

John Carter, Committee Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

28 August 2007

Dear Mr Carter,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into the provisions of the *Higher Education Endowment Fund Bill 2007*. The Academy is pleased to see the higher education sector targeted to benefit from the recent and future budget surpluses, and agrees that this is an important measure to help secure Australia's future social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

The Academy respectfully recommends that the legislation be amended to include specification of procedures for: the appointment of Advisory Board members; the selection criteria for grants; and the range of capital expenditures and research facilities that are to be eligible for funding.

However, if these matters are to be determined by regulation instead, we would hope that the sector will have the opportunity to comment on draft guidelines.

In respect of appointments made under clause 40 (2), the Academy would like to see selection procedures in place that ensure that the Board enjoys the confidence of the sector, and includes persons with a range of expertise, experience and disciplinary background.

In respect of Grants made under clause 45 (1), the Academy would be keen to ensure that a full range of capital expenditures would be eligible and indeed encouraged, including expenditures on facilities that support teaching and learning, community engagement, knowledge transfer and campus life, as well as research. For instance, it is our experience that many university staff and students would nominate their libraries as the area most in need of the kind of support for capital expenditure that the HEEF will make available.

In respect of Grants made under clause 45 (2), the Academy would be concerned that funding is allocated to research facilities of outstanding quality and/or significant potential, regardless of discipline; and that the HEEF is devoted to supporting research across the board, rather than simply duplicating other measures devoted primarily or exclusively to science research.

Please do let me know if you would like any further elaboration on our advice.

Best regards,

Dr John Byron
Executive Director