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MEDIA RELEASE

INDEXATION CRUCIAL FOR UNIVERSITY FUNDING CERTAINTY - ATN

The Australian Technology Network (ATN), which represents some 175,000 university students across the nation, says the Federal Government must maintain the value of the taxpayer's investment in higher education by committing to indexation as a matter of urgency.

ATN Executive Director, Vicki Thomson, said indexation remains a key issue for the university sector.

"The Howard Government committed to a review of indexation late last year however we are yet to see the details as to how and when that review will unfold.

"In a market driven environment, the price paid by Government for the delivery of student load should keep better pace with the actual costs of delivery. The latter is increasing steeply, not just because of unfunded enterprise bargaining, but also because of capital costs.

"Maintaining quality means maintaining the value of the taxpayer's investment and there is clearly an urgent case for adjustments by an index that is closer to realistic wage outcomes," Ms Thomson said.

"As it stands now the funding shortfall created by inadequate indexation has led to larger class sizes and reduced student staff contact time. It also has long term implications for the quality of university teaching and research.

"The current gap between indexation and real salary costs cost universities more than half a billion dollars a year and the ATN believes increasing indexation is crucial to protect the value of the Government's investment in university infrastructure."

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