

ATN UNIVERSITIES BUDGET RESPONSE

TUESDAY 9 MAY 2023

The Federal Budget handed down by Treasurer Jim Chalmers tonight has delivered significant cost of living relief for worthy Australians, including many thousands of students.

Universities play a central role in laying the foundations for a fairer, more inclusive Australia starting with providing people with the skills they need for work.

ATN Universities Chair, Professor Harlene Hayne CNZM, has welcomed the suite of transformative measures laid out by the Albanese Government.

“This is a considered Budget that targets urgent areas of need; it boosts income support for students; provides additional university places and breaks down barriers for anyone wanting to get a university education. This is a crucial down payment on building a fairer go and providing the ability for people to participate in our economy,” Prof Hayne said.

“We have long called for better support for students and are relieved that the Federal Government has listened. The increase in support payments is long overdue and absolutely welcome, as is the increased support for students with disability to access and succeed at university.

“It is also pleasing to see key investment in areas of teaching, nursing, psychology and early childhood education, where there are currently critical shortages. This will go a long way to help ensure that Australia has adequate supply of these much-needed skills.”

The additional 4,000 university places for STEM disciplines to support the AUKUS program will ensure universities are central to Australia’s defence capability strengthening.

This Budget lays the foundations for a highly skilled and advanced economy by making key scalable investments to develop industries like quantum technologies, artificial intelligence and critical minerals. Initiatives like the Industry Growth Program will supercharge these industries by backing SMEs and startups.

ATN also strongly welcomes the more than \$5 billion investment to enable the new national skills agreement, additional fee-free VET and TAFE places, further support for foundation skills programs and apprenticeships.

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ATN has also welcomed the Government's commitment to its second tranche of the 20,000 additional university places in 2024, of which one in four will be delivered by our universities.

"And of course, there is still more to do through the Universities Accord which is currently under way. It will give us the opportunity to put equity at the heart of our system," Prof Hayne added.

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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 to 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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