

22 September 2014

Mr Steve Davies MP  
Chair  
Finance and Administration CommitteeEmail: [fac@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:fac@parliament.qld.gov.au)**RECEIVED**  
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**Finance and**  
**Administration Committee**

Dear Mr Davies

Griffith University supports the general intent of *The Queensland Plan* and offers the following technical comments on the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014*.

The Bill binds all parties and statutory bodies. Universities (Griffith and other Queensland universities) are created by State legislation and thus appear to be bound by the Bill. Universities are governed by their own appointed Councils with the power to make rules for the governance of their institution. However they are also predominantly funded by the Commonwealth under federal legislation and through student contributions. These non-State enactments and sources of funding carry obligations that could conceivably come into conflict with the objects and operation of the Bill once enacted.

I would appreciate clarification that the legislation, any subsequent regulations and the targets and strategies established by *The Queensland Plan* do not override or otherwise interfere with the powers of University governing Councils or University Executive Officers, nor set up potential conflicts in the relationship between universities, the community and other levels of Government or the mutual rights and obligations of its staff and students.

I note that the Plan and Bill place an obligation on statutory bodies:

*in their annual reports under the Financial Accountability Act 2009, to report on their progress in developing policies and programs, and delivering services, that are consistent with the strategic direction of the government response to the Queensland Plan.*

Further, the Explanatory Notes to the Bill state:

*Clause 8(3) specifies that the government response may state the core outcomes to be achieved by a stated public authority, require a particular strategy or action to be taken by a stated public authority, and state the timeframe within which an outcome is to be achieved or a strategy or action is to be taken.*

Again I seek your assurance that universities will not be placed under any such obligations or additional reporting requirements to conform to the State Government's policy intentions under the *Plan*. The higher education sector is seeking to reduce the regulatory burden, not add to it, and the present Commonwealth Government's policy framework is consistent with deregulation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I look forward to your assurance on the above matters, including by the addition of exclusionary clauses in the Bill before it is debated by the Parliament.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ian O'Connor".

Ian O'Connor  
Vice Chancellor and President