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Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Vice-Chancellor

Mr Steve Davies MP
Chair, Finance and Administration Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
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Dear Mr Davies

Your letter of 28 August refers, in which you invite submissions on matters addressed by the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014*.

While QUT strongly supports *The Queensland Plan*, we have concerns regarding the implementation strategies proposed in the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014*.

Universities are statutory bodies and, while they develop plans and strategies which are consistent with those of the State Government, the following requirement would not be appropriately applied to them:

"... 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".

The reasons we believe that these provisions should not apply to universities include the autonomous nature of university academic operations, overseen by appointed Councils, and the particular nature of university activities which extend into independent activities at national and international level. Further, universities are subject to an extensive array of reporting requirements and accountabilities which already serve to ensure the appropriate alignment of their activities to government strategic directions and which, in total, represent a compliance burden that is considered excessive. Efforts have been made at State and Commonwealth level to reduce the complex layers of reporting on universities, and to focus such reporting on the most appropriate forms of accountability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter Coaldrake
Vice-Chancellor