

Submission to the Australian Universities Accord

Response to the Discussion Paper on The Australian Universities Accord

By the Australian Association of University Professors

AAUP Council Email: aaup_council@aaupmember.org

Website: [website: https://www.professariate.org](https://www.professariate.org)

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* **Mangers:** These include academics in management roles

Executive Summary

We, the Australian Association of University Professors (AAUP), are an association of professors from across universities, and serve as a policy forum and advocacy group for improved university governance in Australia.

The core national functions of universities are: to create knowledge; to disseminate knowledge through advanced teaching; and to establish a deep reservoir of expertise that the Nation can draw upon.

Delivery of these functions relies on implementing the core academic values of: rigor in expertise; commitment to advancing and promulgating knowledge; collegiality; freedom of speech; robust intellectual discourse; freedom of academic research; and truth in all academic work. The national interest, public good, and reputation and export value of Australian universities has been built upon - and is critically dependent on - universities working in accordance with these seven core academic values.

Unfortunately, university managements are increasingly disconnected from and unaccountable to academic values and academic communities. Students, Government, industry and granting bodies, pay universities to deliver services according to academic values, but academics are impeded from working in accordance with academic values by interfering management. Further, the managers themselves do not work in accordance with academic values. Therefore, the question must be asked: if, by breaching those values, do university managements now defraud paying stakeholders and the wider public?

This breach by management undermines the function, reputation and value of Australian universities. Current university managements are comfortably unaccountable, to the extent that they publicly ignore empirical facts, make obvious lies, and engage in unscrupulous authoritarian practices to enforce their wishes and silence opposition.

There are a number of recent examples of this that have received extensive publicity. There are many more that have not received significant or indeed any attention at all, including for example: a dean who acquired his position by pretending to have a PhD and who in consequence has significantly damaged his School through untrained decision making; many instances of staff and student abuse; and further instances of potential corruption.

Managers of Australian universities set the shocking example to students and junior academics, that advancement is achieved by deception and cozying to brute authority, and that reasoned democratic opposition will be punished. University management now fails 'the pub test', such that an informed public would and should be outraged.

The value of universities as training grounds for democratic participation, by being open fora for free speech and the exploration of potentially unpopular ideas, is being lost. An earlier Federal Report articulated the importance of critical free speech in universities, to ensure the Nation does not slip into self-deception (see box below) [1]. The spirit of that report is now forgotten, and increasingly authoritarian university managements dissociated from academic values, now undermine the work of academics and put the Nation at significant democratic risk.

The lack of accountability relative to academic values of university managers, and the damage they inflict because of this, is the core problem that AAUP points the Accord towards.

Only Government can restore accountability of university managements, and AAUP makes six discrete recommendations for this, and also suggests a road-map for sustainable implementation (Section 4, Pages 13 to 16).

We warn the Government that the current composition of the Accord panel is excessively loaded with representatives of the very same managements that we describe as the source of the most acute problems. Actual teaching and research academics are not represented, and the AAUP recommends itself for inclusion to address this deficiency.

In addition, we provide brief responses to the specific questions posed in the Accord Discussion paper (Section 6, Pages 19 to 35), but include some further 'questions' and 'answers', that have been missed (Section 5, Pages 17 to 18).

The defense of the idea that the University must be understood as a moral institution if it wants to make credible contributions to the pragmatic needs of the day was spelled out clearly in what can be viewed as a founding document of the university sector in Australia, the [1957 Murray Report](#) published by the Federal Government [1]. An extract is as follows:

'Here is one of the most valuable services which a university, as an independent community of scholars and inquirers, can perform for its country and for the world. The public, and even statesmen, are human enough to be restive or angry from time to time, when perhaps at inconvenient moments the scientist or scholar uses the license which the academic freedom of universities allows [her/him], and brings us all back to a consideration of the true evidence and what it may be taken to prove ... No nation in its senses wishes to make itself prone to self-delusion, or to deceit by other nations; and a good university is the best guarantee that mankind can have that somebody, whatever the circumstances, will continue to seek the truth and to make it known. Any free country welcomes this and expects this service of its universities.'

Importantly, as the University is expected to play a prominent role in innovation, Government also has to recognize that drawing economic value from the University will fail if academic values are eroded and a costly bureaucracy steps between the intent of Government and those who factually deliver the outcomes. Unchecked senior management is 'human enough' to distort and subvert the purpose of the University.

Descriptions of:

1) The AAUP

2) The Structure of This Document

**3) The Main Difficulty Facing Australian Universities -
Governance Disconnected from Academic Values**

1. What is the Australian Association of University Professors?

The Australian Association of University Professors ([website: https://www.professoriate.org](https://www.professoriate.org)), is a think-tank and advocacy group for improved governance and function of Australian universities, with a membership of professors, being the highest, most accomplished, and most experienced rank of academics.

2. Structure of This Document

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the Accord discussion paper. However, we feel that the discussion paper doesn't fully address what we believe to be the matters of most concern in Australian universities, and for that reason the first part of this document outlines those aspects.

Recognizing that the feedback is asked for in the form of 49 questions posed in the Accord discussion paper, we suggest some questions and answers that we feel should be included.

We then provide brief responses to the 49 questions posed in the discussion paper.

3. The Main Difficulty Facing Australian Universities: Governance Disconnected From Academic Values

3.1. Governance Structures are Disconnected From the Academic Mission and Academic Values

At present, the governing bodies of most if not all universities, including: 'councils' or 'senates' (depending on the specific university involved); vice-chancellors; deans and other senior management staff, are not fully, or even substantially, accountable to the university collegiate, students or the broader community that universities serve.

The most senior governing bodies (councils or senates) of Australian universities have a significant over-representation of corporate and/or political appointees, to the extent that the very small numbers of actual academics present have insufficient representation to insist on governance aligned with academic concerns and values.

In the not-too-distant past, senior managerial appointments at dean, head of school and vice-chancellor levels were selected from amongst the most able of senior academics who had gained the trust of their colleagues by life-long demonstration of adherence to academic values. More recently, perhaps in response to the increasing size and complexity of universities, selection has increasingly involved people with managerial as opposed to academic expertise, with the effect that university management is inadequately informed by actual training and experience in the fundamentals of university work.

While corporate managerial practice seems premised on an expectation of obedient implementation of management instructions, academics similarly have a foundational duty to exercise critical reasoned inquiry about the basis for such instructions. The clash of an authoritarian management culture with that of academics committed to reasoned argument based on empirical facts, generates unhelpful and unhealthy institutional disharmony and undermines the academic mission.

We propose as a solution, the incorporation of a set of seven core academic values across all core university functions.

3.2. Core University Functions are Supported by Core Academic Values

The core functions of universities are to:

- create new knowledge through research and scholarship;
- disseminate knowledge through advanced teaching;
- and to comprise and maintain a reservoir of deep expertise, to support all facets of society as a trusted source of expert, independent and honest advice.

Core academic values have evolved to underpin the delivery of these core functions, and for this reason they must be inherent to the way universities are structured, governed and operate. Failing to implement and support any of these values renders proper service of a university impossible. These values are:

- rigor in expertise;
- commitment to advancing and promulgating knowledge;
- collegiality;
- freedom of speech;
- robust intellectual discourse;
- freedom of academic research;
- and truth in all academic works.

3.3. Managers in Universities Seem Not to Understand That The High-Level Expertise of Academics is Unique for Each Academic Discipline Area, and Requires Academic Freedom for Proper Development

Academics must strive toward the highest level of expertise, and to such end it is important that research is unencumbered, free and independent, and be tested by robust collegial debate as well as the enquiring fresh perspectives of students. The skills and sensitivities needed to achieve suitably high expertise in any academic area are idiosyncratic to each discipline. It is self-evident that the training of architects, doctors, dentists, engineers, musicians, lawyers, historians, economists, and all other graduate professions, must of necessity develop different specialized abilities. University academics who have mastered their discrete disciplines understand what is required to achieve such mastery, and achieve promotion by continuing to develop those unique skills through the entirety of their careers. It is logical to trust the expertise of academics with regard to how best to conduct research and teaching in their discipline areas.

For these reasons, delivery of expert university services demands a high level of autonomy for, and trust placed upon, academics in both teaching and research, a concept broadly captured by the term 'academic freedom' [2]. Unfortunately, this seems often not understood by university managers, including sometimes managers drawn from academic ranks, who often interfere with the way academics teach or conduct research, and who also often seek to effect efficiencies by combining or entirely dissolving academic disciplines, without appreciating that such actions undermine the effectiveness of the university to conduct the high-level teaching and research inherent to each discipline area. Such uninformed managerial interference with academic freedom, undermines the capacity of academics to do their work properly.

3.4. Academic Freedom and Collegial Academic Decision Making Are Replaced with Authoritarian Determinations

AAUP observes that many universities currently subjugate necessary academic freedom in favour of managerial methods that may be effective outside of universities, but that fail to properly support the academic enterprise.

We see from the reported actions of senior management in Australian universities that management considers itself to comprise the university-writ-large, with academic staff and students treated as somehow outside the university and/or subordinate to management.

As outlined above, we advise that collegial and inherently democratic processes are necessary to maintain the integrity of Australia's universities, and this must be reflected in their organization and governance. It is remarkable that about two thirds of management positions in universities are now occupied by people without higher education sector experience [3]. In the absence of experience working as academics or of an understanding of academic values, the management of universities is increasingly inconsistent with academic values. Collegial decision making is given mostly lip-service, rather than being the mechanism whereby informed and effective university governance is achieved.

As their mission consequently drifts from public service to corporate-style interests, university research and educational standards are also in rapid decline. We observe inappropriately high salaries for senior management and university executives relative to international standards, as well as a lack of internal and public accountability. This includes the misuse of corporate human resources practices, such as the application of 'gag clauses' to academics, and failure to defend academic freedom on campus. There are no

processes through which management can be effectively challenged or held to account for abuse or poor decision making.

3.5. Examples of Egregious, Destructive Authoritarianism and Managerialism in Universities, and Refusal of the NSW ICAC to Investigate Potentially Corrupt Acts

We see frequent egregious authoritarian managerial excesses, that mock reasoned argument based on empirical facts, but impose managerial will through abuse of internal processes and in defiance of academic values. Some of these reach public attention [4-8], but most do not and we provide just a few examples.

3.5.a. A Dean Who Falsified His Job Application With a False Claim of Qualifications, Who Has Damaged Teaching in a Clinical School and Endangered Public Health, But Who is Protected by Management

For example, a dean got his job by falsifying his job application pretending to have a PhD, and although the university's senior management has been fully informed by a whistleblower who discovered the deception [9], the dean remains in post and the whistleblower has been abused and expelled. There has been significant damage to the clinical school and clinical training for which the dean is responsible, and the effect of this is to endanger the public. Evident facts appear less important to Management, than covering management's mistake in making the appointment.

We are unable to find any other context where it is acceptable for a job application to contain a false claim about the attainment of an essential advertised qualification. That there may have been breach of immigration laws, by award of a working visa based on a false declaration, seems also unimportant to the University's management. The numerous complaints by staff, students and alumni of degraded education in the School administered by the dean involved, have been trivialized and effectively ignored by the higher university management, with consequent degradation of the function of the School. The public is endangered by reduced quality of clinical training. That is a shocking disservice to the Nation.

The tolerance and support given the dean by management, coupled with the professional injury inflicted on the whistleblower by both the dean and higher management, have spread and entrenched fear and intimidation within the School.

3.5.b. An Instance of Management Abuse Protected by Procedure

Academic staff, especially those who voice their concerns on miss-management, malpractice and potential corruption, are routinely subject to gas lighting, bullying, harassment, discrimination and unfair dismissal, subject to the significant power imbalance of authoritarian management supported by seemingly unlimited human resources and legal support. In-house legal teams and external consultants do impose significant cost on universities, but are well funded because they underpin the egregious management we describe. More constructive expenditure would be on education and research.

Whistleblowers and other victims of management abuse, have no protection and their careers, well-being and lives are sabotaged in a highly unprofessional and certainly unacceptable way. The following is typical. There is a case in a Go8 university where a perpetrator of managerial abuse has been found guilty of bullying and discrimination by one of the University's paid independent investigators. However, the university's management later secretly overturned that investigators findings in a second investigation, using an ex-employee who previously worked as a lawyer in the university's office of general council. In the second investigation, the victim who belongs to a culturally and linguistically diverse group, was not informed or interviewed by the second investigator, but the perpetrating manager was permitted to be involved in overturning the original findings. It is reasonable to have doubt on the probity of such proceedings and the decisions that they come to. Clearly, the university management involved condoned

and supported bullying and discrimination in this instance, and was prepared to pay significant monies covering-up the truth and promoting an ongoing toxic work culture. _

3.5.c. Refusal of the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption to Investigate Potentially Corrupt Acts by Management in NSW Universities

Both of the above examples contain elements of potential corruption as defined by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in its own publicly available documents [10, 11].

It is noteworthy that the NSW ICAC was informed of both the above examples given, but refused to investigate. It is further noteworthy that AAUP is aware of additional cases of potential corruption by university managers, that the ICAC has refused to investigate [9].

University managers are currently unacceptably unaccountable.

3.5.d. Does Failure of University Managements to Support Academic Values and to Serve in Accordance with These Comprise Fraud?

Importantly, the above is just a sampling of university management inflicting harm on academics and the function of university Schools and by extension the public, by breaching the academic values that the public reasonably assumes of them. Many further examples can be drawn from across Australian universities, and AAUP can provide details if asked.

Students, Government, industry and granting bodies, pay universities to deliver services according to academic values. However, academics are impeded from working in accordance with academic values by management interference and directives, while management itself fails to work in accordance with academic values. Therefore, the question must be asked: if, by breaching those values, do university managements now defraud paying stakeholders and the wider public?

3.6. *The Erosion of Australia's Democracy by Authoritarian University Managerialism: The Failed "Pub Test"*

In the examples given above, the university's management gave students who witnessed this, a lesson in the successful application of authoritarianism, and in the futility of reasoned argument and democratic process. That should be a matter of great concern, for the elected representatives in our democratic government.

AAUP argues that by serving as a reservoir of informed expertise available to the public, by fostering robust open debate, and by supporting the education of an informed critical-thinking electorate, universities are vitally important for the effective function and protection of democracy. This is highly relevant in the current global political climate where authoritarianism is on the rise. It is now clear that authoritarian forms of management are similarly the cause of many of the problems facing contemporary universities, and it is noteworthy that one of the founding documents of modern Australian Universities, the Murray Report 1957 [1], clearly articulated the role of universities in democratic civil society, a role that does seem to have been forgotten but must now be remembered.

Current circumstances do not pass "the pub test". Any person leaning across any bar in any Australian pub, can see that such goings-on as the story of the deceptive dean or the abusive manager are unacceptable in a university, and should not be tolerated. The public if fully informed of the current behavior of university management, would and should be outraged. The Federal Government is urged to address this in a forthright manner, and to restore the integrity of Australian universities in a way that would justify the trust placed in both universities and government by the public.

3.7. Only Government Can Correct the Current Unaccountability of University Management: The Core Problem The Accord Must Address

It is clear from the above, that university management is now unaccountable. In the course of imposing managerial processes and directives, it is now accepted for university managers to make false statements and to ignore empirical facts.

University managers enforce their will by blunt authoritarianism. With benefit of the significant funds universities attract, management is able to wield an unequal power in law, bully staff and students, and compel silence. University managers are comfortable knowing that the State governments who administer the Acts under which universities are constituted, simply assume the universities are working well. Management is also comfortable knowing that the university Councils (or 'Senates' depending on the institution) to whom they report, have little representation from academics and that any objections that may be brought to them by such academics, are as easily ignored as those of the thousands of academics and students over whom the managers preside. Management is made further comfortable by the esteem granted senior university appointees, but as already mentioned, since most university managers no longer have high achievement as working academics [3], such esteem is misplaced.

Were university managers not complacent in this way, they would not state such obvious untruths or illogical statements in response to academic or student complaints, as is now routine. AAUP can provide examples additional to those outlined above, if asked.

There is no mechanism whereby university managers can be held accountable against academic values, and in consequence, there is no mechanism for halting the rapid and accelerating degradation of Australian universities. This permeates the culture of universities and affects the quality of teaching and research but is largely hidden by the use of selected metrics, not giving voice to staff, and the application of gag clauses to those staff and students who are driven out.

This is the core problem AAUP points the Accord towards, and only Government is able to intervene and to establish national regulations that can be enforced.

3.8. The Government is Warned That the Accord Panel has an Overrepresentation of University Management Responsible for the Problems we Describe, Without Representation from Working Academics

We warn Government, that the composition of the Accord Panel is over-weighted with senior university managers. These managers have incentives to entrench the current power-structures and mechanisms, that we believe undermine Australian universities and academic values.

Although it is appropriate for there to be representation from management, it is equally appropriate for there to be comparable representation from academics who have extensive experience of the realities of delivering teaching and research in the environment created and overseen by management. Without that balanced perspective, the Accord is biased and unable to fulfill its proper role and full potential.

The current panel composition can be expected to ask for more funding and more flexibility in managing universities. A panel where there is more 'feet on the floor' academic representation, is more likely to suggest ways in which there can be improvement within existing resources, and also ways in which further resources might better serve the academic mission.

We recommend as additional members: ourselves (AAUP); and Public Universities Australia, which is an organization with which AAUP is affiliated. This would provide academic voices in the Accord, that are animated by academic values.

4. Specific AAUP Recommendations for Improved Governance in Australian Universities

4. Specific Recommendations for Improved Governance in Australian Universities

4.1. A More Rigorous, Accountable and Collegial Framework for University Governance

AAUP argues that improved governance will address the problems besetting Australian universities. In the absence of statutory and regulatory reform to address the governance structure and cultures of universities, they will continue to drift further from their core mission of being public institutions producing and disseminating information for the public good, and be instead increasingly at odds with traditional and international expectations of universities as articulated in the Magna Charta Universitatum [12]. Notably, many Australian universities are signatory to this charter, but fail to abide by it with consistency.

A more rigorous, accountable, and collegial framework is required for university governance. Moreover, structures for establishing and safeguarding academic values and freedom are lacking, and AAUP proposes a series of changes we believe would strengthen governance and accountability in a way that would support improved and sustainable service to the community.

4.2. Recommendation 1: Obligation of Universities to Operate in Accordance with Academic Values to Improve Delivery of the Academic Mission and Accountability

It should be made obligatory for all parts of each university to work in accordance with core academic values. We think this would entail at least two separate regulatory instructions in all relevant policy and procedure documents produced for and by each university.

Firstly, academic values should be briefly defined in all university documents relating to policies and or procedures, and we suggest the following as underlined:

Academic values comprise: rigour in expertise; commitment to advancing and promulgating knowledge; collegiality; freedom of speech; robust intellectual discourse; freedom of academic research; and truth in all academic works.

And secondly, all these internal university documents should specify how these academic values are to be applied. We suggest the following form of words: This policy (or procedure) is to be interpreted and acted upon in a manner that is consistent with these academic values.

This would provide guidance for any member of the university seeking to apply the specific policy or procedure, to ensure that these are acted upon in a manner that supports the academic mission. Policies and procedures that undermine academic values could be identified.

Accountability would be improved, by providing a formal documented basis for legitimate objection to any transgressions that undermine the academic mission.

4.3. Recommendation 2: Improving the Informed Academic Perspective of the Senior University Governing Bodies

University 'senates' or 'councils' are currently comprised mostly of representatives from the community and or industry, and have few academic representatives.

This fails to take advantage of the informed perspective of active and experienced academics in these important governance bodies. In these key governance assemblies, informed academic perspective is too readily overwhelmed by the uninformed. Similarly, current arrangements fail to make proper use of the corporate expertise of senates or councils, because there is insufficient contact between representatives of corporate and academic cultures.

We suggest that there should be significant change to the composition of university governance structures as follows:

a) The governing bodies of Australian public universities must be composed of a majority of experts in academia and tertiary education, as well as including individuals (including alumni of the university) who represent the broader communities that universities serve. Financial, commercial and corporate expertise must be maintained, but must not dominate the composition of any university's governing bodies.

b) At least half of all members of governing bodies should be elected by and from within the university community (representing academic staff, non-academic staff, students and alumni).

4.4. Recommendation 3: Improving the Status and Quality of the Most Senior Academic Managerial Appointments by Specifying Minimum Requirements for These Positions

Currently, the expected level of training and experience of vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, provosts and chancellors is not specified. Inappropriately qualified appointments are thus formally possible, and this undermines not only the likely effectiveness of the appointees, but also the respect they are able to command from the highly expert academics they are meant to lead.

AAUP recommends specification of minimum qualifications for holders of all important academic leadership positions, in accordance with our separately published general recommendations for university governance structures as per the following:

University chancellors, vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, and provosts should be democratically elected by the university community with candidates selected from among the most distinguished academics after wide consultation with all members of the university. The selection committee should be drawn from the university community (including academic staff, non-academic staff, students and alumni) and should include representation from a wide range of discipline areas.

4.5. Recommendation 4: Ensuring Accountable Executive, Fiscal and Academic Decision Making

We suggest the below governance principles should be applied in universities.

4.5.a. Open Deliberation of Key Governing Bodies Including the Council and Senate

To ensure transparency, wherever possible, meetings of the governing body of all universities should be open for members of the public to attend as observers. Furthermore, detailed minutes should be made publicly available in a timely manner, and both the agenda and agenda papers, wherever possible, should not be confidential and should be made available prior to the meeting to both the university community and to the public.

4.5.b. Leadership, Management and Decision Making at the Faculty / School / Discipline Level Should be on a Collegial Basis:

All academic decisions should be made collegially by the academic community. Major decisions within particular faculties, schools or disciplines should involve the entire faculty, school or discipline following academic values and democratic principles. Faculty, school or discipline leadership/management should be either elected from within the faculty, school or discipline, or recruited from outside by a selection committee containing a majority of members from within the faculty, school or discipline.

4.5.c. Executive Positions and Salaries, Remuneration and Fringe Benefits Should Be Capped and Aligned Those of Other Leaders of Public Institutions:

All salaries of the executive officers of Australian public universities – including, but not limited to, vice-chancellors – must be aligned with those of other leaders of public institutions and capped at twice a professorial salary. Furthermore, all salaries, remuneration and fringe benefits must be made fully public.

The hiring process of all executive officers must be undertaken by committees that represent the university community (including academic staff, non-academic staff, students and alumni).

4.6. Recommendation 5: Protection and Promotion of Academic Freedom, Independence and Autonomy

We believe that academic freedom should be enshrined in all legislation and regulations that govern universities, and should be incorporated into key university documents, in a manner that ensures application throughout the entirety of each university, and in all academic works.

AAUP believes that academic freedom is of such importance to the function of universities that each institution should have an Academic Freedom and Integrity Committee. Such committees would be comprised of experienced senior professors who do not hold executive leadership roles, there being one representative from each faculty or School, and all of whom have delegated authority to act to maintain standards of academic freedom and integrity. Such structures would be capable of providing informed and

direct advice on academic freedom and integrity to the senior governing bodies of universities, independent of direct control by the university's executive.

4.7. Recommendation 6: Collaborative Decision Making on Major Structural Changes

Major organisational changes, e.g. mergers of Schools, Faculty, University, should be through voting by academic and non-academic staff.

Currently, major structural changes in universities such as: the sale of campuses for real estate development; or the merging, dissolution or decanting into new locales of Disciplines, Schools or Faculties, is decided by central management with little if any input from the academics of affected units, who unlike management are informed of the relevant academic needs and operational details.

While strategic, operational and academic advantages can accrue from such structural changes, they are usually conducted behind a veil of secrecy. The result is that not only are the potential advantages undermined by the lack of relevant expert academic input, but they also generate unnecessary and unhelpful resentment, objection and disharmony.

Academics respond well to open engagement in reasoned argument, but are right to oppose unexplained, poorly considered, and inherently uninformed authoritarian decrees that have potential to undermine the academic mission. The current controversy surrounding the proposed closure of the Sandy Bay campus in the University of Tasmania for real estate development, is a good example of management failing to properly engage affected academics [7, 8].

For these reasons, we recommend that any consideration of, or planning for major structural changes such as those outlined above, should include open discussion and engagement of the academics and academic units involved.

4.8. Roadmap for Sustainable Implementation

4.8.a. A Federal Government Education Department Ministerial Directive

The Federal Government is urged to establish a Federal Education Ministerial Directive that instructs Australian universities to accord with the recommendations above (Sections 4.1 to 4.7).

The Federal Government is further urged to consider enacting Federal legislation in accordance with the Ministerial directives suggested above (Sections 4.1 to 4.7).

4.8.b. Collaboration of Federal with State Governments to Amend Acts That Govern Universities

In addition, we suggest that the Federal Government should encourage State and Territory governments to amend the Acts under which their respective universities are constituted, to establish in the Acts the Federal Ministerial directives outlined above that we suggest (Sections 4.1 to 4.7).

4.8.c. Annual State Government Reports to Federal Government on Enactment of the Federal Directives

Universities do provide annual reports to the State governments under which they are constituted.

We suggest that the Federal government request that those reports should include description of how each university has enacted the recommendations AAUP makes above (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and how each university has supported and guaranteed operation in accordance with the seven core academic values we describe (Section 3.2).

Such reports should be provided by State Governments to the Federal Government on a yearly basis, providing the Federal Government with oversight of the universities that it funds.

5. Questions That The Accord Discussion Paper Has Missed

5. Questions That the Accord Discussion Paper Has Missed

5.1. What Are the Main Problems Facing Australian Universities?

We have already indicated in Section 3 above that we believe the main problem facing Universities is poor governance, and we have suggested solutions to this in Section 4.

5.2. Does a Focus on Utilitarian Aspects of Workforce Development, Employability and Developing National Industry Undermine the Broader Academic Functions of Universities?

There is an understandable emphasis by successive governments on the value of universities for development of the national workforce, employability, and in supporting industry. This extends through to support for basic research assuming that this can lead to new industries, and targeting of research investment to that end.

While AAUP agrees that these are important roles, and that directed research funding is justified in some circumstances, the further roles of helping to establish a well educated and democratically engaged community, and of serving the intellectual and cultural needs of the Nation seem forgotten. The importance of employability as a role seems overstated, while it further appears that the permeability of borders to ideas makes research funding that aims to build specifically Australian industries ineffective [13].

We believe that placing the emphasis on academic values in the way AAUP suggests, will serve all national functions of the university well.

The degradation of the vocational education and training sector through failed market experimentation, has intensified the pressure on universities to ensure students are job ready, but this is a curtailment of the purpose of university education.

5.3. Are Metrics Used to Assess Universities and Academics Meaningfully Applied?

There is an understandable desire to quantitate the performance of universities, and a number of global university rankings are currently employed, including the Shanghai ranking, the QS ranking, and also the Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) process by the Australian Research Council. While these statistics can be informative, university managements skew activity and reporting to maximise results, rather than meaningful performance [14-16].

Similarly, metrification of academic staff performance does have its place, but must be carefully interpreted on a case by case basis with consideration of how well the academic serves academic values. For example, an academic whose research is focused on a new and unexplored area will likely have low research productivity as measured by the number of papers published or citations, but sensible interrogation of the work by an informed senior colleague should reveal the original nature of the work, and it is just such research that leads to entirely new ideas and discoveries, satisfying the academic mission and academic values in full. University managers now frequently pass judgement on the academics they manage, guided only by metrics, and often being unqualified by training or experience [3], fail to apply the necessary nuance required to make a proper assessment.

Related to this, there are instances where managers lack numeracy, and are unable to meaningfully interpret sometimes complex numeric data, or to understand explanation of numeric data given them by the academics they manage. In many instances, management exercises unbalanced power, and sometimes makes irrational decisions that are demonstrably inconsistent with the numeric and statistical facts.

6. Questions Posed in the Accord Discussion Paper and AAUP Responses

6. Questions Posed in the Accord Discussion Paper and AAUP Responses

6.1.a. Q1 How should an Accord be structured and focused to meet the challenges facing Australia's higher education system?

As we have discussed above (Section 3.8), we see that the Accord panel has over-representation of university management that will emphasise managerialist solutions adopted from the corporate sector, without comprehending consequences for academic values and implications for the quality of teaching and research.

There is not adequate representation of academics to inform discussion from the perspective of those who deliver the actual work of universities, or to speak to academic values (Section 3.8).

We recommend inclusion of AAUP and also Public Universities Australia (PUA) as academic voices in the Accord.

6.1.b. What is needed to overcome limitations in the current approach to Australian higher education?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.7).

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.2. Q2 How can the diverse missions of Australian higher education providers be supported, taking into account their different operating contexts and communities they serve (for example regional universities)?

We have described the importance of academic freedom, based on trust in academics with their respectively highly trained Discipline level skills, to know how best to teach and conduct research. Interference with this academic freedom undermines the operation of the university (Section 3.3).

We contend that the best way to support that the diverse needs of communities accessing different higher education providers across the Nation, is to firstly seek to ensure that the local needs are represented by establishment of Disciplines suitable to those local needs, and to then allow the academics employed the necessary academic freedom to fully serve their roles in teaching, research and provision of expertise to the local community.

6.3. Q3 What should the long-term target/s be for Australia's higher education attainment by 2030 and 2040, and how should these be set and adjusted over time?

We have described how the function of Australian universities is undermined, becoming worse and ultimately unsustainable, because university management has become disconnected from academic values, and is unaccountable with reference to those academic values (Sections 3.1 to 3.6).

We indicate that Government has an important role addressing this (Section 3.7), and that this can be achieved by adjusting composition of the Accord panel (Section 3.8), together with implementation of six specific recommendations (Section 4.1 to 4.7), and suggest a roadmap for implementation of these (Section 4.8).

This will establish a sustainable framework for successful self-governance of universities that is in accordance with academic values, and also a mechanism for verification by Government (Section 4.8.c). The verification process we suggest (Section 4.8.c), will afford Government opportunity to correlate national and community needs with the functional operation of universities, as a basis for making adjustments over time as required.

Related to this, The Productivity Commission has shown that the demand driven university system has not served students well. This is exacerbated by the demise of the vocational education and training sector. The current aim of 50% of young people attending university, without the resources that would be needed

for all of these students to have a high quality learning experience with appropriate support, has compromised both students and academics

6.4. Q4 Looking from now to 2030 and 2040, what major national challenges and opportunities should Australian higher education be focused on meeting?

It seems self-evident that climate change imposes a need for universities to support research, flexible learning, professional re-training, and rapidly changing industries, to satisfy the anticipated fast changes in markets, social structures and needs, and geo-political and economic challenges. We contend that a healthy university system that has structural commitment to academic values in the ways that we recommend (Section 4), will best serve these needs in a sustainable way.

6.5. Q5 How do the current structures of institutions, regulation and funding in higher education help or hinder Australia's ability to meet these challenges? What needs to change?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6).

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

Also, we recommend removal of the HECS debt burden for the reasons outlined below (Section 6.12), and this would remove a powerful disincentive for participation in higher education by those less advantaged.

6.6. Q6 What are the best ways to achieve and sustain future growth in Australian higher education, given the changing needs of the population and the current pressures on public funding?

We are uncertain that there is a real problem relating to future growth of Australian higher education related to changing needs of the population, or that there are currently uniquely difficult pressures on public funding relative to other times in history. We urge the reinstatement of publicly funded vocational education and training.

Growth of the higher education system for its own sake, without linkage to the size and needs of the population, makes no sense and we would not support it. What does make sense, is for higher education funding to be related to the current and reasonably anticipated demands of the time.

That demand is established in large part by the size of the population, and the size of the population relates well to the productivity of the Nation, and so also to taxation income for Government. All three are thus functionally connected.

From the above, we argue that sensible funding should be related to GDP, and that universities guided by academic values and working in collaboration with the wider community, should define the need and direction of any changes required. Oversight by Government, as suggested by us is required (Sections 4.8, 6.2 and 6.3), and should help ensure effective coupling of changing needs to changing universities.

6.7. Q7 How should the mix of providers evolve, considering the size and location of existing institutions and the future needs of communities?

We urge the reinstatement of publicly funded vocational education and training. We indicate some general guidelines coupling community need to evolving institutions (Sections 4.8, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6), and believe that these together with the suggested reforms to entrench academic values for university governance (Section 4), and the improved government oversight that we suggest (Section 4.8.c), will provide mechanisms for engaging with changing need, and responding in a timely and appropriate manner.

6.8. Q8 What reforms are needed to promote a quality learning environment and to ensure graduates are entering the labor market with the skills and knowledge they need?

We argue strongly for the importance of academic values to ensure that students receive full benefit from the nuanced and highly trained skills of academics in student training, and that this produces the best possible graduates (Section 3.3).

We also argue that it is important for university management to support academic values, and to not impose educational policies that are by definition less informed of the specific needs at the Discipline level (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We further argue that the broader capacity of graduates to fully engage in the democratic process, and to also have been encouraged by example to deliver their professional services in an honest and productive manner is currently undermined by the shocking example of unprincipled and despotic behavior of university management (Section 3.6).

We suggest that by addressing these issues in the manner we specify in Section 4, it will be possible to promote quality learning and ensure that graduates enter the labor market with the skills and knowledge they need.

6.9. Q9 How should Australia ensure enough students are studying courses that align with the changing needs of the economy and society?

Student demand provides a reasonable measure for immediate community needs, but is distorted by at times incorrect student and community perceptions relating to income potential and job security.

We suggest that in order to ensure enough students are studying courses that align with the changing needs of the economy and society, it would be necessary to perform numeric demographic analysis coupled with cautious interpretation of changing technology and the evolving environment. This should be a Federal Government activity, and independent of institutions that have incentive to distort the analysis for their own benefit. Academics who are demonstrated to abide by academic values could play a role informing such analysis, but responsibility for the conclusions, decisions and resulting resource allocations made on basis of that analysis, must reside with the Federal government.

Related to this, it is necessary to ensure that there are adequate resources to properly support students in their studies. To achieve this, we believe that it is important to stop the current often poorly informed and authoritarian decision making of University managements that we describe (Section 3), by implementing the recommendations we make (Section 4).

6.10. Q10 What role should higher education play in helping to develop high quality general learning capabilities across all age groups and industries?

Additional to educating students at universities, academics have an important role providing continuing education and expert advice to the community and industry. Many academics also participate in 'school outreach' activities, encouraging children to learn about the disciplines the academics have mastered.

Such service is of high quality only when it is delivered in accordance with academic values (Section 3.2), and can also only occur where there is reasonable institutional support for academics to deliver such service in the manner that accords with academic freedom (Section 3.3).

Current interference with academic freedom, and distortion away from service in accordance with academic values, limits capacity of academics to provide this important service to the fullest of their ability (Section 3). We make recommendations to address these concerns (Section 4), and if implemented believe that this would help deliver high quality general learning across all age groups and industries.

6.11. Q11 How should Australia boost demand from people to study in the higher education system?

Given that demand for higher education currently outstrips capacity for supply in most areas, we do not understand why the Accord poses this question.

It is possible that this reflects the over-burdening of the Accord composition with university managers, all of whom have incentive to increase the size of their respective institutions by manufacturing demand.

Of more concern, is to ensure that the quality of the higher education system is elevated to the highest possible level with available resources, and we believe that this can be achieved by implementing the recommendations that we make (Section 4).

Related to this, we recommend removal of the HECS debt burden for the reasons outlined below (Section 6.12), and this would remove a powerful disincentive for participation in higher education.

6.12. Q12 How should an adequate supply of CSPs be sustained and funded, as population and demand increase?

We are unconvinced of the wisdom of the HECS/HELP system, and similarly skeptical of the sense of full fee paying student positions.

We believe that university education most benefits the community when the cost barrier to access is removed, and when graduates emerge debt free and fully able to engage in the economy.

We argue that the penny-pinching approach of successive governments towards supporting students during their studies, imposes an ultimately unhelpful economic burden on the Nation, with no clear benefit, and we outline that argument below.

6.12.a. The Premises for Introduction of HECS/HELP were Incorrect

One premise for introduction of HECS/HELP, was that it was unfair for less well off tax-payers to pay for the education of those who had gone to university. A further argument was that there had been little effect of Whitlam's introduction of 'free' university education, on the socio-economic profile of those attending university.

Those arguments seem unreasonable in light of the community providing full support for primary and secondary education, both of which benefit recipients at least as much as university education. Similarly, the failure of Whitlam's initiative to shift the socio-economic profile of university students, was entirely predictable in light of the previous Commonwealth Scholarship scheme introduced by Menzies. That program provided full support for university positions on a means-tested basis. There was no demographic change following introduction of free university tuition, because less well-off students had already been able to access university with full government support.

6.12.b. The Payments Demanded of Graduates for HECS/HELP Debts are Unreasonable

The threshold set for HECS/HELP repayment is \$48,361.12, which is far below the median income of \$65,000, and so imposes an appreciable burden on young graduates attempting to establish themselves. CPI indexing at a time of high inflation, raises the interest charged for HECS/HELP above that of the compulsory repayment rate for any debtors earning an annual salary less than \$99,997. If HECS/HELP is to continue, it seems more reasonable for it to be indexed to the Wage Price Index.

6.12.c. Higher Education is a National Benefit

Adequate investment by governments in education is a necessity for improving the incomes, health and wellbeing of citizens, and for driving economic factors such as productivity and innovation. The introduction of HECS more than three decades ago appears to have been exploited by successive governments to conceal progressive defunding of the Australian Higher Education system. The universal right to an education has consequently been eroded by stealth.

6.12.d. Graduating with Debt Increases the Cost of Doing Business in Australia

It is difficult to understand the economic logic of imposing significant debt on university graduates. Graduates who emerge from universities with significant debt must of necessity demand higher wages or impose higher professional fees in order to make those debts good, and then further to justify and benefit from the monetary investment made in gaining education. This increases the cost of doing business in Australia.

6.12.e. Graduate Debt Decreases Incentive for Australian Graduates to Train for Academic Careers

The fact that highly skilled but indebted Australian university graduates are increasingly reluctant to pursue an academic or professional career in higher education, reduces the capacity of Australian universities to employ former students they have themselves educated, and encourages the employment of overseas trained and educated staff.

Notably, the wage-inflationary effect of debt on graduates (Section 6.12.d), imposes an additional cost on universities themselves.

6.12.f. Graduate Debt Increases Government Costs

Given that government is a major employer of graduates, the imposition of higher student debt and the higher graduate salaries that such policies must inevitably compel (Section 6.12.d), increases government costs in a way that likely defeats the initial purpose of imposing student fees.

6.12.g. Graduate Debt is a Disincentive to the Risk-Taking Necessary for New Businesses to be Established

Finally, graduate debt not only reduces the capacity for graduates to spend, it also undermines the economic risk-taking necessary to start new businesses.

6.12.h. We Suggest the HECS/HELP Scheme Should be Scrapped

For the reasons outlined above, we believe that the HECS/HELP system undermines the economy and is self-defeating with regard to government expense. It would be best scrapped.

6.13. Q13 How could an Accord support cooperation between providers, accreditation bodies, government and industry to ensure graduates have relevant skills for the workforce?

Constructive feedback and liaison with accrediting bodies, government, industry and employing alumni can provide a meaningful dialogue that can inform universities of developing skills and workforce needs.

Universities do engage with alumni and industry, but sensitivity to that feedback is currently blunted by managerial authoritarianism. An example is a petition for preservation of academic Disciplines that was signed by 1000 alumni (comprising 9 full graduating cohorts of the School involved), in a professional area where the alumni are the main employers [17]. That petition was entirely ignored by the relevant university, because it opposed a managerial determination that although based on demonstrated falsehoods and or errors, was nonetheless the authoritarian wish of the managers involved, consistent with what we describe in Section 3.

Leadership should be shown by Government to encourage meaningful dialogue, between academics at the Discipline level and accreditation bodies, government and industry, perhaps using an approach similar to that outlined in Section 4.8.

6.14. Q14 How should placement arrangements and work-integrated learning in higher education change in the decades ahead?

We argue strongly for the importance of academic freedom to ensure that students receive full benefit from the nuanced and highly trained skills of academics in student training, and that this produces the best possible preparation for graduates (Section 3.3). Free liaison between academics and placement providers, given suitable and helpful administrative support by university management, is able to negotiate highly effective and flexible placements.

The difficulty is that at times, university management interferes with this natural process, and we argue that it is important for university management to support the academic freedom necessary for academics to arrange placements, and to not impose policies that are by definition less informed of the specific needs at the Discipline level (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We suggest that by addressing these issues in the manner we specify in Section 4, that placement arrangements can best be arranged according to the unique circumstances appropriate to each discipline, placement provider, institution and student body.

6.15. Q15 What changes are needed to grow a culture of lifelong learning in Australia?

There is already a culture of life-long learning in Australia, that has been fostered by the Nation's academics together with colleagues across the entirety of the education system.

We describe, however, how the academic mission is undermined and discouraged by poor university governance (Section 3), and recommend remedies (Section 4). Enacting the recommendations we make (Section 4) will invigorate universities, and improve their capacity to grow the already healthy culture of life-long learning.

Also, we recommend removal of the HECS debt burden for the reasons outlined above (Section 6.12), and this would remove a powerful disincentive for participation in life-long learning related to higher education.

6.16. Q16 What practical barriers are inhibiting lifelong learning, and how can they be fixed?

We outline in 6.12 how HECS/HELP debt undermines the economic potential of graduates, and this impacts capacity for life-long learning. Elimination of the HECS/HELP will alleviate this barrier.

Provision of more generous tax regimens that encourage participation in life-long learning would be expected to increase participation.

Similarly, improved and more affordable childcare and carer-relief services, would help those with carer responsibilities to engage more fully in life-long learning activities.

Finally, we show how poor university management undermines capacity of academics to properly perform their work, part of which includes participation in continuing education and life-long learning activities (Section 3). We make recommendations for improvement (Section 4).

6.17. Q17 How should better alignment and connection across Australia's tertiary education system be achieved?

The multiplicity of higher educational offerings across Australia is a strength, and that diversity has value. Nonetheless, there are circumstances where course content is limited by locally available expertise. It would be helpful were a framework established that supported cross-institutional collaboration in course development and delivery. With the advent of improved electronic communications and teaching methods, such collaboration is increasingly possible. However, universities currently have financial incentive to jealously guard the time and expertise of the staff they employ. For this reason, we suggest that discrete funding would be required to incentivise the loaning of staff time and productivity between separate institutions.

Separately, we recommend adoption of a national approach to ensuring academic standards and the application of academic values (Section 4), and this would help establish fundamental alignment in mission across Australia's tertiary educational system.

AAUP has developed a professional ethical framework for Australian academics that could be of service in this regard, and is happy to share this with the Accord if wished.

6.18. Q18 What role should reform of the AQF play in creating this alignment?

The AQF provides national guidelines that if applied equally across the Nation should help align educational effort across institutions.

Unfortunately, such harmonization is hindered at the local level, by managerial interference with academic freedom necessary to fully benefit from the skills of trained academics (Sections 3.3 and 3.4), and this also imposes unnecessary discontinuity on AQF standards.

We suggest remedies in Section 4.

6.19. Q19 What would a more effective and collaborative national governance approach to tertiary education look like?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). The deleterious effect of management suffocating academic freedom is described (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.20. Q20 How can pathways between VET and higher education be improved, and how can students be helped to navigate these pathways?

Analysis of VET course content, and determination of the extent to which this overlaps with that in courses in universities is possible, and bridging courses can be constructed to address gaps. Where there is complete overlap, credit can be given in universities for VET courses.

In practice, however, it is almost impossible to perform such exercises with high fidelity. Reasons for this include: the large number of VET and university courses that need to be compared; the difficulty in properly comparing depth of course material delivered between courses where the educational mission is different; the difficulty of aligning content from disconnected VET courses with that in highly integrated university courses, especially in professional training programs where gaps in content cannot be tolerated; and finally the extraordinary amount of work required to do this even for a small number of courses.

We suggest that it is best to minimize attempts to make such comparisons or to systematically award credit.

Instead, we suggest that the current practice of universities offering inter-semester and or bridging courses in defined disciplines important for university entrance, as well as award to academics of the academic freedom needed to do this well (Sections 3.3, 3.4, and 4), would be helpful.

High quality student services that give informed advice can help students negotiate these pathways.

6.21. Q21 How can current examples of successful linkages between VET and higher education be integrated across the tertiary education system?

We have no specific comment on this question, other than to reiterate the importance of academic freedom (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) unhindered by managerial interference (Section 3), as per the recommendations we make (Section 4), provides the best opportunity for the highly localized interactions between VET providers and universities, to optimize linkages between the two.

6.22. Q22 What role do tertiary entrance and admissions systems play in matching learners to pathways and supporting a sustained increase in participation and tertiary success?

This question presupposes that it is self-evidently beneficial for there to be sustained increased participation in tertiary education. The basis for this assumption is, however, unclear.

We have argued that it is important for universities to seek to satisfy student and community demand (Section 6.6)

Our main concern is that the quality of university education be unhindered by uninformed and authoritarian managerialism (Section 3), and that this be achieved by the recommendations we make (Section 4).

6.23. Q23 How should an Accord help Australia increase collaboration between industry, government and universities to solve big challenges?

6.23.a. Academic Freedom as a Necessary Core for Successful Collaboration

We have described the importance of academic freedom, based on trust in academics with their respectively highly trained Discipline level skills, to know how best teach, conduct research and interface with the wider community. Interference with this academic freedom undermines the operation of the university (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We contend that in order to increase collaboration between industry, government and universities to solve challenges big and small, it is firstly necessary to ensure that academics who conduct the research through which such challenges must be addressed, are accorded the academic freedom required for them to do their best work. We make recommendations towards that end in Section 4, and especially 4.6.

6.23.b. Adequate Internal Research Support

In addition, we argue that adequate funding for academic research is important for research to occur.

Currently, although academics conduct research as part of their expected work, the funding for this must be sought by each individual academic from a variety of sources external to the university they work in. Although this has become normalized, it is on any passing reflection, remarkable.

No other professional group is paid by their employer to deliver a service, with simultaneous expectation that they seek the necessary funds from external bodies, usually on a highly competitive basis, to pay for consumables, laboratory space, and equipment needed to do their work. University managers need not apply for grants for the material needs of their work, but very strangely expect that of academics.

Surgeons, nurses, doctors, architects, lawyers, librarians, and indeed university managers, find that the material means for them to conduct their paid work, are provided by their employers. There would be consternation in a surgical theatre, were a hospital manager to barge into the room and instruct the surgeon to first get an external grant to pay for the anaesthesia, instruments, equipment, theatre hire, and suture material, before cutting into the patient. And yet, that is precisely what Australia's universities expect of their academics. It would seem fitting, were academics to be included amongst the rest of their professional fellows in this regard.

6.24. Q24 What reforms will enable Australian research institutions to achieve excellence, scale and impact in particular fields?

In our response in Section 6.23, we point to the importance of academic freedom, as well as of adequate internal funding for academic research.

Current ARC and NH&MRC funding tends to exclude high risk novel projects, and this does stifle the research potential of the Nation, because it is from high risk and novel projects that entirely new discoveries and all their downstream opportunities arise. Consideration should be given to how grant assessment in these major government funders might be improved, and AAUP would be happy to assist in such exploration.

Separately, there are already some central core service facilities that work at a national level, with AGRF providing sequencing or synthetic services for example at a reasonable price. Expansion of that model to

make a wider range of complex but commonly needed research facilities available to Australian researchers, independent of their institutional affiliation, would greatly support the national research enterprise. Examples of such facilities would include for example electron microscope and advanced microscopy facilities, or advanced clinical imaging facilities. The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) provides an already established platform that could support such initiatives.

6.25. Q25 How should Australia leverage its research capacity overall and use it more effectively to develop new capabilities and solve wicked problems?

Our responses to 6.23 and 6.24 address this question.

6.26. Q26 How can Australia stimulate greater industry investment in research and more effective collaboration?

The erosion of academic values in Australian universities that we describe (Section 3), undermines Australia's reputation and the confidence needed for industry partnership with universities. The reputational damage further erodes the ability of Australian trained researchers to become engaged with industry.

Management drives for what are perceived as efficiencies in PhD training, such as more strict limitations on enrolment time, degrade the quality of research training possible in universities. The limited, or indeed in most cases non-existent funding available to support research within universities (Section 6.23.b), is also inhibitory.

Establishment of mechanisms for guaranteeing academic values and academic freedom as we recommend (Section 4), together with improved funding, will improve the trust needed for industry to invest more heavily and collaborate with Australian universities. Notably, failure to do so, will deepen the difficulties we describe (Section 3), and worsen potentially fruitful collaboration of academia with industry.

6.27. Q27 How can we improve research training in Australia including improving pathways for researchers to gain experience and develop high-impact careers in government and industry?

6.27.a. Less Restrictive Research Candidature and Funding Constraints

A drive to formularize and 'pump through in minimum time' PhD and MPhil candidatures, currently erodes the capacity of academics to train research students to the maximum of their potential. The absence of funding to support research students, other than any that can be found by supervising academics from external research grants, is a further limitation to student training and success.

Similarly, research scholarships are miserly and do not recognize that many research students are well advanced in their personal lives, and have families to support.

6.27.b. A More Healthy Educational Environment Free From Authoritarian Managerialism

Research students are trained towards academic values, but this is undermined in an academic environment where free speech, free research and free thought are suffocated by authoritarian managers. While research supervisors struggle to conduct work in an environment that is often laden with fear and intimidation, research students suffer still further from their comparatively disempowered positions.

Rather than being given the example of principled honesty, adherence to empirical facts and collegial reasoned discussion, upon which research depends, research students are shown by university managements that authoritarian abuse and misrepresentations are the way towards success (Section 3.6). This weakens the quality of Australian research training in a frankly shocking way.

AAUP can cite many instances where research students have endured direct and indirect injury, due to managerial abuse of their supervisors, including for example disbandment of laboratories where the students are conducting their research, or having their enrolment blocked.

We describe these underlying problems (Section 3), and until such time as they are addressed by the means we suggest (Section 4), research student training will be undermined in Australia, and research graduates will be less well prepared than possible for service in government and industry.

6.28. Q28 What is needed to increase the number of people from under-represented groups applying to and prepared for higher education, both from school and from other pathways?

Many universities have initiatives to facilitate university entrance of students from rural or indigenous communities, as well as from low socio-economic circumstances. Support programs are also often present to support indigenous students. Cultural awareness programs are also frequently available in universities, as a mandatory component of both staff and student training.

This is not, however, on a national basis, and establishment of national guidelines and support for such programs to maximize their potential would seem sensible.

Also, we recommend removal of the HECS debt burden for the reasons outlined above (Section 6.12), and this would remove a powerful disincentive for participation in higher education.

Related to this, improved support for research students and their research supervisors as we outline (6.23 to 6.27), would be beneficial.

6.29. Q29 What changes in provider practices and offerings are necessary to ensure all potential students can succeed in their chosen area of study?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). This clearly undermines capacity and potential of students to succeed.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.30. Q30 How can governments, institutions and employers assist students, widen opportunities and remove barriers to higher education?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). This hampers students, limits opportunities and establishes barriers to success in higher education.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

We make further recommendations for removing barriers to progress through research training (6.23 to 6.29, and in 6.31).

6.31. Q31 How can the costs of participation, including living expenses, be most effectively alleviated?

We outline how HECS/HELP debt is self-defeating and damages the national economy (Section 6.12). We believe that elimination of student fees, and return to the system of 'free' education that was well established and successful prior to the introduction of the 'tuition fee' that was the forerunner of HECS, would be a healthy forward step for the Nation (Section 6.12).

While this would aid graduates who seek to re-enroll for further education, it would not reduce the immediate cost of participation or address living expenses.

The provision of scholarships for living expenses, tax concessions, or discrete funds to defray the costs of study materials would be helpful alleviating the financial burden of study.

6.32. Q32 How can best practice learning and teaching for students from under-represented groups be embedded across the higher education system, including the use of remote learning?

We are unconvinced that remote learning is as effective as that possible when students are physically present in a shared learning environment with academics. Electronic remote learning is now well established in Australian universities, in large part due to the pandemic. We believe that it would be a mistake to make a virtue of that passing necessity.

Rather than resort to remote learning in universities as the norm for people from under-represented groups in potentially isolated locations, we think it is more constructive to establish support for such students to travel and join their fellows in a university environment.

Of more fundamental concern, is that education in Australian universities is now in an environment where academic values are undermined (Section 3), and we recommend remedies for this (Section 4).

6.33. Q33 What changes to funding and regulatory settings would enable providers to better support students from under-represented groups in higher education?

We outline how removal of the HECS/HELP debt burden would be sensible (Section 6.12), and discuss the general question of support for students and academia elsewhere (Sections 6.11, 6.16, 6.31).

Better support for students would arise from addressing the managerial dismissal of academic values that we describe (Section 3), by implementing the recommendations we make (Section 4).

6.34. Q34 How should the contribution of higher education providers to community engagement be encouraged and promoted?

We address this largely in our above responses (Sections 6.2, 6.13, 6.14, 6.21, 6.23, 6.26).

We have described the importance of academic freedom, based on trust in academics with their respectively highly trained Discipline level skills, to know how best to teach, conduct research and interface with the wider community. Interference with this academic freedom undermines the operation of the university (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We contend that community engagement by academics requires that academics are accorded the academic freedom required for them to do identify where they can be helpful to the community, and to interact with the community free from interference by management. We make recommendations towards that end in Section 4 and especially 4.6.

6.35. Q35 Where providers make a distinctive contribution to national objectives through community, location-based or specialized economic development, how should this contribution be identified and invested in?

Academics accorded proper academic freedom (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) are able to identify their own participation in location-based or specialized economic development. If the Government believes that this should be identified, then it could establish a Federal register that academics can self-report to.

If the Government wishes to fund such efforts, then that register could be used as a basis for distribution of funds according to the needs of the academics who register.

Our above suggestion is premised on academic freedom, that is currently curtailed in most if not all Australian universities by management interference, so that implementation of the recommendations we make is necessary (Section 4).

6.36. Q36 What regulatory and governance reforms would enable the higher education sector to better meet contemporary demands?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6).

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.37. Q37 How could a more coherent and dynamic national governance system for higher education be achieved?

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.38. Q38 How can the Accord support higher education providers to adopt sector-leading employment practices?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to academics and students (Section 3.5), and it is clear that morale is poor in environments where fear and intimidation are routine management tools.

AAUP can provide numerous examples of such employment practices in Australian universities.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would improve employment practices along with many other aspects of Australian universities (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.39. Q39 What reforms are needed to ensure that all students have a quality student experience?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to academics and students (Section 3.5), and it is clear this undermines the quality of the student experience.

We describe the importance of academic freedom, and how this is necessary for academics to best deliver their services to students and the community (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We also outline the importance of academic values for training a democratic mindset (Section 3.6), and believe that the student experience is greatly enhanced by exercise of the academic values of free speech and robust debate based on empirical facts that goes towards this.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would improve the student experience along with many other aspects of Australian universities (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

We make further suggestions that would also improve the student experience, including with regard to:

- removal of the HECS/HELP debt burden (Section 6.12)
- improved cooperation with accreditation, government and industry (Section 6.13)
- placement arrangements (Section 6.14)
- cross-institutional collaboration and national academic standards (Section 6.17)
- support for sensible bridging courses and high quality student services (Section 6.20)
- adequate internal research support (Section 6.23)
- improved core facilities available to support research students (Section 6.24)
- reduced management interference in research student candidatures (Sections 6.26 and 6.27)
- National level support for programs to support students from under-represented groups (Section 6.28)
- scholarships, tax concessions and discrete funds to alleviate the financial cost of study (Section 6.31)
- support for students from remote areas to study on-site at universities (Section 6.32)

6.40. Q40 What changes are needed to ensure all students are physically and culturally safe while studying?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to students (Section 3.5), and it is clearly unsafe for students to be in an environment where fear and intimidation are routine management tools.

AAUP can provide numerous examples where students have been made unsafe in this way in Australian universities.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would address this significant concern (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

6.41. Q41 How should research quality be prioritized and supported most effectively over the next decade?

We make the case for the importance of academic freedom to achieve good research outcomes (Sections 3.3 and 3.4), and also for adequate internal support for research (Section 16.23). We thus make the unpopular suggestion that most research should not be centrally prioritized.

Peer reviewed publication is the well established and widely accepted method for maintaining the quality of research, and is downstream of the actual research having been conducted. It seems irrational to guess at the quality of research before it has been conducted, which is what this question seems to ask guidance for.

However, we do recognize that there are instances where establishment of national research priorities is reasonable, and suggest that such prioritization should be made by collegial discussion of senior experienced academics together with government. We pointedly recommend exclusion of university management from this process, on basis that it is now increasingly comprised of people who do not have appreciable research experience or attainment [3] (Section 3.1).

6.42. Q42 What settings are needed to ensure academic integrity, and how can new technologies and innovative assessment practices be leveraged to improve academic integrity?

We understand that this question expresses a limited interpretation of 'academic integrity', as it might relate for example to plagiarism, cheating in examinations, falsification of research or other academic misrepresentations. We do appreciate this is an important issue, but are more concerned with the much more systemic and institutionally accepted lack of academic integrity that is due to the failure of university management to accord with academic values.

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities with integrity (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of significant lack of integrity by management in a university (Section 3.5).

AAUP can provide numerous examples where the management of Australian universities has acted without integrity, and certainly without reference to the academic values that define and deliver academic integrity.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would address this significant concern (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

With regard to the more limited and we believe more rare aspects of miscreance by students or academics, we point to the highly specific nature of individual academic disciplines, and believe that such matters are best addressed at the level of those academic disciplines. Centralized 'one-size-fits-all' approaches as that seemingly asked for by the Accord in this question, cannot be expected to be universally effective across diverse disciplines where diverse skills are assessed. We appeal to the trust in senior experienced academics that is engendered in academic freedom (Sections 3.3 and 3.4), to deal with such matters at a discipline level, preferably informed by inter-institutional intra-disciplinary discussion.

6.43. Q43 How should the current recovery in international education be managed to increase the resilience and sustainability of Australia's higher education system, including through diversification of student enrolments from source countries?

6.43.a. Australian Universities Disconnected from Academic Values are in No Shape to Increase International Student Intakes Without Damaging Long Term Reputation

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to academics and students (Section 3.5), and it is clear this undermines the quality of education Australia is able to offer international students.

We describe the importance of academic freedom, and how this is necessary for academics to best deliver their services to students, and how this is undermined by poor university governance disconnected from academic values (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We also outline the importance of academic values for training a democratic mindset (Section 3.6), and believe that international students come to Australia in part to enjoy and acquire skills in the democratic process through exercise of the academic values of free speech and robust debate based on empirical facts. The projection of 'soft power' in this way, is of strategic importance for the Nation.

We contend that Australian universities must first get their house in order in this regard, before launching into any major initiative to increase international student enrolments.

6.43.b. These Issues Can be Addressed in Reasonable Time

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would improve the resilience of higher education, and through the diversity that emerges from academic freedom would also improve the diversity of higher education (Sections 4.1 to 4.7). We outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

These can be implemented with reasonable haste, and we anticipate that this would have rapid impact improving the operational governance of universities. This would provide a sound platform from which the Government could then reasonably seek ways for increasing international student intake.

6.44. Q44 How can the benefits of international education be shared broadly across the system, including in regional areas, and what level of reporting should there be?

International students already self-select into regional areas, dependent on courses chosen. It is important that the quality of education and student experience is suitable wherever an international student may choose to study.

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to academics and students (Section 3.5), and it is clear this undermines the quality of the student experience.

We describe the importance of academic freedom, and how this is necessary for academics to best deliver their services to students and the community (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

We also outline the importance of academic values for training a democratic mindset (Section 3.6), and believe that the student experience, and especially that of the international students, is greatly enhanced by exercise of the academic values of free speech and robust debate based on empirical facts that goes towards this (Section 6.43.a).

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would improve the student experience along with many other aspects of Australian universities (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8).

We make further suggestions throughout this document that would also improve the international student experience, including with regard to:

- improved cooperation with accreditation, government and industry (Section 6.13)
- placement arrangements (Section 6.14)
- cross-institutional collaboration and national academic standards (Section 6.17)
- support for sensible bridging courses and high quality student services (Section 6.20)
- adequate internal research support (Section 6.23)
- improved core facilities available to support research students (Section 6.24)
- reduced management interference in research student candidatures (Sections 6.26 and 6.27)

We also suggest strengthening of programs to support international students to attend Australian universities, such as the new Columbo program and AusAid Scholarships.

We emphasise, however, that Australian universities should first make themselves worthy of the trust international students place in them, and bring management into alignment with academic values (Section 6.43).

6.45. Q45 How should the contribution of different institutions and providers to key national objectives specific to their location, specialist expertise or community focus be appropriately financed?

Potential contributions of specialist expertise and community focus are often inherently local, however, funding for research via the ARC and NH&MRC are competed for on a national basis.

If Government considers it important for there to be specifically local research on matters it considers to be of national importance, then funding mechanisms that do not compete at the national level but are targeted to local institutions would need to be established.

Improved internal university research funding would also be of benefit (Section 6.23.b).

6.46. Q46 How can infrastructure development for higher education be financed, especially in regional and outer urban locations?

It is not clear on what basis this question is asked. Higher education comprises major national infrastructure. Like any other important national infrastructure, the cost is ultimately born by the tax payer, while in the case of universities there are also still further contributions by students both local and international.

It is not clear why the Accord panel seeks suggestions or perhaps justifications, for funding higher education infrastructure in a manner fundamentally separate from that of other important national infrastructure. For this reason, we have no special comment to make.

6.47. Q47 What structure of Commonwealth funding is needed for the higher education sector for the system to be sustainable over the next two decades?

We argue that by unhitching the burden of graduate debt, the national economy would improve (Section 6.12).

We also argue that by removing the current burdens on academic productivity that are imposed by university management disconnected from academic values and interfering with academic freedom (Section 3), and by implementing the changes we recommend (Sections 4 and 6), that there would be: improved academic productivity in research; improved quality of teaching; and improved engagement with industry and other stakeholders. This would reasonably be expected to add to improved national economic performance.

The flexible and adaptable university system attuned to community and international needs that would result, would be inherently sustainable.

We point out, however, that current arrangements in universities are unsustainable and failing (Section 3), and that they must be addressed (Section 4) to achieve sustainability and for universities to prosper.

6.48. Q48 What principles should underpin the setting of student contributions and Higher Education Loan Program arrangements?

We argue that HECS/HELP, student contributions and any further loans system, is contradictory to the flourishing of universities and the Nation (Section 6.12).

We argue that such debt inducing burdens damage not only students and graduates, but the Nation at large, so that we recommend their removal (Section 6.12), not entrenchment with tailored guidelines.

6.49. Q49 Which aspects of the JRG package should be altered, and which should be retained?

We describe university governance as currently disconnected from academic values, and hence failing to properly serve the function of universities (Sections 3.1 to 3.6). We give examples of how this causes damage to students and their education (Section 3.5).

We describe the importance of academic freedom, and how this is necessary for academics to best deliver their services to students, and how this is undermined by poor university governance disconnected from academic values (Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

The Job Ready Graduates Package makes no mention of these issues.

We make recommendations for improving university governance based on academic values that would improve the quality of education and job readiness (Sections 4.1 to 4.7), and outline a roadmap that the Federal Government could follow to achieve implementation (Section 4.8). We suggest that our recommendations should be expressed in the Job Readiness Package.

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