

Submission to Save Public Universities

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My name is Dr Fiona Anne Martin, and I have worked in the university sector since 1990.

I commenced work as a lecturer in the Law Faculty at QUT, Brisbane. I have now retired and am an Emeritus Professor at the University of New South Wales, Sydney.

My areas of expertise include taxation law and charities and not-for-profits, and I am recognized as an international expert in these areas.

I am making this submission because I am unhappy about the development of universities away from the focus on education and research and towards making money and behaving like a business. Universities obviously need to be solvent and high-quality education and research is not inexpensive, however this does not mean that it is necessary to pay excessively high salaries to management levels. There has been a growing trend to both import executives from overseas, which is appalling considering that we have so many great academic managers here and also to pay excessive salaries. An exception who stands out from the crowd is the current Vice Chancellor of Western Sydney University who has stated publicly that he will not accept such a ridiculous and above-market salary when there is a need for more teaching staff.

When I refer to above market salaries please consider the salaries of institutions of higher education overseas. The President of Harvard University's salary in 2021 was \$1.3 m including benefits.¹ This university is one of the highest ranking in the world. Students also pay very high fees to attend this university. Yet some of our Australian university heads are earning the equivalent. It is not a comparable situation. University of Essex Vice-Chancellor's salary covering 2022/23 is £325,624 per year.² This university is also very high ranking.

I therefore submit that University Management salaries should be reduced to a level that is more in line with that paid to professors at their universities. They are not chief executives of multi-national corporations, they are entrusted with public moneys and student welfare and need to put this first,

¹ The Harvard Crimson <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/5/14/2021-financial-disclosures/>.

² Essex Live <https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/eye-watering-salary-paid-essex-9663906>.