

# Australian Technology Network

FIVE UNIVERSITIES: ONE VISION



Curtin University  
of Technology



University of  
South Australia



RMIT University



University of Technology,  
Sydney



Queensland University  
of Technology

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **HIGHER ED CHANGES PROVIDE A FIRM STARTING POINT FOR REFORM - ATN**

The Australian Technology Network (*ATN*) says much progress has been made in delivering to Australia's universities, their students and staff, a higher education reform package that will set the agenda for the next decade and beyond.

However, the ATN says whilst negotiations have already taken place which have provided the Senate with a piece of legislation which is a good starting point for the sector, there remain areas in which we would urge the Government and the independents to continue to negotiate.

The ATN has welcomed measures which will remove an interest rate on student fees and ensure that Commonwealth Learning Scholarships will not be subject to the social security income test. ATN Convener and Vice-Chancellor of Queensland University of Technology, Peter Coaldrake, said the Government must continue to work with universities to improve opportunities for participation and lifelong learning, particularly among disadvantaged groups.

"The ATN is committed to providing lifelong learning and, in particular, work-related education and training for all who can benefit from it," he said.

"We also believe a review of the indexation of higher education funding is a valuable element in the package under consideration. However we would question the timing and implementation (currently proposed for 2007-2008). Indexation is an important part of protecting the Commonwealth's investment in higher education and whilst a review is a start, the sector is looking for certainty in terms of government funding. In this context, remain concerned by the linking of essential funding increases to workplace reform and governance changes.

"As the group representing some 170,000 students and 13,000 staff, we support the position articulated by the AVCC and urge the both the Government and the Senators to reach a good compromise now and ensure that the legislation that is passed is as good as it can be," Professor Coaldrake said.

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