

## IHEA Calls for Reduction in Higher Education Bureaucracy

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) today expressed significant concerns about the growing regulatory burden on Australia's higher education providers. As part of its Federal Election Platform, IHEA is calling on the next Australian Government to adopt a more streamlined approach to sector governance.

The planned establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), scheduled to begin operations from 1 July 2025, will add yet another layer of costly bureaucracy to an already heavily regulated sector.

IHEA CEO, the Hon Dr Peter Hendy, emphasised that the higher education sector already navigates a complex web of regulatory bodies. "Higher education providers are already contending with a maze of regulators, compliance requirements, and reporting obligations."

"The creation of ATEC represents another administrative burden rather than a solution to the challenges facing our tertiary education system," said Dr Hendy.

"Last month's announcement of ATEC's interim commissioners gives the sector no comfort and only reinforces our concerns for the future of Australian higher education," Dr Hendy said.

IHEA's Federal Election Platform highlights that housing ATEC within the Department of Education risks creating a mere bureaucratic reshuffle without the independence needed to drive meaningful reform.

"What our sector needs is not more bureaucracy, but a more agile regulatory environment that enables providers to focus on delivering quality education and meeting skills needs. ATEC in its proposed form threatens to divert valuable resources away from these priorities," Dr Hendy stated.

IHEA also emphasised that clear delineation of responsibilities between ATEC and existing agencies is essential. "For ATEC to add any value, it must not duplicate functions already performed by established agencies. Policy levers currently available to existing regulators, such as compliance reporting on quality issues, should be explicitly removed from ATEC's remit," added Dr Hendy.

IHEA's Federal Election Platform outlines 14 proposed pillars of reform for a better higher education sector, with reducing regulatory burden being a key focus area.

**Ends**

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