4 June 2013

Labor cuts uni funding without proper analysis

The Coalition’s Regional Education spokesperson, Senator Fiona Nash, said she’s astounded that there appears to be no analysis available on the impact tertiary education funding cuts will have on regional universities.

The Labor government will cut $2.3 billion from the university sector to pay for its share of the Gonski reforms. It includes a two per cent efficiency dividend that will especially impact regional universities, making it harder for them to achieve further economies of scale.

Senator Nash, during senate estimates, questioned education officials on whether any analysis was done to determine the extent in which regional universities would be affected.

Robert Griew, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Look there was a great deal of information provided in consideration of all those savings measures and I can’t recall in all honesty that we provided information that went to individual universities in any group.

Senator Nash: Would you not want to know what the impact was going to be on the university sector in doing this?

Mr Griew: The impact on the university sector as a whole and on university operations is something that we certainly provided advice on and was considered in detail.

After further questioning, he said: ...we don’t normally, with respect when considering options for the government in a budgetary nature, talk to the universities about it. We wouldn’t with any sector.
**Senator Nash:** So before the announcement, you say as a rule you don’t talk to them. So I take from that you didn’t talk to the universities beforehand, and correct me if I’m wrong, neither did you look at the impact of what this would have on individual universities. Is that correct?

**Mr Griew:** I said to you that I couldn’t recall that we had done a breakdown of analysis on universities and campuses in the decision-making process.

“I find it extraordinary that the Labor government and the department do not seem to have any information on how the funding cuts will impact individual universities especially those in regional Australia,” Senator Nash said.

“I would have thought it would be the logical thing to do when advising on policy decisions. More concerning is that the Prime Minister and Tertiary Education Minister pursued these cuts anyway. It proves again that Labor’s so-called education revolution is a joke.”

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