

Go8 RECOMMENDS COMPACTS MODEL

The Federal Government is currently consulting with universities about the form of mission based compacts.

In an effort to inform the consultation, the Go8 has published a policy paper describing the potential role of compacts in a student-driven higher education context.

The Government's vision is for a responsive and high quality higher education system. A partnership approach, which recognises institutional autonomy and is based on mutual respect, will be necessary to achieve enhanced education outcomes for students and improved performance in research and research training.

The Government's policy decision to remove funding caps on the number of student places will increase the responsiveness of the sector and give universities greater flexibility in the courses they offer and the students they admit. Compacts can provide the mechanism for alerting the Government to risk of closure for fields of study that may be considered important for Australia and can become the vehicle in which to put in place complementary arrangements for protecting fields of learning that may not be sustainable in the more deregulated environment and on the basis of student demand alone.

The Go8's suggested approach to compacts is guided by four principles:

- **Dynamism:** Australian higher education needs to be responsive to changing needs and circumstances and always improving.
- **Specialisation:** Universities offering higher degrees by research (HDR) must be able to demonstrate that they can provide the right intellectual environment for quality research training.
- **University autonomy and social responsibility:** In order for universities to play their full role, on the one hand, they should be free to decide who they will employ as staff, who they will enrol as students, what and how they teach, what and how they research, and how they manage their internal operations; while on the other hand, they should have regard to broader public interests and contribute to the provision of education and related services.
- **Transparency:** Public resources for universities should be allocated in an open and accountable way.

The Go8 suggests that to ensure transparency, external participants should be involved in the agreement setting process and at review points in the life of the compact. People with extensive experience in universities can ensure performance targets are realistic. It would be expected that the external party could help achieve coherence across different objectives for teaching and learning, and research.

Ideally agreements would cover a five year time period, with a mid-term review. The re-negotiation of the compact would commence in the final year of the agreement including an extensive assessment of performance against stated objectives. At any point in the agreement either party could request a review.

The Go8 compacts model is available in full at www.go8.edu.au.



Go8 POLICY STATEMENTS

The Go8 responded to a variety of parliamentary and government inquiries in August.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WELFARE

The Go8 submission to the Senate's inquiry into international student welfare made recommendations aimed at ridding the Australian system of unsatisfactory providers and their overseas recruitment agents. It further highlighted the need to embrace the reciprocal benefits of genuine internationalisation in education, including educating Australians to understand, respect and value cultural diversity at home and abroad. The Go8 submission can be downloaded at www.go8.edu.au.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL STUDENTS

The Go8 submission to the Senate's inquiry into access to education opportunities for rural and regional students supported better targeting of limited public funds to provide support to those students most in need. The Go8 welcomes the removal of university scholarships from the income test—which will mean more regional and remote students who receive these scholarships will not have their income support reduced.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH

The Go8 provided feedback on the NHMRC's draft National Strategy for Medical Research and Public Health Research. The Go8 emphasised that a priority for the strategy is to develop and maintain Australia's medical and health research environment including a sustainable research work force which delivers world class biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research.



The Go8 welcomes its newest board member, Professor Ed Byrne AO, Vice-Chancellor of Monash University.

Professor Byrne is a pioneering neuroscientist, who has had a distinguished career in medicine, scientific research and academic management.

Professor Byrne commenced as Vice-Chancellor at Monash University in July 2009. Prior to taking up this position, he was Vice Provost (Health) at University College London from 2007 to 2009 and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University between 2003 and 2007.

He holds a first class Honours degree from The University of Tasmania and a Doctor of Science from The University of Melbourne.

Professor Byrne was admitted as an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2006.

Go8 EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIPS

A reminder that applications for next year's Go8 European Fellowships are now open and will close on 30 October 2009.

Eight Fellowships are awarded each year to early career researchers from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. Applications must be supported by an academic staff member at a Go8 member university.

Go8 Fellows receive benefits worth \$20,000 to travel to Australia and work at a Go8 university for up to six months.

The scheme recognises the importance of international contacts for early career researchers and plays an important role in building Go8 research partnerships in Europe.

Further information is available at www.go8.edu.au.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Go8 Research Directors meet in Perth on 3–4 September
- Go8 Student Services Directors meet in Perth on 3–4 September
- Go8 Deans of Engineering meet in Canberra on 10–11 September
- Go8 Advancement Directors meet in Perth on 15–16 September
- Go8 Academic Policy committee meets in Melbourne on 22 September
- Go8 Vice-Chancellors meet in Sydney on 24 September
- Go8 Chief Finance Officers meet in Canberra on 30 October

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The *Go8 Update* is published online to keep the Go8 network of committees and staff at Go8 universities informed about the organisation's activities.

Past editions are available at www.go8.edu.au.

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