

## **UNIVERSITY STAFF CONDEMN VICE-CHANCELLORS' CALL FOR FEE-DEREGULATION**

University staff are urging cross-bench senators to maintain their opposition to fee deregulation, in the wake of a renewed call from Vice-Chancellors for an amended version of the bill to be passed in the next fortnight.

Vice-Chancellors' enthusiasm for deregulated university fees ignores the overwhelming opposition not only of the public, but of university staff, says the National Alliance for Public Universities (NAPU).

NAPU was formed in October to give university staff committed to a public university system another voice to oppose fee deregulation.

The NAPU charter outlining the principles of a public higher education sector has been signed by over 1300 university staff members from around the country, including Nobel Prize Winner J.M. Coetzee, University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor Stephen Parker and over 100 senior professors.

"There are fewer than forty Vice Chancellors in Australia. They don't represent the tens of thousands of university staff, who, like the rest of the public, are strongly against deregulation," said NAPU spokesperson Dr Nick Riemer. "Vice Chancellors should be lobbying government to fund universities better, not advising them on what level of cuts is acceptable."

"We are very encouraged by Jacqui Lambie's statement that she will never support deregulation," Riemer continued, "and we call on all the other cross-benchers to give similar undertakings. There is nothing fair about deregulation. A Fairfax-Ipsos poll at the start of November found overwhelming public opposition to the government's plans. Vice-Chancellors are out of step both with the public, and with basic principles of equity and social justice."

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