

## **INNOVATION AND INCLUSION AT HEART OF BIGGEST HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW IN NEARLY 15 YEARS**

**16 November 2022**

Innovation, opportunity and inclusion will be central to the success of the biggest shake-up to Higher Education in almost 15 years, according to the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN).

The Terms of Reference for the long-awaited Australian Universities Accord confirm that the university sector will be pivotal to driving Australia's innovation-led economy, building a skills-based workforce and solidifying our place in the region.

ATN Executive Director, Luke Sheehy said the ATN supports the Government's approach.

"It's clear the plan is for our universities to embrace students of all walks of life, and universities will provide them with necessary tools and skills needed to be successful in the world of work," Mr Sheehy said.

"Education Minister, Jason Clare, has demonstrated a keen desire to listen and consult widely across the sector and political spectrum. This reform is about meeting Australia's knowledge and skills needs, now and in the future, and ensuring we deliver new knowledge, innovation and capabilities.

"This is big ticket reform - which is very much in the Labor tradition and will be as important as the Bradley and Dawkins reviews were in their era - all of which will help build our most resilient and dynamic communities.

"ATN is pleased that the late Professor Denise Bradley AC, her work and her impact are a guiding force for this significant reform. As one of the founders of ATN, Professor Bradley's work and impact is evident in the work undertaken at our members every day - importantly with students as the clear focus," said Mr Sheehy.

"There is a clear appetite from the Minister for bold reforms in the mould of previous Labor Governments such as HECS, the demand driven system and equity and participation programs," added ATN Chair, Professor Iain Martin.

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We welcome that ambition and the focus on lifelong learning, equity and excellence.”

ATN looks forward to working closely with what is an eminent and bipartisan Expert Panel:

Professor Mary O’Kane AC (scientist and engineer, Chair of the Independent Planning Commission of New South Wales)

- The Hon. Jenny Macklin (Vice-Chancellor’s Fellow – University of Melbourne and Former Minister for Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs)
- Ms Shemara Wikramanayake (Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Group)
- The Hon. Fiona Nash (Australia’s first Regional Education Commissioner and former NSW Minister for Regional Development and Communications)
- Professor Barney Glover AO (Vice-Chancellor and President of Western Sydney University)
- Professor Larissa Behrendt AO (Director of Research at Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at University of Technology Sydney).

ATN looks forward to working together with Minister Clare and his Ministerial Reference Group, to ensure the voices of students, staff and important stakeholders are heard.

“This is a once in a generation opportunity for us in Higher Education to work side-by-side, leaning on the best and brightest in the sector in order to forge the future path and build a better, more inclusive and brilliant system befitting incoming students,” Professor Martin concluded.

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The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) was established in 1999 and brings together Australia’s six real world universities focused on enterprise, impact and finding solutions to issues facing our rapidly changing economy and society. Our member universities are Curtin University, Deakin University, RMIT University, The University of Newcastle, University of South Australia, and University of Technology Sydney. Our universities produce Australia’s most job-ready graduates and undertake world-class research with real-world impact. Through our innovation we are proud disruptors challenging the status quo. ATN universities provide world-class education to almost 310,000 students and teach 20 per cent of domestic higher education students and 19 per cent of international students. We are the fastest-growing university grouping in terms of domestic students. Together, we are proud of who we include, not exclude, with a strong commitment of equity, excellence, and social justice. ATN is one of Australia’s leading university peak bodies with a track record of advocating and shaping positive policy outcomes with all levels of government.

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