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National Alliance for Public Universities change the political narrative: Senate told to listen to the staff and students, not VCs and lobbyists

In the Senate debate on higher education last night, Sen Lee Rhiannon made it clear to Parliament and the Australian public that **Vice Chancellors and lobbyists for deregulation in no way represent the will of the higher education sector**, highlighting the viral growth of the **National Alliance for Public Universities**.

"It is clear that the minister and his coalition colleagues have **a strong preference for meeting and discussing higher education issues with university executives and managers over staff and students**," she said.

"Just last week we saw the creation of the **National Alliance for Public Universities**, an organisation seeking 'to give voice to the researchers, teachers, administrators and other staff who oppose the deregulation of fees and whose perspective has been overlooked in the national debate'.

"The organisation has grown rapidly, with 500 academic staff signing up in a few days.

"I congratulate them on their launch and welcome their voice in this crucial debate. **These are the people who are truly representative of the university sector, along with the students, not the Group of Eight vice-chancellors**, many of whom have been camped out in the minister's office attempting to lobby crossbenchers week after week."

NAPU officially launched earlier this week a charter and by Thursday morning 650 university staff in every State and Territory has signed their [charter](#). There have been 8000 views of their website, 960 Facebook likes and wide coverage in the national media, including *The Australian*, *Crikey*, *New Matilda* ABC 702, RN and JJJ.

The 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.

A *Charter for Australia's Universities* can be found here: <http://napuaustralia.org/charter/>
Signatories 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 following may be contacted for further details and comment

Dr Ben Etherington (UWS): 0478 665 692 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
Can comment on US/Australia comparisons; perils of 'Americanisation'.

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Can comment on the political stakes involved and the social consequences; long-time
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Can comment on equity and institutional politics; long-time campaigner on academic
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