



# VOTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## SENATE INQUIRY INTO UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: WHY IT MUST CONTINUE

**The current Senate inquiry into university governance represents a critical opportunity to address the longstanding governance crisis plaguing Australia's higher education sector.**

As the federal election approaches, the NTEU firmly believes this vital work must continue regardless of which party forms government after the May poll.

Australian universities are mired in an unprecedented governance crisis. The Senate inquiry has already exposed shocking governance practices. Much of this has been done by NTEU members through hundreds of written submissions and brave evidence given to senators at public hearings.

Committee Chair Senator Tony Sheldon described Universities Australia's "lack of shame" as breathtaking after the peak body made a one-and-a-half page submission which suggested governance was largely not their problem.

"That notion that they can step back from it and that they can not look this governance crisis in the eye is frankly insulting to staff and students, who are, as we know, under intense pressure," NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said, in response to a question from Senator Mehreen Faruqi who described UA's submission as a cop out.

The NTEU has presented substantial evidence to the inquiry, highlighting how current governance models have led to:

- » An explosion of insecure work which now sees two-thirds of all staff in casual or fixed-term roles
- » Incoherent and inconsistent decision making, including excessive restructures
- » More than 300 executives earning more than state premiers, and the average vice-chancellor pocketing \$1 million a year

- » Silencing of staff and student voices on university governing bodies, which are increasingly stacked with corporate appointments
- » Wage theft on track to exceed \$400 million from 150,000 staff

With Parliament dissolved before the inquiry delivers its final report, there is a risk this crucial work could be abandoned. This would be a devastating blow to reform efforts and would allow the status quo to persist unchallenged.

That's why all political parties must commit to continuing this inquiry in the next Parliament. University governance reform is not a partisan issue – it's essential for maintaining Australia's research excellence, teaching quality, and international reputation in higher education.

## GET INVOLVED

# THIS IS A PIVOTAL ELECTION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

We are in dire need of a government that is serious about governance reform, committed to reversing the disastrous "Job Ready Graduates" cuts, understands the value of independent public research, and manages international education fairly.

The Coalition has already signaled its intent to roll back key gains, such

as the right to disconnect, while also targeting public universities by cutting international student enrolments and politically interfering with research.

Every Coalition government has a track record of reducing investment in higher education, and it is clear they will return to these cuts if given the chance.



**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN**  
[betterunis.nteu.au/election25](https://betterunis.nteu.au/election25)