



The Hon Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education

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Interim Australian Tertiary Education Commission  
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*Barney, Tom & Fiona*

Dear Commissioners

I am writing to outline my expectations of the interim Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC). As you are aware, subject to the passage of legislation currently before Parliament, the ATEC will be formally established as steward of the higher education system. Once this occurs, an updated letter of expectation will be provided to the formally appointed ATEC Commissioners.

Your leadership during this interim period will continue to shape the foundations of the future ATEC and will be critical to guiding the sector through this transition period. In addition to the complexities of moving from the current funding system for Commonwealth supported places to the new managed growth and needs-based funding system, providers will need to prepare for negotiations on new mission-based compacts and take action to address challenges facing the sector, including improving university governance and addressing racism on campuses.

The Government has set a clear direction for the ATEC to focus on expanding access, lifting national tertiary attainment, and ensuring the system is fair, sustainable and able to meet Australia's long-term skills needs. Achieving this requires strong system stewardship and a coordinated effort to improve access and outcomes for students from under-represented backgrounds.

I seek your leadership across several strategic priorities that will support stability and clarity during transition:

**Managed Growth Funding System:** Engagement with universities to reinforce the principles of the Managed Growth Funding System as it moves toward implementation, including responsible load management, sustainable pathways for all universities and clear expectations on the transition toward fully funded student load over time. These priorities are to reflect the Government's expectations of lifting participation of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, First Nations students, and students from regional and remote Australia, alignment with national skills needs, and ensuring the sustainability of all universities as they transition to the new funding system.

**Student demand:** A systems approach to managing student demand in 2026 will be important. I ask that you support universities to prepare for expected demand pressures in a way that maintains system integrity and ensures access for students. Universities will need clarity on the transitional arrangements, and it will be important that they understand the principles that underpin decisions and how they can contribute to stability and sustainability across the sector.

**Equity and participation:** The Government has high expectations for equity and participation in tertiary education. I ask you to reflect this expectation with strong tertiary system stewardship and a coordinated effort to improve access and outcomes for students from under-represented backgrounds.

**Tertiary Harmonisation:** Strengthening coherence across the tertiary system and supporting more seamless student pathways is critical to lifting tertiary education attainment levels. I ask you continue to drive the development of a tertiary harmonisation roadmap in 2026. Alongside this, I ask you to work with the sector to develop a national credit recognition framework that can be implemented by universities from 1 January 2027.

This framework should build on the work some universities are doing to better recognise vocational education and training qualifications, which increase pathways and save students both time and money. I ask that you develop this framework with the Department of Education, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Jobs and Skills Australia and in close collaboration with state and territory governments. Future allocation processes are to prioritise the additional Commonwealth supported places available from 2027 onwards to universities that adopt this framework.

**Costing and pricing:** I ask that you continue the Interim ATEC's work on better understanding the costs of teaching and learning to assist the ATEC to provide advice on the overall higher education funding levels per student.

**Teaching Professionalisation:** I ask that you continue the work on professionalisation of teaching in higher education through the progression of advice developed by the Enhancing Professional Practice in Higher Education Working Group and any other sources of advice that you deem necessary.

**Threshold standards:** I ask that you support the Higher Education Standards Panel to continue their work in advising changes to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 to ensure higher education institutions demonstrate a commitment to address racism and improve university governance.

I will write to you on any role the ATEC will have in determining 2027 allocations of international student commencements for higher education providers in due course.

Your leadership during this period is essential to guiding the sector through transition while maintaining momentum on long term reform. Thank you for your commitment and partnership and I look forward to continuing to work with you to build a better and fairer tertiary education system.

I have copied this letter to the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training.

Yours sincerely



JASON CLARE

4/3/2026

Cc. The Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Skills and Training