended learning and a more culturally diverse student cohort have required the development of more inclusive pedagogical approaches that are more challenging and more time consuming to implement (Kenny & Fluck, 2017).

Commodification, massification and internationalisation led to increased casualisation of the academic workforce and work intensification, which have further undermined the autonomous and scholarly aspects of academic work (Blackmore 2020; Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021; Ryan et al., 2013; Roberts, 2013; Sutton, 2017; Yielder & Codling, 2004). There is also evidence of a greater administrative burden falling on academic staff (Blackmore, 2020; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Hornibrook, 2012; Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b).

Within the managerial university, Smyth (2017) claims academic work has been "hollowed out", "through a process of 'identity theft,' severely undermining and impugning notions of collegiality and collaboration that are indigenous to academic work" (p.18-19). Sutton (2017) describes universities as "dominated by the measurement of process…(where) (t)he normative has been displaced by the performative" (p.626). While university management focuses on efficient production of research and/or knowledge to feed industry, performativity has come to override "the moral purpose… central to academic labour" (p.627) and the notion of scholarship has become circumscribed to effectively act as a constraint on the research agenda.

In this environment, Sutton (2017) argued, "the soul of academic labour…has been lost", as "academic values and commitments are replaced by contractual duties" and the "collegial academic subject is being displaced by the individual neo-liberal subject acting to maximize their economic value" (p.629).

In the UK, Kidd, et al. (2021) described how the "impact agenda" has come to corrupt "academic virtues" of curiosity, honesty, sincerity and truthfulness through the infiltration of perverse incentives, structural constraints and the promotion of practices that weaken or penalise "social norms" in Academia. In practice, this undermining takes subtle forms, such as inflated or exaggerated claims of impact to win grants, or "disguising…the essential character of one's research projects and also feigning certain motivations" (p.161).

Kidd, et al. (2021) feared the "implications for the place of academic knowledge as it relates to democratic deliberation, civic and social life and human inquiry" (p. 163). Similarly, Henkel (2005) noted "profound epistemological, structural and cultural changes…have challenged the assumptions underpinning the working of academic systems" (p.97).

Where traditionally the major influences on "academic identity" were the disciplines, with a lesser contribution from their institution, these systemic changes have increased the influence of institutions over how academics work (Henkel, 2005). Corporatised performance systems that reward individual performance over the collective can infect motivations for collegiality (Macfarlane, 2017) and give oxygen to the "ontological heart of neoliberalism" (Roberts, 2013, p.40). Self-interest comes to overshadow the higher purpose in academia. Productivity must be measurable as a proxy for quality (Ball, 2012) and many important scholarly contributions are devalued. This impacts how individuals see themselves as academics (Billot, 2010; Jolly, 2005; Kenny, 2017; Kwok, 2013; Sutton 2017; Yeatman, 2018). Roberts (2013) predicts "a dystopian future for the academy" (p.39).

There is growing evidence across the globe of these perverse and counterproductive effects in many disciplines and the undermining of the previously taken-for-granted fundamentals of academic work (Archer, 2008; Ball, 2012; Brenneis et al., 2005; Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Houston et al. 2006; Huber, 2005; Kidd, Chubb & Fortenzer, 2021; Jolly, 2005; Kenny, 2017; MacDonald, 2023; Macfarlane, 2017; Roberts, 2013; Salinas, 2023; Sutton 2017). Roberts (2013) claims countering these "dominant trends will be extraordinarily difficult and will require a long-term perspective" (p.41).

Reclaiming academic autonomy

In the past, individual academics were protected by tenure and significant prestige and control over the research agenda by the Academy (Benjamin, 2010; Gerber, 2010; Henkel, 2005). In the corporatised university, however, these protections no longer apply. If, as Sutton (2017) conceded, the "measured university" is here to stay, and university governance and accountability arrangements undermine the principles of academic work, something is fundamentally wrong.

What is needed are new protective mechanisms to shield individual academics from the perverse and unintended impacts of the "hegemony of the 'audit cultures'" whereby governments impose their will "more directly" on Australian universities and which have impacted profoundly on the professional lives of individual academics (Jolly, 2005, p.40).

Barnett (2004) and Williams (2008), along with Sutton (2017, p.633) called for the restoration of "normative measures concerned with moral purpose" and an emphasis on creativity and autonomy as central to academic work. Their call for the re-ignition of academic values at the core of academic work, is needed but insufficient. What is also needed are mechanisms to support the autonomy of academics to act according to academic values, as opposed to being controlled by the fundamentally different values of the audit culture. Acting as individuals, however, academics are largely powerless to resist these systemic changes, and indeed many are seduced or entrapped by them (Jolly, 2005; Roberts, 2013; Shams, 2019; Smyth, 2017).

This literature suggests a re-conceptualisation of the academic role in the modern university is long overdue (Barnett, 2004; Coates & Goedegebuure, 2012; Harman & Treadgold, 2007; Houston et al. 2006; Kenny, 2008a; Roberts, 2023; Smyth, 2017; Sutton, 2017; Williams, 2008; Yielder & Codling, 2004).

Gerber (2010) linked the professionalisation of the Academy to shared-governance and academic freedom, underpinned by tenured employment, which he claimed led to "the emergence of American higher education as the envy of the world." Freidson (1999) linked professionalism to shared values, autonomy and a higher purpose. We argue, therefore that "professionalisation" offers a way to re-empower the Academy in the corporatised university environment. Indeed, Gerber (2010) claimed academic freedom and autonomy are threatened by "deprofessionalization" (p.23).

Theme 2: The professional nature of academic work

Although terms like "the academic profession" occur widely in the literature (see, for example, Benjamin, 2010; Ball, 2012; Barnett & Middlehurst, 1993, Billot, 2010; Henkel, 2005; Jolly, 2005; Sutton, 2017), it remains a contested and under explored idea. Indeed, Williams suggested it is largely an assumed notion as there may be "no single professional academic group" (p. 539).

We claim that this lack of clarity around their professional status has severely reduced the ability of the Academy to unite, and left individuals exposed to managerial demands, which directly challenge fundamental notions about their work, such as academic freedom and autonomy (Billot, 2010; Henkel, 2005; Jolly, 2005; Yeatman, 2018). Moreover, this lack of clarity has been evident for a long time. In 1993, in the UK, Barnett and Middlehurst (1993) lamented the lack of effort by academics to define what their work entailed:

> If the professionalism of academics has come under attack, …and if that attack has succeeded, to what extent is this outcome the result of a failure of academics to explicitly define their professionalism? (p.127).

Further, echoing comments by Brenneis et al., (2005), Rowlands (2015) and Harman (2003), Smyth (2017, p.19), maintained many academics have "become complicit and compliant in constructing a culture that is toxic to the very nature of their critical and inquiring being."

In summary, this research spanning a period of 30 years, has noted a serious deterioration in the working lives of academics driven by managerialism and the audit culture, and they place much of the responsibility for this situation at the feet of the Academy itself.

We add that this deterioration has coincided with a lack of clarity around the notion of academics as professionals and leaders. Indeed, as a colleague cited by Huber (2005) warned, if academics "don't take charge of their own affairs, someone else will" (p.53). That "someone else" has predictably turned out to be governments and university management.

Shaping academia as a Profession

The above discussion raises the question *How do we envisage the academic profession?* Yeatman (2018) argued that the subordination of professionalism to managerialism leads to "profound compromise" with increasing reliance on "over-worked", "stressed" and under resourced and casualised practitioners (p.213). It separates the "ethic of professionalism from professional work," valuing only the instrumentalist aspects of expertise where corporate objectives replace professional purpose (p.213). The subordination of professionalism, as described above by Yeatman (2018) is consistent with the earlier discussion on the loss of power of the Academy in universities.

Freidson (1999) claims the notion of "professionalism" arises naturally in relation to any form of work which has a higher moral purpose and exists in connection with the "ideology of service" and trust (p.127). He identified the "ideal" characteristics of professionalism as: control of the work by the profession, arising from "officially recognized body of knowledge and skill" (or expertise), based on "abstract, theoretical knowledge" which requires "the exercise of discretion" and "an occupationally controlled training program that is associated with a university" (p.118). Further, the commitment "to some transcendent values…(which) can be invoked to justify a stance that is independent of, even opposed to, the demands of a particular political regime or client" (p.127). These "constants" of professionalism interact with other "contingent" variables, such as

organisational and governmental policies and "the dominant ideologies of the time and place," to shape a profession in practice.

Freidson's model fits well with the ideal of Academia serving the greater good but, he points out "(o)nly the state has the power to establish and maintain professionalism" (p.123). However, because no two states are the same, and they "change over time", this affects how a profession functions in a given context, where context refers to the "exercise of political and economic power" which determine the "degree of professionalism" (Freidson, 1999, p.120-122).

Yeatman (2018) claimed a profession should publicly articulate the public good for which it is responsible, assume "stewardship of this good" and become a "trustee for this good" (p.206). She added "no one is placed better than professionals themselves to reclaim professionalism and its importance" (pp. 213-4).

Consistent with Freidson (1999), numerous other researchers have pointed to limitations on the ideal of professionalism in Academia. It is claimed that Academic Freedom has always had to be moderated to suit "the ideological agendas of state, managerial and even intra-professional hierarchies" (Barnett, 2004, Henkel, 2010 Tierney, 2001; Williams, 2008, p.535). Similarly, both Benjamin (2010) in the US and Henkel (2005) in the UK argued the ability of academics to exercise academic freedom has never been equal. In particular, those individuals with "lesser reputations" or working in areas not easily applicable to "commercial exploitation" often must adapt their research agendas to suit external demands.

So, in arguing for Academia as a profession we need also to determine the "degree of professionalism" academics need to perform their role as described and recognise this as being contingent upon political and economic support within the sector.

The Framework as a protective umbrella for Academia

There is a body of literature on "academic identity" (e.g., Billot 2010; Henkel, 2005; Neame, 2016) which considers how individual academics have responded to these systemic changes over time. This literature suggests that, as individuals develop their careers as teachers, researchers and/or leaders, a plurality of identities has emerged. Our contention is that what this body of literature has revealed is the coping strategies individuals have adopted to deal with the reality of the managerial university (Shams, 2019), where conformity becomes "a matter of survival" (Roberts 2013, p.40).

This need to adapt has been exacerbated, in our view, by the loss of traditional protections academia enjoyed (e.g., tenure, prestige, control of the research agenda). As individuals, academics have been largely powerless to prevent the erosion of the fundamentals that underpin their work, such as academic freedom and autonomy (Henkel, 2005; Huber, 2005; Jolly, 2005). So, with no clear guidance at the level of the profession, individuals have been left to argue with more powerful university management for the fundamental aspects of their role and/or accept, adapt to, or resist mandated productivity requirements, with increasingly detrimental consequences for their careers and/or welfare, (Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b; Papadopoulos, 2017; Shams, 2019).

By contrast, we claim the professional conception of Academia put forward in *The Framework*, offers an overarching protective umbrella with which the Academy can identify and around which it can unify as a professional group. The collective strength afforded to these, as claims of the profession, as opposed to individuals, can potentially replace the traditional protections which have been lost in the managerial university and at the same time, provide greater equity for the significantly different academic cohort in the corporatised university of today. It does this in several ways. Firstly, by providing a statement of common professional values that underpin the role.

Secondly, by providing a common language to discuss and communicate about the academic role. Thirdly, by confirming scholarship, which links directly to fundamentals of academic freedom and autonomy, as the unifying and distinguishing feature of academics as professionals. Fourthly, by confirming these fundamentals as applicable to <u>all</u> academics, by virtue of their membership of the Academic Profession, regardless of level of experience or employment situation, and across their professional career, from research student to professor.

By endorsing *The Framework* and acting as a profession group, the Academy will have greater power to promote and protect the fundamentals of their work and, consequently, individual academics will be better placed to concentrate on shaping their individual academic identities. Professionalisation also supports the development of normative standards within their discipline or field, determined by a consensus of their colleagues, not managerial, economic nor government audit criteria.

This level of professional protection and guidance is particularly important for younger and more vulnerable academics, whose experience is totally embedded in the managerial university. Currently in the face of contradictory messaging and the imposition of inappropriate metrics, they have little guidance on how to assert their claims for autonomy and academic freedom. They are especially vulnerable to coercion while on probation and short-term contracts, as they develop their professional identity. Confusion may result if these fundamentals are challenged by senior colleagues in managerial roles (Archer, 2008).

Where might the limits be on academic professionalism?
Freisdon's work suggests achieving the ideal of professionalism is unlikely and compromise will need to be struck in establishing the degree of professionalism necessary, but it is important to articulate the ideal to be able to identify at what point deviations from this in practice begin to undermine the profession and become counterproductive.

For example, typically in Australia, the design and conduct of teaching is required to fit within the constraints of institutional quality assurance frameworks, software templates, online learning and conferencing platforms and accreditation processes. From a professional academic point of view, at what point should autonomy and academic freedom in teaching be asserted?

We claim that decisions on the choice of content, the pedagogical approach and assessment should be made by the subject matter experts leading a unit or course. Although, even here, the ability to exercise autonomy would not be equitable across the profession, as casualised and non-permanent teaching academics have little security and would be unlikely to raise concerns.

Similarly, in research and scholarship, while freedom of inquiry is central to academic work, many academics make a pragmatic decision to adapt their research agenda to suit the priorities of their university and external funding bodies. Again, what are to be the limits beyond which professional autonomy in research should be non-negotiable? These limits need to address not only the obvious examples of political or bureaucratic interference in the research process (Francis & Sims, 2022; Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021; SIFAC, 2022), but also more subtle or implied interference in the selection process for research funding and/or the inquiry process itself (Kidd et al., 2021). In Australia, government priorities require funding bodies to favour applied research over pure, so certain disciplines, perceived as more directly relevant for national development or to meet industry needs, are favoured (ARC, 2022; DESE, 2022, Jayasuriya & McCarthy, 2021).

From a professional academic point of view, however, the systemic undervaluing of pure research can have potential long-term repercussions and undermine the development of new lines

of inquiry (Rowlands, 2015). Further, it does not follow that research in other disciplines is not also beneficial to society. The broader contributions to society through areas such as the arts and social sciences can be justified according to criteria other than economic value or their ability to attract funding (Smolentseva, 2022).

Across the system, there also must be scope for creative endeavours, where academics can choose to undertake pure research or open-inquiry, funded or unfunded, where they decide "which bodies of knowledge are worth furthering through research and scholarship" (Kidd et al., p.151). Arguably, aside from certain exceptional cases (e.g., national security related projects), academics should in principle be free to share their findings with other academics and/or the broader community. There should be no outside interference in the research process by powerful interests, be they governmental, commercial or managerial. This includes attempts to suppress findings or manipulate data and/or conclusions.

In summary, therefore, the professional theme of *The Framework* aims to address the long-standing need to articulate and protect the fundamentals that underpin Academia as a profession and how they fit into the power structures of the modern university. While there have always been practical and contextual limitations on academic freedom and autonomy in practice, we need to be able to establish the limits beyond which academic work will be compromised. *The Framework* articulates the fundamental professional and ethical underpinnings of academic work as non-negotiables and around which all academics can unite. It provides an ethical rationale for why these professional obligations on academics would override allegiances to any organisation, university, ideology, commercial entity or self-interest.

However, *The Framework* also enables the communication of this professional conception of Academia so it can be understood and accepted by non-academic stakeholders in higher education. This is a necessary outcome if the reputation of universities and the integrity of their research and teaching are to be protected and adequately resourced (Freidson, 1999).

Theme 3: The scholarly nature of Academic work

In *Scholarship Reconsidered,* Boyer (1990) recognised that, while "(t)heory surely leads to practice…practice also leads to theory" (p.16). He proposed four overlapping "scholarships" as the basis of academic work: Discovery, Integration, Application, and Teaching:

1. The scholarship of *Discovery* or pure research is the "commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom of inquiry…wherever it may lead" (p.17).
2. The scholarship of *Integration* involves "making connections across disciplines, placing specialties in larger contexts" to better understand some of the "pressing human problems" (p.21). It resonates with collaborative research of today.
3. The scholarship of *Application* relates not only to the application of knowledge to society, but also to what can be learnt from this. *Application* encompasses the notion of "service", which, to Boyer, refers to activities that are rigorous, related to one's special field of specialisation "and flow directly out of this professional activity" (p.22). He noted these important activities generate new understandings as "theory and practice vitally interact" (p.23).

4. Finally, for Boyer (1990), *Teaching* as a scholarship not only ensures the "continuity of knowledge", but also deepens our understanding of relevant pedagogies and the learning process itself. He considered *Teaching* to be the most important of the four scholarships.

Being scholarly means academic expertise is based on a deep understanding of what is known in a field (or fields). Further, this knowledge is based on rigorous methodological and evidential processes, along with an openness to critique by peers to advance understanding in the field.

This work suggests an expectation to be scholarly is what distinguishes academic work from other professions and unifies its members as a professional group. This expectation applies regardless of the field of expertise and encompasses whatever mix of research (pure or applied), teaching and/or services duties in which an individual may be engaged.

While the degree of emphasis placed on the research, teaching and service will vary between individuals according to their field of expertise, career stage, experience and local priorities, across the sector and the profession, all four scholarships must be supported and evident to bring "legitimacy to the full scope of academic work" (Boyer, 1990, p.16). Thus, in *The Framework*, pure and applied research, teaching, integration and engagement in service of their community, profession, discipline or institution all have inherent value, contribute to the advancement of knowledge, help a university to fulfil its intended purpose and are therefore legitimate and important components of academic work.

The Scholarship Theme therefore recognises the centrality of academic freedom and envisages a much broader view of scholarly academic work than has come to be commonplace under the 'audit cultures.' While not disputing that Academia needs to be accountable, judgements about how well an individual is performing should be based on the full range of their scholarly contributions.

This more holistic view of scholarly activity goes far beyond winning competitive grants and would place value on many less prestigious, but equally important, service and engagement contributions of individuals to the advancement of knowledge in their profession, discipline and/or institution (Jolly, 2005; Kenny & Fluck, 2019; 2022a; 2022b).

Together, Themes 1-3 of *The Framework* describe a range of leadership, professional and scholarly aspects of the role which academics may undertake to fulfil their responsibility to society as outlined in top-level policy documents. Acceptance of this as a fundamental principle is crucial. The next step is to ensure the necessary legislative and policy environment is established and resource allocation processes enable the "degree of professionalisation" required (Freidson, 1999).

Theme 4: The working conditions necessary to support professionalisation.

The expectation to serve society through the generation of knowledge, teaching and social critique requires a high degree of trust in universities so society will support their work. In return, academics and universities are expected to repay this trust by adhering to high professional ethical standards.

In the more accountable environment of the modern university, it is necessary to clearly communicate what universities do (Marginson, 2011) and justify to society why they are important and must be supported. Naturally, this leads to a consideration of how the academics, who do the bulk of this work, are to be supported and resourced so that their conditions of employment enable them to work as expected.

The effective management of academic work in universities has been a contentious issue since the 1990s. While supposedly meant to avoid overload and ensure staff welfare (Burgess et al.

2003, Vardi, 2009), in practice, the dominance of managerial demands for efficiency and accountability have intensified academic work. There has been a lack of transparency and consultation in the development and implementation of academic workload policies. In Australia, institutional workload models tend to focus on teaching and some formal service roles and typically ignore or underestimate many other essential scholarly aspects of academic work (Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b). As a result, academic workload policies and practices generally fail to accurately reflect what individual academics do, or the time required to do it (Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b; Lyons & Ingersoll, 2010; O'Meara et al. 2022; Papadopoulos, 2017).

With their control over policy, research workload is generally based on an individual's research output, or productivity, rather than the work required to produce it (Kenny, 2017; Kenny & Fluck, 2018). Managers often pressure individual academics to take on more work due to budget pressures, staff shortages, organisational restructuring and/or unrealistic performance expectations (Kenny, 2017; Papadopoulos, 2017). Consequently, most academics do not see their institutional workload models as equitable, fair or realistic are very dissatisfied with the institutional workload models they have experienced. Despite Enterprise Agreements containing specific clauses designed to limit the demands on academic staff, academic unionism in Australia has been largely ineffectual in protecting academics. Many perceive the primary purpose of their institutional workload model is to enable managers to control the budget and reduce staff costs per student (Lyons and Ingersoll, 2010; Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b; Vardi, 2009)

From our analysis, this is because Enterprise Agreements are based on the notion of productivity trade-offs for employee working conditions. They are not suited to professional work which is based on values and leadership. The loss of tenure and the growth of casualisation has undermined the power of academics to shape internal policy matters that directly affect their work, such as resource allocation, workload and performance policies.

A way forward

Autonomy is recognised as important for the job satisfaction, motivation and commitment of academics to the university (Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Winter & Sarros, 2002). Kenny & Fluck (2022a) have proposed a series of principles to guide the development and implementation of policies that directly affect their work. These principles have been included in *The Framework to* provide "procedural fairness" (Hornibrook, 2012) for academics and in recognition of their ability, as leaders in their universities, to ensure these policies capture their work in a holistic way, fair, equitable and transparent way that is resourced adequately (Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Houston et al. 2006; Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b; O'Meara et al. 2022; Vardi, 2009).

Professionalisation takes this one step further and suggests the development of realistic professional standards of practice, defined by the profession, that cannot be manipulated and which minimise opportunities for exploitation.

In Australia, work towards the development of such professional standards of practice is well underway. Kenny & Fluck (2022a; 2022b) have developed and validated an Academic Workload Estimation Tool (AWET www.awet.edu.au) which enables individual academics to select from a comprehensive list of activities they might undertake in their teaching, research and/or service roles. Each activity has an associated research-based time-value (or allocation).

The AWET is being used by several universities to develop more meaningful workload policies and to provide evidence in support of grievances concerning workload. The Australian Fair Work Commission (FWC) has suggested universities employ a methodology similar to that used in

the AWET. See a recent decision by Commissioner Simpson, FWC (2021), which called for the parties to "gather data to develop workload models based on a median or average time taken to do the work" (p.60).

In *The Framework*, we argue that agreed professional standards for academic tasks will be more equitable and should apply to all academics, including sessional staff, which should help to minimise the incidence of "wage-theft," as reported widely in the Australian media in recent years (see, for example, the Conversation Article of October 2020). Further, we argue this standardised process can also be useful for managers to estimate more realistic costings of academic labour (Vardi, 2009).

Conclusions:

In the more accountable environment of modern higher education, systemic changes enacted through policy and funding mechanisms have significantly impacted the autonomy of universities and the work of academics. In this paper we have been particularly concerned with the impact of these changes on the Academy.

Research shows the independence of universities has been reduced from without by government-imposed accountability mechanisms, while within, corporate style leadership dominates academic leadership. With the loss of traditional protections, such as tenure, casualisation has reduced academic power and enabled managers to challenge fundamentals of the academic role, such as academic freedom and professional autonomy.

As Jolly (2005, pp.8-9) suggests, the "first step" to rectifying the situation "must surely be to be more conscious and critical of what is happening to our profession." (pp.8-9). However, we also note that Academia has been somewhat complicit through its failure, as a professional group, to organise and provide a credible counter narrative (Barnett & Middlehurst, 1993; Smyth, 2017; Yeatman, 2018).

In this paper, we have proposed *The Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics* as a possible counter narrative to the neoliberal ideal of the self-interested academic. *The Framework* can be visualised as an overarching protective umbrella, supported by the collective strength of a profession that: identifies with a common set of values. These values underpin academic leadership and scholarship to provide an overarching professional identity for all academics.

The collective strength of this re-conceptualisation of Academia should provide greater guidance for all academics to better understand their role and ensure individual academics, but especially younger and more vulnerable colleagues, have access to the autonomy and academic freedom that underpins their work. This should enable individuals to better manage the myriad of competing tensions inherent in the modern university context, as they move through their careers from research student to professor and strengthen claims for support and adequate resources to do their work. This professional identity is not reliant on the status, discipline, level of experience or employment status of any individual, so arguably, in the modern context, it provides more equitable protections than those of the past.

The significance of The Framework
While the values of scholarliness, altruism, academic freedom, autonomy and collegiality inherent in *The Framework* are consistent with existing statements of professional of ethics (e.g., American

Association of University Professors (US-AAUP), Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), UK Professional Standards Framework, to our knowledge, it is also unique in several ways.

Firstly, it is premised on shared governance, with a balance of power between the academic and managerial leadership. While clarifying the differences, it emphasises what is non-negotiable and must be protected in relation to the academic role. It challenges academics, as a professional group, to be more engaged in decision-making by electing academic leaders who will apply the values of their profession and represent the broader perspectives of their academic colleagues, the broader university community and their discipline in decision-making to ensure their university serves the wider the social good.

Secondly, it recognises the importance of communicating to non-academic stakeholders, such as university managers, administrative staff, government, students and industry, so they better understand how academics contribute to universities and why their role needs to be supported and adequately resourced. We claim this understanding should lead to more respectful and trustful relations, better decision-making processes and more effective universities.

Thirdly, it challenges university managers and government to recognise the limits beyond which their actions become counterproductive to academic work. It includes examples of practical implications for behaviours in common scenarios as guidance.

Fourthly, *The Framework* explicitly links conditions of employment to the required "degree of professionalisation" (Freidson, 1999) through support for the further development and implementation of research-based professional standards of practice which are controlled by the profession (Kenny & Fluck, 2022a; 2022b). Transparent, holistic, fair and realistic workload is an equity issue (FWC, 2021; O'Meara et al., 2022) that will enhance the agency of individual academics to do their work.

Benjamin (2010) claims that universities will function more effectively if they accept that the quality of academic work "depends on assurance of a delimited, but protected, sphere" in which academics "can conduct their work on the basis of appropriate professional standards" (p.3). He suggests professional standards should be enshrined in "the terms and conditions of their appointments" because, while academics have "ethical responsibilities to their profession and their institutions…only the latter are legally binding" (p.13).

In Australia, this implies *The Framework* should be embedded within Enterprise Bargaining Process for academic staff to ensure recognition of their professional and leadership status, whose role is to provide an autonomous voice as a counterpoint to corporate leadership. This presents a challenge for government, university management and unions to adapt current university employment policies.

While *The Framework* has been developed primarily for an Australian context, we recognise the global nature of these issues and hope it will prove to be useful to international colleagues in shaping the future of higher education more globally and within their own context.

Further research

Based on a synthesis of ideas from an extensive research base, this paper presents a rationale and justification for the claims made in *The Framework* and is intended to promote awareness of, and discussion about, what it offers the academic profession and the higher education sector.

We are seeking feedback on how it might be improved and contribute to better outcomes for both academics and the university sector. Thus, we particularly encourage a broad base of our

academic colleagues, in Australia and internationally, from any discipline and all experience levels, to give constructive feedback.

Ethical approval has been granted from the *University of Tasmanian Human Research Ethics Committee* to explore the impact of *The Framework* from the perspective of different stakeholders in the sector, Project ID: 27180. We encourage all readers to study *The Framework* carefully and/or attend a workshop, as advertised on the AAUP website, complete the online survey and raise awareness of *The Framework* amongst academic colleagues. We will also approach peak academic organisations, such as TEQSA, the union, university management, industry bodies and government to advance this work and present at national and international conferences. Feedback will be used to improve *The Framework* over time.

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