



17 September 2012

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Education and Employment
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Committee Secretary,

I write this submission on behalf of the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) in support of Schedule 3 of the Higher Education Standards Amendment (Maximum Payment Amounts and Other Measures) Bill 2012 (the Bill) which relates to disclosure of information between DIISRTE and agencies including TEQSA.

The ATN support the Bill as a means of reducing the burden on universities of reporting directly to TEQSA.

The caveat for this support is an assurance that provider consent will be sought for disclosure of information to external agencies outside of TEQSA as per the conditions of the disclosure of information noted in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill:

“Where the information is provided by a higher education provider or a VET provider, then the Secretary of the Department may only disclose the information to the staff of the other providers or other bodies or associations determined by the Minister if the provider consents to that disclosure”.

Upon the enacting of the Bill, the ATN would expect that TEQSA and its staff provided access to personal information would be bound by Section 179 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and subject to the penalties described therein for inappropriate or unauthorised disclosure.

The ATN would consider an invitation to be consulted further on conditions of the disclosure of information to external parties outside of TEQSA.

The ATN brings together five of the most innovative and enterprising universities in Australia. We are committed to forging partnerships with industry and government to deliver practical results through focused research. ATN universities teach over 200,000 students, or almost 20% of Australia’s student population. With 1 in 4 international students choosing to study at an ATN university, we are also the largest provider of international education, both with our onshore and offshore students. We enrol 19% of Australia’s low SES students, 14% of disabled students and 17% of indigenous students.

Yours sincerely

Vicki Thomson
Executive Director
Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN)