

HIGHER EDUCATION



Collaborate to boost nation: PM

TIM DODD
HIGHER EDUCATION EDITOR

Scott Morrison has called out the lack of co-operation between business and universities, urging more collaboration to realise the full benefits of Australia's "world-class science".

In a speech delivered virtually to the Business Council of Australia last week, the Prime Minister praised the quality of Australian scientific research, its importance during the pandemic and its potential to boost the economy.

"Science and research is not just helping us fight COVID-19. It is at the heart of helping our economy grow back stronger," he said.

But for this to happen, Mr Morrison said, researchers and businesses need to "come together".

"This has been a real failing of Australia. The reality is Australia is a laggard when it comes to business collaboration with higher education and research institutions," he said in the speech.

"And you are both at fault, as is the government. This means we aren't capturing the full benefits of our world-class science and re-

'We aren't capturing the full benefits of our world-class science ... We aren't capitalising on it enough'

SCOTT MORRISON
PRIME MINISTER

search. We aren't capitalising on it enough to improve lives, to grow our wealth or to create jobs.

"The government understands this and we understand what we need to do."

The often-quoted OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2017 shows Australia near the bottom of the OECD in the proportion of its businesses collaborating with universities and research institutions.

The Prime Minister told the BCA the government wanted "to provide a platform and a pathway for our talented researchers to partner with you, with businesses all around the country and to apply their intellectual firepower as research entrepreneurs".

He pointed to the \$1bn extra funding for university research

announced in the budget, the \$450m boost for the CSIRO, and a government-initiated study into speeding up commercialisation of university research.

He urged business to work with the expert panel, chaired by Siemens Australia chief executive Jeff Connolly, which will provide advice to the study.

"We want to provide a platform and a pathway for our talented researchers to partner with you, with businesses all around the country, and to apply their intellectual firepower as research entrepreneurs," Mr Morrison said.

In a speech on Wednesday federal opposition education and training spokeswoman Tanya Pibersek will call on the government to support science "with consistency and credibility, not just when it's convenient; not just when we need a vaccine".

According to a copy of her speech to an intelligent systems conference that was circulated in advance, Ms Pibersek will call on the government to support university science and engineering departments, "not reduce their teaching budgets like Scott Morrison did last month".

University in final scholarships push

JILL ROWBOTHAM
HIGHER EDUCATION WRITER

Anyone who donates \$50,000 to University of Queensland's need-based endowment scholarships will see it matched dollar for dollar in a final push to soak up the final \$4.9m of funding set aside for the purpose 18 months ago by former vice-chancellor Peter Hoj.

The Create Change Scholarship Match scheme had raised and matched \$10.1m of a planned \$15m from philanthropists, said pro vice-chancellor (advancement) Jennifer Karlson said.

"We're having a lot of conversations with people who we know well and who have supported the programs or scholarships and just asking them if they would like to make an additional or a new commitment," Ms Karlson said.

The scheme was designed with a minimum \$50,000 donation, but commitments have ranged higher, with the largest \$350,000. "To create a new endowment scholarship traditionally would be \$100,000, which is obviously out of reach for most people," she said. "So the matching brings it down to \$50,000 as a minimum, still an incredible investment that people can make over a period of time, which then makes it a lot more manageable."

So far, 81 scholarship funds have been created, which could cover about 132 scholars. Donors also have the right to name the scholarship or scholarships they endow and to attach one criterion to it, such as that it must be in a

particular faculty, or for a particular kind of student such as someone from a regional or remote area, or an Indigenous student.

"We have been saying that we're delighted to partner with donors, but we need them to be as flexible as possible," Ms Karlson said. "They can add one criterion ... to limit that level of specificity that sometimes hinders our awarding process."

The lion's share of scholarships have been set aside for undergraduates, whether school-leavers, people who have already embarked on a degree, or mature-age students and it is expected they will go to domestic students.

"Each scholarship will be worth \$5000-\$7000 annually and it is anticipated that in some cases more than one will be awarded to a recipient to cover their needs."

The pandemic altered the donation pattern. "We saw a slight decrease in the number of donors acting on the match, but the value of the dollar amounts slightly increased," Ms Karlson said.

"People were saying, 'I know students are going to be struggling, that they're losing their jobs, their parents are losing their jobs. How can I help make sure that a student who is in their second year of university can finish, or help a student who is deciding whether to go to university say yes? We've got to see the best in humanity, through this.'"

If the final goal of the scholarship campaign is not reached, the residual \$4.9m of university funds will still be available for some form of student support.



John Monash Scholar Jessica Coldrey plans to do a master of humanitarian engineering in the UK

Monash scholars are leading lights despite recession

JILL ROWBOTHAM

An internship at a sustainability foundation the summer before she started university showed Jessica Coldrey how to combine her artistic aspirations with her view that "to have good ideas, you have to really understand what's going on in the world", so she added a human geography degree to her visual arts degree at Monash University.

Today, at 22, she is a technology artist (with an upcoming 3D printing residency in France), has an internship this summer with engineering and design group Aurecon where she hopes to work on infrastructure, and has been announced as a John Monash Scholar for 2021. She plans to study a master of humanitarian engineering with management at Warwick

University in Britain. A record 360 people applied for the annual Monash scholarships announced on Wednesday, but only 13 have been awarded as The General Sir John Monash Foundation took a conservative view on funding in the recessionary climate triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, 20 were awarded.

"A lot of the perpetual scholarships rely on the activity of the financial markets," Foundation chief executive Annemarie Rolls said. "It could be that the markets are going to be volatile for a few years and therefore, we need to be conservative in our approach."

Ms Rolls attributes the record applications to the growing prestige of the scholarships, which are worth \$70,000 in tuition fees and other costs annually for up to three years. The foundation also covers travel costs, and winners

often top up their funds with a variety of other scholarships.

She also speculates that the impulse to embrace postgraduate study now, rather than any other time, may have something to do with the pandemic. "I do think that there's probably a lot of people who are keen to do postgraduate study and things are perceived to be so dire in the employment space that they might say, this is probably as good a time as any," Ms Rolls said.

This might be tempered by the uncertainty over when overseas travel might be possible.

The scholarships are awarded for travel in the August-September of the following year. In the case of the 2020 scholars, 10 have deferred their travel. It is not known how many of the new cohort will do the same.

Among those who received

scholarships are army engineer officer Amrinder Ghuman, who plans to undertake a master of engineering and a master of business administration at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; lawyer and policy adviser Alice Crawford, who proposes to complete a master of public administration at Harvard University; and navy officer and meteorologist Hannah Phelps, who is hoping to do a doctorate in atmospheric science at the University of British Columbia.

Brett Shannon, 32, a Brisbane-based medical registrar specialising in occupational and environmental medicine, recently stood down as chairman of the Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service to undertake a PhD at the University of Illinois occupational and occupational

health sciences school. His mentors advised him the Monash scholarship would be a good fit because it allows access to experts in his field, with a specific interest in occupational injury management and prevention in indigenous and vulnerable populations.

"Australia's response ... is limited by poor data, be it worker's compensation or health surveillance data," Dr Shannon said. His research will aim at informing better practices that could improve data quality and thus management and prevention.

Ms Coldrey also wanted her work to have a clear impact on communities' humanitarian engineering addresses "how we can design civil structures or utilities like power and water in a way that addresses humanitarian challenges. So you might be working in a context of needing to expand

access to water or limited resources."

She has already done research on using recycled plastic to build roads: there about dozen such roads in Australia, mostly small in scale. "So far they've been using post-consumer plastic waste like milk bottles and plastic bags as a bitumen additive, to strengthen the materials," Ms Coldrey said.

Following her scholarship, she wants to work in international development and community-scale infrastructure projects to gain project delivery and management experience.

"And then coming back to Australia, I want to help bring more human-centred approaches into our engineering industry, working in the private sector to help drive some really innovative humanitarian engineering-inspired approaches."

A clarion call to Team Australia

Research funding will help us meet our part of the challenge

VICKI THOMSON

Last week Scott Morrison made a critical, authentic speech to the Business Council of Australia about government, universities and business working together.

Part command, part support, part recognition, it was a headline speech delivered without the pre-promotion bells and whistles that usually accompany such an address so vital to a nation. It must be acted on because more jobs and more economic independence for Australia will result.

The Group of Eight — representing Australia's leading research-intensive universities that carry out 70 per cent of the nation's university research — is directly affected by the speech and commits to doing what is required for an exceptional post-COVID-19 recovery for Australia.

The Prime Minister was talking directly to us when he said "we need our higher education sector and our research institutions to

support our recovery" and "for this to happen, businesses and researchers do need to come together". It has been a long time coming. For too long governments have paid lip service to the Team Australia approach needed for the three sectors — universities, business, government — genuinely to work together.

For our part, the Go8 has long advocated that the approach used in Medical Research Future Fund be used to invest across the broader research sector so we can successfully develop essential research translation capability and maximise the economic benefits of excellent research in national priority areas such as defence, agriculture and advanced manufacturing.

We must grow to become a far more sovereign nation so we can have many more announcements such as the one last week on the largest flu vaccine plant in the southern hemisphere to be built in Melbourne as a joint venture between government and biotech company CSL.

If COVID-19 has driven one message it's that our nation has learned some harsh lessons about being too reliant on others to sup-

ply us an end product. But it also has enabled government to see what true collaboration between universities and business can enable, as companies pivoted at speed to deliver products Australia required.

No one is saying we must become a totally independent nation, but the Prime Minister's words provide not only hope but also reality. His new expert research panel comprises can-do, outcomes-focused chief executives. As Morrison said: "The importance of our world-class science and research community and the role it can play is vital to claiming that new ground on the other side of COVID-19."

Attracting the significant funding to have this welcome commitment become reality for the long term must be high on the expert panel's priorities because our university research is worth investing in.

The Prime Minister has issued a challenge and an economic direction for business, government and universities. For our part, the Go8 is committed to it.

Charles Darwin University recorded a net operating loss of \$87.6m, followed by the University of Notre Dame Australia (\$53.1m), the University of New England (\$4.85m) and Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (\$2.7m).

Coaldrake is new TEQSA chief

JILL ROWBOTHAM

Former Queensland University of Technology vice-chancellor Peter Coaldrake has been appointed chief commissioner of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, succeeding Nicholas Saunders in March next year.

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan said Professor Coaldrake would bring "invaluable experience, insight and leadership to the role" at the higher education regulator.

"As the higher education system recovers from COVID-19 we need a strong and fair regulator to ensure our providers are of the



Peter Coaldrake

highest quality and serving our students' interests," Mr Tehan said.

Universities Australia chief executive Katrina Jackson said Professor Coaldrake had a "thorough understanding of TEQSA's important role applying appropriate regulation to the self-ac-

crediting university sector". He is a former member of the UA board and a former chairman.

Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia chief executive Troy Williams said Professor Coaldrake was "highly attuned to the particular needs of independent higher education providers".

Professor Coaldrake was QUT vice-chancellor from 2003 to 2017. He conducted the Review of the Higher Education Provider Category Standards in 2018-19 and is a TEQSA commissioner.

Professor Saunders's contribution also was widely acknowledged. Mr Tehan thanked him for his service to higher education across many years.

Report reveals net operating losses for four

Four Australian universities ended last year with net operating losses, the 2019 Financial Report for Higher Education Providers, released by federal Education Minister Dan Tehan on Wednesday, shows.

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operating result after expenses was \$2.3bn, an increase of 0.6 per cent.

Assets at year's end were \$90.4bn, an increase of 9.2 per cent, with total expenses of \$34.2bn, up by 6.1 per cent. Staff costs were \$19.2bn, up 5.9 per cent.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA
CREATE CHANGE

Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit

The University of Queensland, ranked consistently among the world's top universities according to several key independent rankings, has educated and worked with outstanding people for more than a century to deliver knowledge leadership for a better world.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (ATIS) Unit was established at The University of Queensland in 1984, recognising the importance of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and engagement with the Indigenous community.

The Director, ATIS Unit plays a key role in developing the strategic direction of the unit in line with the University's Indigenous Engagement Strategies. You will provide leadership to the unit across key focus areas of outreach, community engagement and student support.

As the ideal applicant, you will have a postgraduate degree with proven leadership in a Tertiary, Government or Community organisation or similar, or an equivalent combination of experience and expertise.

Your demonstrated understanding of Indigenous societies and cultures, and extensive experience engaging and collaborating with Indigenous communities, individuals and organisations will be invaluable when working closely with stakeholders throughout the University and Indigenous community.

An appropriate remuneration package will be negotiated with the successful candidate including super of 17%.

Applications close 13 December 2020

Job No. 517788

Visit jobs.uq.edu.au for more career opportunities and to obtain a copy of the position description and application process. The University of Queensland values diversity and inclusion.

This is an identified position and the occupant must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent under sections 25 and 105 of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991.

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