

8 June 2017

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary:

**Inquiry into the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment Bill
2017**

Swinburne University of Technology welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 (the Bill).

Australia is fortunate to have a university sector that is internationally-competitive, supports excellence in higher education and provides equity of access and quality educational outcomes for students. While Swinburne is supportive of certain elements of the Bill, there are a number of features of

Professor Linda Kristjansson
Vice-Chancellor and President

Swinburne's key concern regarding the reform package proposed in 2014 was the inflationary risk of deregulated university fees, with public commentary from providers at the time confirming the likelihood of this development.¹ Swinburne also noted the additional risk posed by the design of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) which ensures that students incur no upfront costs for

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their tuition. Given that students can defer loan repayments for many years, we observed that students could incur far larger debts than they reasonably should, as no 'price pain' was experienced at the time of purchase.²

While Swinburne is pleased that the significant and hasty 2014 deregulation agenda is off the table in these new proposals, and the previously announced 20% cut to the Commonwealth Grant

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Given the evidence-based, transformative effect of higher education, maintaining and increasing access and reducing financial barriers for students is crucial to both Australia's future economic

success and aspirations for a resilient, equitable society. Quinlan contends that to cut funding to a sector

is to cut the future of the nation. The Government's proposed cuts to higher education funding are a direct attack on the future of the nation.

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Similarly, the prospect of having funding tied to graduate employment outcomes is poorly conceived, as universities have no control over such outcomes. Further, the Government's Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), the only significant data collected relating to outcomes, is taken voluntarily by limited

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For Oxbridge, the ability to offer a greater number of sub-bachelor places will help us to improve the

academic skills and preparedness of students to undertake a Bachelor level qualification. Sub-bachelor studies are also an attractive entry point for students who are returning to study after a long

Post-graduate scholarships

Government's proposed postgraduate scholarship scheme would be administered. Swinburn is

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concerned that there is potential for scholarships to be awarded in a non-transparent manner.

Spinby strongly believes that Australia's future prosperity is dependent on strong investment in

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