On behalf of Flinders University, the Acting Chancellor, Mrs Judith Roberts, AO, and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anne Edwards, AO, are pleased to submit the following comments on the issues paper on the Review of the National Governance Protocols.

Flinders University endorses the paper entitled 'University Chancellors Council-Universities Australia Joint Submission Review of National Governance Protocols' which was submitted on 30 July 2007.

In particular, the University agrees that further regulation of the kind proposed in the issues paper would be counterproductive and could have the effect of reducing flexibility and diversity. Further regulation could also impact on the ability of University Councils to attract the right mix of skills and expertise from the wider community.

The University also wishes to make a specific comment about the proposed reduction in size of Councils. At Flinders, the Council functions very effectively with its current size, composition and skills mix. In the University's view, a forced reduction in size would lead to a loss of diversity, talent and expertise for no clear discernible benefit. Moreover, should the University decide at any stage to amend the size or composition of the Council, it can propose an amendment to the University Act to achieve this, consistent with the existing Protocols.

Flinders University believes that good governance is important and has, particularly over the past ten years, taken a number of steps to achieve this, including ensuring that it complies with the existing National Governance Protocols. In our view, the imperatives of good governance exist independently of the Protocols: they derive from the need to respond to increasing institutional complexity and changes in strategic direction. Changes have been made in the past and they will be made in the future. If institutions are to respond effectively, as the Government hopes, to the changing demands of an increasingly entrepreneurial and competitive education market, they must be allowed to shape their governance to fit their particular needs.

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