



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

Media Release

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Room to move, Room to excel

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee today released its statement *Room to move, Room to Excel – Commonwealth and State Regulation of Universities* issued in response to the Federal Government's recent consultation paper *Building Better Foundations for Higher Education: a discussion about re-aligning Commonwealth-State responsibilities*.

The AVCC welcomed the balanced discussion in *Building Better Foundations* and the Government's recognition that there are several viable options for responsibility for higher education.

AVCC President Professor Di Yerbury said Vice-Chancellors do not support a regulatory framework in which the Commonwealth assumes full responsibility for universities. Rather, they favour transparent, nationally coherent and uniform laws across Commonwealth and State jurisdictions.

"Each university needs 'Room to Move' to fulfil the academic mission set by its Council. Councils are established by legislation and are responsible for overseeing the direction of the university, consistent with its enabling legislation," Professor Yerbury said.

"Universities are subject to Commonwealth and State requirements which, in combination, restrict the capacity of each university to pursue its mission effectively. However, it is not realistic for one level of government to take full responsibility for universities because of their various local, State, national and international roles.

"Commonwealth and State governments need to develop a cooperative regulatory and reporting framework that gives universities greater capacity to pursue their missions. This should replace the current arrangements whereby levels of government impose requirements without sufficient consideration of the other," she said.

"The AVCC believes full Commonwealth authority runs the risk that at times of conflict between universities and the Government, a government - of any political hue - with funding, administrative and legislative control, would face no barriers to imposing its position on universities.

"Clearly, the present arrangements have some weaknesses. The AVCC looks forward to working with the Government to ensure any changes are workable and advantageous to all concerned," Professor Yerbury said.

The AVCC statement is available at www.avcc.edu.au/roomtomove

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