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Dear Committee Secretary

**E: Higher Education Support Amendment  
(Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity for The Australian National University (ANU) to appear before the inquiry into the Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020.

During the course of our appearance on 17 September 2020, there were three questions which we took on notice. The responses to those questions are included below.

**National Institutes Grant (NIG)**

The National Institutes Grant is core to supporting the Australian National University deliver on its unique compact with Australia as a resource of national significance, providing knowledge, research, skilled people and building sovereign capability.

Since the start of the Job Ready Graduate Package consultation process the University has engaged in discussions with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as to how the University's allocation of the National Institutes Grant could be affected by the proposed changes.

The University has received assurances from the Department and the Minister, with which it is satisfied, that the University's allocation of National Institutes Grant funding is unaffected by these changes.

**Requests for Support**

The University has been in regular contact with both the Department and the Minister during the COVID-19 pandemic to discuss the impact both financial and otherwise on our institution. The University has also been represented, along with our sector colleagues, by Universities Australia and Group of Eight advocacy.

The University has discussed financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. The ANU is limited in the amount of debt we can take on with the aggregate debt limit set by the Minister for Finance, and the Minister agreed to our request to increase the University's debt limit shortly after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also continue to actively advocate for a research package to allow us to continue to conduct research that transforms society and creates sovereign capability.

### **How much does the University expect to spend on Cluster 1 students' education?**

The University understands that the cluster this question relates to comprises of the following fields of education:

- 08 – Management and Commerce
- 09 – Society and Culture
- 10 – Creative Arts

In the University's last submission to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment under the "Transparency in Higher Education Expenditure Process" the University submitted 2018 teaching costs for these fields of education of approximately \$174m, an average of just under \$15,000 per EFTSL.

Given these were 2018 expenditure rates the University estimates that it will be spending, on average, more than the proposed new maximum student contribution per EFTSL across those fields of education in 2021.

The University will continue to dedicate significant resources to teaching and scholarship in the humanities, this is consistent with the importance the University places on Humanities education, as reflected in the significant contribution made by our humanities expert to Australia's pandemic response, as outlined in our original submission.

### **First year students and educational progression**

We also wanted to provide some further information regarding first year students who do not achieve required academic thresholds. In the five-year period between 2015 and 2019 ANU records indicate a total of 177 domestic students who did not pass 50% of their first eight subjects, equivalent to their first year of full time study. 19% of these students were the first member of their family ever to attend University.

Of these 177 students, 45 have either gone on to successfully complete their degree or remain enrolled, continuing their studies in 2020.

As reflected in the University's current submission, the University is committed to the success of all its students and believe that students should be extended every opportunity to be successful without additional pressures. Our data shows that if given support and the opportunity, many students who initially experience a difficult transition to University go on to have great success in their studies.

The University also believes current TEQSA regulation on the issue of student admission, progression, success and retention is adequate. However, the University would be supportive of, and would engage with, additional focus by the regulator on sharing of best practice experience in this very important space in the hope of continually improving the outcomes identified above.

The University believes this section should be removed from the Bill.

Yours sincerely

Professor Grady Venville  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)