

Collarts Submission to Australian Universities Accord - on Terms of Reference priorities

Dear Australian Universities Accord Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our priorities for the accord panel to consider as you commence your review of the Higher Education Systems in Australia.

Collarts is a family owned, Institute of Higher Education. We focus on courses in the creative industries, supporting around 1,200 students per year to pursue careers in the creative industries. We were founded in 2010 at a small campus in South Melbourne. We now have 6 campuses in Melbourne, and we continue to grow.

We are members of Independent Higher Education Australia's (IHEA) and I currently serve on the board of IHEA. As such, our submission here largely echo's the detailed submission that IHEA is making for your consideration. However, I would like to provide our small to medium, creative industries provider perspective on some of those items.

As outlined by IHEA, our key recommendations for priorities to be explored in the context of the Australian Universities Accord Terms of Reference cover three broad themes.

- 1. Student equity and choice**
- 2. Competitive neutrality**
- 3. Ensuring a cohesive and connected, quality and sustainable tertiary education system**

Our assumptions are that students make good choices of their own volition, and that the independent sector provides choices that the public sector does not. We are able to offer diverse courses including those that might not attract large enough numbers of students for a university to consider viable and we are able to offer courses that are expensive to deliver particularly in the performing arts where we have seen public providers cease to offer many courses in these fields. We are also proud of our QILT (well above the national average) results and our standing with TEQSA showing that we are compliant with the Australian standards. We have been able to achieve these outcomes for students despite not having access to a level playing field in terms of the 3 themes listed above.

Summary of Collarts recommended Accord priorities (these largely echo the submission from IHEA):

1. Amend the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) (2003) to widen Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) to all higher education providers, i.e., delivering education in national priority fields
2. Stop FEE-HELP loan surcharge inequity, which undermines student choice and is both iniquitous and anti-competitive
3. Develop a universal, income-contingent loan scheme with equitable settings for all tertiary students
4. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to develop a Service Obligation Charter that underpins the application of TEQSA's Cost Recovery model and sets out clear time commitments for TEQSA's responsiveness
5. TEQSA's scheduled Cost Recovery three-year transition for annual levies to be adapted and extended to a five-year phased transition
6. TEQSA and Australian Skills and Quality Agency (ASQA) to place greater effort on aligned self-assurance where possible
7. Competitive access to Government funding to ensure that funding eligibility, including access to equity funds is driven by quality criteria rather than provider type
10. Abolition of student visa fees to; re-energise Australia's international education market, remove barriers to entrance, and advance a narrative of welcome to international students post-pandemic impacts

Regards



Dr. Ben O'Hara
Managing Director
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