



ABN 34 934 186 186

**President: Professor Moses Tadé**

Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor:  
Faculty of Science and Engineering, Curtin University  
T: 08 9266 4800  
email: M.O.Tade@curtin.edu.au

26 April 2016

The Hon Senator Simon Birmingham  
Minister for Education and Training  
Australian Government  
[Minister@education.gov.au](mailto:Minister@education.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Re: Future Arrangements for the Former Office of Learning and Teaching**

I write on behalf of the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) to express the Council's concern about the uncertain future for the operations of the Office of Learning and Teaching, in the form of the proposed National Institute for Teaching and Learning.

Over the past decade or so the grants, fellowships and awards programs of the OLT, and its predecessors, the ALTC and the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching, have continued to make critical contributions to the quality of education provided by Australian universities. Overall, these programs have, without question, improved graduates' learning outcomes and employability, transformed the performance and status of teaching and learning in our universities, and contributed to the high standing in which Australian higher education practice and research are held across the world. The OLT programs continue to be required to address the many challenges in higher education through national leadership and collaboration in teaching and learning, not least in the STEM disciplines that are clearly critical to the nation's future.

For the engineering discipline, the 36 member institutions of ACED have all contributed to and benefitted from the grants, fellowships and awards programs of the OLT and its predecessors. Through these programs, the OLT model of collaboration and outcomes dissemination has supported our faculty members' staff to provide high quality engineering education to an ever growing proportion of the 11,000 graduates of engineering degrees, now being produced nationally each year. These graduates will enter practice in engineering and other fields, and will use their knowledge and skills in complex problem solving and design that will be surely essential in realising good outcomes from future infrastructure investment and the innovation agenda. Recent graduates have benefitted directly from many OLT projects. Recent OLT grants to engineering have been focussed on contemporary and emerging issues including students' employability skills (work integrated learning), the use of virtual work environments, and high quality team and project work.

In our submission to the Review of the OLT undertaken by Professor Ross Milbourne, we argued that the annual value of OLT grants in engineering (estimated to be about 0.2 per cent of faculty income) has leveraged many institutional initiatives to improve performance in teaching and learning, increase collaboration between universities, and increase sharing of the best-practice educational methods. The OLT and its predecessors have contributed strongly to positioning Australia amongst global leaders in engineering education. We also note that leadership in Australian engineering education is well distributed amongst all parts of our university system. The neutrality of the OLT with respect to the system has been

---

ACED Inc. is incorporated in New South Wales

Contact: Emeritus Professor Robin King  
Consultant to the Australian Council of Engineering Deans Inc.  
167 Boundary Road, North Epping, NSW 2121

T: 02 9868 3113  
M: 0418 823 415  
E: robin.king@uts.edu.au

of immense value. In short, for our discipline, the OLT has had impact out of proportion to its size and funding.

We seek assurance from Government that funding provision for the proposed National Institute for Teaching and Learning will not be cut from the Federal Budget in May, and that the Institute will be rapidly established to continue in its proven and essential roles of support for high quality teaching and learning in Australian universities.

I and my ACED colleagues would be pleased to discuss these matters further with you and your team.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Moses Tadé**  
President, ACED Inc.

Copies to:

Minister's Advisor, Alex Polson, [alex.polson@education.gov.au](mailto:alex.polson@education.gov.au)

Executive Assistant to Jessie Borthwick, [Sylvia.Tobler@education.gov.au](mailto:Sylvia.Tobler@education.gov.au), for the attention of:  
Jessie Borthwick, Acting Deputy Secretary, Higher Education Reform and Support, DET  
Dr James Hart, Acting GM Higher Education, DET  
Dom English, Group Manager, Research and Economic Group, DET

Labor Shadow Minister for Education & Training, Senator Kim Carr, [senator.carr@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.carr@aph.gov.au)

The Greens Education spokesperson, Senator Robert Simms, [Senator.Simms@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.Simms@aph.gov.au)