


COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN
DIRECTORS OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

CADAD is a non-profit organisation that is not registered for GST. ABN 48 669 069 291

April 26, 2016

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Minister@education.gov.au

Dear Senator Birmingham,

I write this letter as President of the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) on behalf of its members. CADAD is the peak professional body of Directors who have responsibility for academic development within their universities, with the aim to promote and advance research, policy and practice as it relates to the leadership, management and development of higher education learning and teaching in Australia.

We are aware that that the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) will close on 30 June 2016 and that as yet no new entity has been established to replace it. The recommendation of the independent review report commissioned by your Government and conducted by Professor Ross Milbourne proposed a new National Institute for Learning and Teaching and recommended a mission, a set of objectives and a set of guiding principles, as well as a governance structure, for such a body. The members of CADAD request that you act on Professor Milbourne's report and establish a National Institute.

The students in our Australian higher education institutions are the beneficiaries of the investment that has been made to date through the significant initiatives that have been undertaken to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. Professor Milbourne's report, points to the sustained improvements in student outcomes and credits the government's investment in learning and teaching sector initiatives for this success.

Higher education in Australia delivers a high quality and well regarded service to an increasingly international market – our third largest export industry. Maintaining our position requires the demonstrable measurement of excellence, and maintaining and extending the high reputation of quality education that is enjoyed by the sector nationally.

As a sector-wide representative body we acknowledge and applaud your Government's commitment to supporting the strategically important research agenda and its underlying infrastructure to drive an innovation agenda. As such, we believe that a proportion of the proposed \$1.1 billion of investment would be productively invested through initiatives that ensure the universities also focus on innovation in teaching and learning within which our future national innovators and researchers will be developed. The Office for Learning and Teaching and its predecessors have pro-

vided this investment to date. Investment in teaching and learning is as critical to achieve the Government's vision of an innovation nation as is investment in research.

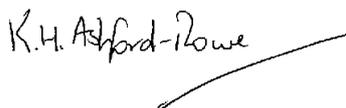
I direct your attention to the extensive evidence that has been provided over many years that detail the value and success that the programs funded by the OLT and its predecessor organisations have had in enhancing both teaching excellence and our students' learning and experience in Australian universities and tertiary institutions, albeit with a very modest investment. The evidence is overwhelmingly positive and is documented in independently substantiated evaluation reports, commissioned evaluations and Government commissioned reports. In addition, the outcomes are documented and published in highly regarded peer reviewed journals, presented in conferences and public forums - all subject to public scrutiny and verification.

These include the independent project evaluations for each funded project, good practice reports that represent a meta-analysis and summative evaluation of projects and fellowships completed in strategically important areas. Examples include 'Assessment of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics students' (2011), 'Technology enabled learning' (2011), 'Assuring graduate outcomes' (2011), 'Revitalising the academic workforce' (2012) and 'Assuring learning outcomes and standards' (2014). The ongoing impact of grants are further supported by reviews conducted by distinguished scholars such as Professor Kwong Lee Dow on the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (2009) and a further report commissioned by the Government and carried out by Professor Allison Johns (2011) that attest to the importance of investment in learning and teaching innovation and research in the sector.

To date, our University sector has maintained its status and reputation as a provider of excellent quality teaching and learning in comparison to international benchmarks. This standing is very much predicated on the commitment our Governments' have demonstrated in pursuing a robust quality assurance agenda, underpinned by an exemplary model of quality enhancement through initiatives provided by the programs of the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and its predecessors. The loss of any momentum in this direction will be felt by our students who are increasingly being required to fund a higher proportion of their education.

The Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) urges the Minister to ensure that innovation in teaching and learning is promoted and supported by his government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.H. Ashford-Rowe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Professor Kevin Ashford-Rowe
President
Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development

C.C. Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry,
Senator Richard Di Natale Leader of the Australian Greens,
Senator Nick Xenophon Senator for South Australia.