



Charles Sturt
University

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
LEGISLATIONS

Student Identifiers Amendment
(Enhanced Student Permissions)
Bill 2019 -Inquiry

20 January 2020

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Charles Sturt University



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Senator the Hon James McGrath
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair,

STUDENT IDENTIFIERS AMENDMENT (ENHANCED STUDENT PERMISSIONS) BILL 2019 – INQUIRY

On behalf of Charles Sturt University, I am pleased to provide this submission to The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment for your inquiry into the *Student Identifiers Amendment (Enhanced Student Permissions) Bill 2019*.

Charles Sturt University is Australia's largest regional university, with more than 43,000 students and approximately 2,000 full time equivalent staff. We are a unique multi-campus institution with campuses at Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Canberra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Manly, Orange, Parramatta, Port Macquarie and Wagga Wagga, as well as various study centres located throughout regional and rural south-eastern Australia.

As Australia's largest regional university, combined with our presence in western and southern New South Wales, a significant proportion of our commencing students have accessed higher education through vocational pathways. Consequently, the University welcomes opportunities to strengthen the quality of vocation education and training (VET) records. Improvements to VET student identification contemplated in the Bill will assist the University with admission processes, further underwriting the University's efforts in VET-higher education pathways, particularly for students from regional, rural and remote Australia, including older students and students from low SES backgrounds.

The University has prepared this submission for consideration by the Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, refer https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment.

The University supports the proposed amendments to the *Student Identifiers Act 2014* contemplated in the *Student Identifiers Amendment (Enhanced Student Permissions) Bill 2019*. The University believes that that proposed amendments will make it simpler for tertiary education and training providers, including universities, as well as employers, employment agencies and licensing bodies to validate an individual's VET qualifications.

Charles Sturt University is of the view that the proposed amendments will assist, in particular, the integrity of recruitment processes and applications for licenses in skilled professions and occupations. Equally the proposed amendments will have a similar positive impact on admissions processes of tertiary education and training providers.

Further, Charles Sturt University supports the intent of the proposed amendments to protect the integrity of authenticated VET transcripts by introducing a civil penalty regime to address attempts to apply for a second unique student identifier (USI), alter an authenticated VET transcript (or extract) or represent that a document is an authenticated VET transcript (or extract). Obviously, this is essential to maintain the integrity of Australia's occupational and professional accreditation schemes, as well as the admissions systems of our

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tertiary education and training providers. However, such a change to the law, must be accompanied by a strong enforcement regime where regulators and law enforcement agencies are equipped with the resource to enforce the provision of the Bill once enacted. Regulatory failures highlighted by recent Royal Commissions demonstrate the importance of ensuring regulators and law enforcement agencies are adequately resourced to ensure the law is adhered to by sector players and individuals.

The University acknowledges that the Student Identifiers Registrar, state and territory governments, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority and the Western Australian Training Accreditation Council were consulted in relation to the measures proposed in the Bill through the Skills Senior Officials' Network (SSON) Data Strategy Working Group, SSON and the Council of Australian Governments Skills Council. The University believes that consultation with these groups during the development of the Bill places the proposed amendments to the Act in a strong position to deliver the desired policies outcomes.

I would be very pleased to provide further information to the Committee and would be available to provide evidence at any proposed hearings that that Committee may undertake regarding Australia's legislative framework for governance and management of tertiary education and training student records, including proposed amendments to the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*.

Yours sincerely

Professor Andrew Vann
Vice-Chancellor

