

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **A New Alliance Supports Public Universities**

A group of academics from universities across Australia **have this week formed the National Alliance for Public Universities (NAPU) to combat deregulation and promote the values of public universities.**

**The group has launched a charter which they are inviting other university staff and members of the community to support.** The [charter](#) presents a very different vision for our universities than that put forward by the Abbot government in radical HE legislation before the federal parliament today.

See: <http://theconversation.com/vice-chancellors-vs-the-collegiate-who-is-right-on-deregulation-33461>

‘Since the Abbott government proposed deregulating fees, public debate has almost entirely excluded the views of regular university staff, most of who are appalled by the prospect.’ Dr Ben Etherington a spokesperson for the group said today.

‘We will give a voice to these researchers, teachers, administrators and other staff and invite members of the community to join us.

‘Most university vice chancellors and Universities Australia have refused tell the public about the very real concerns within the university community about these changes, which will turn universities away from their communities and towards private benefits only.

‘Vice chancellors have been considering their corporate self-interest ahead of the interests of students, staff and the community. When it comes to deregulation and deep funding cuts we want the Australian public to know university staff are opposed to fee deregulation and the idea of universities that underpin these radical changes.’ Dr Etherington continued.

‘Our charter sets out an alternative vision based on an understanding of public universities as institutions that serve the public good. The Australian public is rightly concerned about the massive increases to the cost of university education; they should also be concerned about the way these changes will degrade education and undermine the capacity of universities to serve their communities.’

*A Charter for Australia’s Universities* can be found here: <http://napuaustralia.org/charter/> Signatures have quickly passed 250 over the last three days, and include the Nobel Prize winner Prof J.M. Coetzee (Adelaide), Prof Paul Salzman (La Trobe), Professor Ivor Indyk (UWS), and Winthrop Prof Jenny Gregory (UWA)

**The first two key principles are :**

**1.Universities provide both public and private benefits. To fulfil these, they must function independently of market forces and political interference.**

**2.The educational opportunities that universities provide are a basic right. Ongoing public financial support is required to ensure that these are sustained across generations.**

The following may be contacted for further details and comment

Dr Ben Etherington (UWS):           0478 665 692           [b.etherington@uws.edu.au](mailto:b.etherington@uws.edu.au)  
Main spokesperson. Can comment on the background of the alliance, the text of the charter and its underlying philosophy; UK/Australia comparisons.

Dr Chris Peterson (UWS):           0414 449 847           [c.peterson@uws.edu.au](mailto:c.peterson@uws.edu.au)  
Can comment on US/Australia comparisons; perils of 'Americanisation'.

Dr Nick Riemer (USyd):           0481 339 937           [nick.riemer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:nick.riemer@sydney.edu.au)  
Can comment on the political stakes involved and the social consequences; long-time commentator on HE.

Dr Julie-Ann Robson (USyd):       0419 608 723           [julie-ann.robson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:julie-ann.robson@sydney.edu.au)  
Can comment on equity and administrative issues, institutional politics. She is a long-time campaigner on academic freedom.