

To: Ms Jessie Borthwick,  
Acting Deputy Secretary, Higher Education Reform and Support, DET

From: Prof John Rice  
Executive Director, Australian Council of Deans of Science

Date: April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016-04-19

Re: Milbourne Report, university science and mathematics education

I seek to raise the concerns of the ACDS over

- Failure to establish the institute envisaged in the Milbourne Report in advance of the closure of the OLT
- The limited capacity of such an institute to support the goals of the [ACDS Teaching and Learning Centre](#)

I draw attention to the work of the ACDS T&L Centre

- In establishing and supporting the ‘Science TLOs’, a set of standards for science degrees endorsed by the ACDS and now widely used as a national reference point for course and curriculum reviews. The TLOs emphasise broad transferable skills alongside discipline specific knowledge and represent a decisive shift away from content and process focussed thinking.
- In developing a program, via the support of the Office of the Chief Scientist, to build organisational capacity in science faculties for work integrated learning and industry engagement.
- In establishing the First Year in Science network, a national transdisciplinary network capable of addressing the student experience for commencing students, curriculum coherence, and the organisational challenges of managing large cohorts of diverse students in which the emphasis is on ‘service’ teaching. This network could provide the university side of a national interface for secondary and tertiary science education.

I believe that a centre of this scope and influence would not exist without the national impetus provided by the ALTC and then the OLT.

This is not merely a matter of providing funds for projects, as important as that is. The most important aspect of the ALTC/OLT was in bringing tertiary education out of the tea-rooms and onto a national stage. The kind of cultural change to T&L that this makes possible is very important for science. It aligns the cultural processes by which change and innovation can occur in teaching and learning with those that apply in research, enabling teaching and learning to gain priority and status.

This aspect of a national centre is severely underplayed in the Milbourne Report. Given the massive cultural change that is implied by the National Innovation and Science Agenda and various other influences on the horizon, this is a highly significant issue.

I seek assurance from Government that provision for a national institute for teaching and learning will not be excised from the Federal Budget.

I ask that the role and scope of such a national institute be reconsidered in the light of the issues that I have raised.

I should appreciate an opportunity to discuss these matters further.