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Universities Australia applauds Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education

Universities Australia is impressed by the bold vision for the sector evident in the Review of Australian Higher Education jointly released today by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP and the Chair of the Review Panel, Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC.

The Review report outlines crucial recommendations to the Government to reform higher education and maintain Australia's position as a world class higher education system, one which is the cornerstone of investment in the future of the nation.

"Universities Australia supports the call to increase the number of Australians who hold a bachelor-level qualification to 40 per cent of the population, and to raise the number of students from low socio-economic groups to 20 per cent of undergraduate enrolments. These targets are realistic, have funding attached to their implementation, and are necessary to further build our nation and economy and protect Australia against skills shortages," said Dr Glenn Withers, Universities Australia Chief Executive.

"We are delighted that many of the recommendations reflect Universities Australia's submission to the Review. These include increased public investment in teaching, including appropriate indexation; support for covering the full cost of research, initially by increasing the level of research block grant funding; serious financial support for students in need; improvements to increase participation in higher education among students from equity groups; and a focus on reducing the reliance on cross-subsidising university budgets from international student fees," Dr Withers said.

"The report presents some challenges for the higher education sector in terms of the recommendations for a national accreditation body; a student demand-driven entitlement system; new arrangements for federal and state responsibilities; and reforms to higher education provision in the regions. Universities Australia is confident it can collaborate with the Government to ensure any such changes are appropriate and work for the future of the Australian economy, society and environment, and for universities, staff and students alike," Dr Withers said.

This landmark report contains detailed information on all the recommendations as well as costings for their implementation.

"Universities Australia is analysing the report in detail and will provide feedback to the Government early in 2009 outlining the impact the recommendations will have for Australian universities," Dr Withers said.

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