



AUSTRALIAN
COLLEGE OF
THEOLOGY

SUBMISSION TO THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES COMMITTEE

The Australian College of Theology Limited (ACT) is a national, self-accrediting higher education provider. The College was established in 1891 by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia to provide a set of courses to equip people to serve the wider society of this country. It enrolls 1450 equivalent full-time students. Students have been able to defer the payment of their tuition fees to the FEE-HELP scheme since 2005.

The ACT Ltd enrolls about 800 equivalent full-time students across Australia in undergraduate diplomas and undergraduate degrees. These students originate from across the broad spectrum of Australian society, including students from low socio-economic backgrounds, recent arrivals to Australia, and students commencing higher education studies. Were these students enrolled in an Australian university they would have access to the HECS scheme and be eligible for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP). The Higher Education Research Reform Bill 2014 now proposes to extend CSPs to students enrolled in the higher education provider of their choice.

My institution strongly supports the principle of equity embedded in the Higher Education Research Reform Bill 2014. We commend the federal government for its commitment to funding students at whatever higher education provider they choose to attend. Students should not be discriminated against just because they choose to study theology at an institution that happens not to be a university.

The Australian higher education landscape is tightly quality regulated by TEQSA. The Committee can be confident that all higher education providers receiving CSPs are fully able to provide a high levels of student services and quality learning and teaching. The Committee should support and endorse the equitable treatment of all students.

The Rev Dr Mark Harding
Dean & CEO

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