



The Education Revolution: challenges facing Higher Education

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The aspiration



“... We need to set for ourselves a new national vision – for Australia to become the most educated country, the most skilled economy and the best trained workforce in the world.”

Kevin Rudd MP and Stephen Smith MP, *The Australian Economy Needs an Education Revolution*, ALP, January 2007

The government goals



- “Core organising principles”:
 - responsible economic management
 - building a modern Australia; and
 - meeting the challenges of the future

Responsible economic management



- Fiscal discipline
- Savings encouragement
- Improving current account balance
- Solving skills shortages

Building a modern Australia



- Workforce participation
- Infrastructure enhancement
- Productivity growth
- Innovation and ideas

Meeting the challenges of the future



- International understanding
- Ecological sustainability
- Social opportunity and inclusion
- Cultural excellence
- Regional and community development
- Federalism reform

Universities Australia's role



- To affirm that universities contribute to each and every one of these goals
- To enunciate clearly how this is presently being done in each case

Universities Australia's role



- To define how this contribution can be enhanced into the future – by government and by universities themselves
- To ensure that decision-makers understand the universities' contribution and the reforms needed to enhance that contribution

What's needed?: The three F's



- Funding
- Flexibility
- Fairness

Going forward funded

- Improved public investment in universities to ensure we do not fall further behind international competitor nations
- Indexation of core university funding for teaching, research and research infrastructure
- HEEF supplementation from Budget surplus

National investment strategies

- The recently announced European targets:
 - 2% of GDP for education
 - 3% of GDP for R&D
- Should we be adopting similar strategies?
- Rhetoric and Reality in government: universities last and least

Going forward flexibly



- “Removing the foot of government” : HEWRRs and Governance, COAG and beyond
- Compacts for university missions: research, teaching, engagement and innovative activities
- Rhetoric and Reality in government: pork-barrelling, control, uniformity

Going forward fairly



- Building social inclusion through equity and access to higher education for all eligible students
- Equity :
 - Age of independence – 18 instead of 25
 - Non-government scholarships & bursaries not to be counted as assessable income for Centrelink benefits
 - National Internships Scheme with working wage
 - Tertiary Student Computer Fund

Mutual Responsibility



- The importance of reciprocal responsibility for gaining commitment
- Applying this to HR: recruitment, retention, remuneration, development, motivation, etc
- Need for best practice processes both for intrinsic benefits and to avoid the Bishop critique
- Watch this space