

Bold reforms for a bigger and fairer higher education system for the future

25 June 2026

The 2050 Alliance congratulates Education Minister Jason Clare and the Albanese government on the major reforms to higher education policy and funding in the *Universities Accord (Opening the Doors of Opportunity) Bill*, introduced today in Parliament.

The Alliance supports the introduction of the new Managed Growth Funding System and Needs-Based Funding for university students. These reforms are needed to deliver on the long-term goals of the Universities Accord, to increase tertiary participation and equity by 2050.

This is essential to ensure that all students and communities can share in the benefits of higher education, obtaining the skills needed for the jobs of the future, reducing inequality and driving future productivity.

2050 Alliance Chair, Distinguished Professor George Williams AO (Vice-Chancellor of Western Sydney University), welcomed the introduction of the legislation as a critical next step in implementing the vision of the Universities Accord.

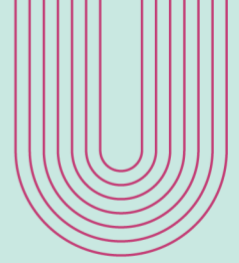
“This legislation brings significant change for the university system, which will be good for students and communities right across Australia,” he said. “We agree with Minister Clare that more Australians will need a university education to prepare them for the future and that we should carefully manage this growth to make sure public funding is targeted to where the need is greatest.

“To maximise student choice and expand opportunity in every community, we need sustainable universities in our inner cities, suburbs and regions. Growth for the sake of growth will not deliver a fairer higher education system which can meet our future skills needs. We need managed growth in the national interest.”

The 2050 Alliance will support this legislation and work constructively with the government and the new Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) on the implementation and continued improvement of the new system. Key issues for further work will include linking Needs-Based Funding with outreach programs and updating the equity categories and definitions that underpin the new funding system.

2050 Alliance CEO Paul Harris said that the challenges facing Australia in the future require a new approach for the nation’s universities.





“The policy lesson of the last twenty years is that you can increase higher education participation while still going backwards on key indicators of equity and leaving significant skills shortages,” he said.

“Australia will not meet its targets for 2050 if growth is concentrated in a handful of large universities. The times demand more careful stewardship of our higher education system, treating education not as a market but as a public good.”

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ABOUT THE 2050 ALLIANCE

The 2050 Alliance is a new university group focused on students, communities and the future. Across Australia, our member universities have more than 65 campuses in inner city, suburban and regional areas, serving diverse communities and teaching over 285,000 students. We are expanding opportunity: increasing participation and productivity to benefit all Australians.

