

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

DATE: FRIDAY 28 JANUARY 2011

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **UTAS chief vows to overturn PM's axing of Australian Teaching and Learning Council**

The acting vice-chancellor of the University of Tasmania today condemned the Federal Government's proposed axing of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council and will work to overturn the move.

Professor David Rich is critical of the lack of consultation with the university sector and has labelled the move a nonsense for a government needing such a group to help it achieve key higher education goals.

He joins seven other Australian universities concerned that the cuts' impact will harm the longer term productivity of universities and the quality of graduates.

"On behalf of the University of Tasmania I condemn this proposal and will work with the Australian university sector to have it overturned," he said.

"The Council has been a powerful force in the higher education sector, supporting high teaching and learning standards especially through its awards and grants office.

"The strength of its work has been in the collective nature of its activities; this cannot be done by individual institutions alone."

The abolition of the Australian Teaching and Learning Council from the end of 2011 was part of budget cuts proposed yesterday by the Prime Minister in order to fund Queensland's infrastructure needs following the recent floods.

Prof. Rich said the abolition of the Council is completely at odds with the Commonwealth's own strategy through the Bradley report to:

- Increase the proportion of young adults with higher education qualification;
- Improve the proportion of students coming from lower socio-economic groups;
- Improve the quality of education provided to our students.

“These high priority and central areas for the university sector cannot easily be done elsewhere,” he said.

“If this abolition eventuates, will the Federal Government then negotiate with each individual university on changes it wants to make in the sector?”

“Not only do universities need the Council to continue its excellent work on enhancing academic standards and disciplinary learning outcomes but I believe the Government needs the Council to translate and champion some of its key educational policies so that they are actually taken on by the sector.”

Prof. Rich said universities see the Council as a focussed and efficient body with a modest budget of around \$22m.

“Its work so far has had a deep and wide impact, and the Federal Government’s lack of consultation on its abolition is regrettable,” he said.

**For more information contact Sharon Webb,  
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