

Dear Colleagues,

On May 31st a group of four of us met with John Spierings, Senior Adviser to the PM, and Andrew Dempster, Senior Adviser to Minister Chris Evans, to pursue the issues raised in the two letters to the PM concerning the abolition of the ALTC.

You may be aware that Minister Evans has commissioned Ms Alison Johns of the UK Higher Education Council to undertake consultation with the higher education sector during August on the matter of the ALTC. We came away from the meeting convinced that a coherent position that we could all reinforce to Ms Johns in our various ways would have a powerful influence and set the stage for the productive establishment and growth of an ALTC replacement body.

ACDICT, ACED and ACDS propose to convene a meeting in July to discuss strategy to this end.

We provided the ministerial advisers with a briefing paper in advance, which is attached. The two letters referred to above are also attached for your convenience

Our group comprised:

John Rice, Executive Director, ACDS

Tony Koppi Executive Officer, ACDICT

Jill McKeough, President, CALD

Mark Freeman, ALTC Discipline Scholar in Business, Management & Economics

We can report to you that, somewhat to our surprise and certainly to our delight, the briefing paper was very well received. The advisers regarded its points concerning the role and operation of what we might call an 'ALTC' reconstituted inside DEEWR to be well made, although we noted that the degree of independence of the governing board was queried.

An overarching point that we made, that did not appear in the paper, was the role of the ALTC in providing an arena for defining and acknowledging T&L issues of national significance at a national level, and acknowledging individual contributions, through discipline networking. We pointed out that the ARC and NHMRC played that role in research, which is what allowed recognition of research of a kind that could be acknowledged across institutions. Our argument, again well received, was that without that kind of recognition, that could translate into institutional reward processes like promotion, the energy for teaching would go out of the higher education system and the status quo favouring research would remain entrenched.

We seek your feedback on the briefing paper and the point above, either before or at the proposed July meeting, and any further ideas that you may have towards a core set of points around which we could all elaborate during Ms John's consultation.

16/05/11