

Academics for Public Universities (APU)

A brief introduction

Peter Tregear (UniMelb)

peter.tregear@unimelb.edu.au

peter.tregear@gmail.com

‘Universities are not corporations’: 600 Australian academics call for change to uni governance structures

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More than 600 academics from 36 Australian universities and members of the academic community have signed an [open letter](#) to federal and state education ministers calling for a return to a more democratic, cost-effective and functional structure for Australia’s universities.

Australian universities are in [crisis](#). Large-scale redundancies are announced almost daily, with estimates of [up to 21,000 jobs at risk](#) this year alone. [Financial modelling](#) by the University of Melbourne reveals the prospects for even the richest universities are bleak, while poorer universities face a veritable existential threat.

Authors



Alessandro Pelizzon

Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Justice, Southern Cross University



Martin Young

Associate Professor, School of Business and Tourism, Southern Cross University



Renaud Joannes-Boyau

Senior research fellow, Southern Cross University

Disclosure statement

W: www.publicuniversities.org E: academicsforpublicuniversities@gmail.com

**Academics
for Public
Universities**

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We are a group of academic researchers from different Australian Universities. We are focusing on the current crisis faced by the Australian Public Universities. Through our collective work, we aim to contribute to a meaningful solution to this crisis.



Core members

Professor Fran Baum AO (Adelaide University)

Professor Emeritus Kim Economides (USQ)

Dr Toby Freeman (Flinders University)

Professor James Guthrie (Macquarie University)

Dr Renaud Joannes-Boyau (Southern Cross University)

Professor Richard Hil (Griffith University)

Dr Siobhan Irving (Macquarie University)

Dr Julie Kimber (Swinburne University of Technology)

Dr Stephen Lake (Independent Scholar)

Dr Adam Lucas (University of Wollongong)

Professor Justin O'Connor (UniSA)

Dr Alessandro Pelizzon (Southern Cross)

Prof Peter Tregear (University of Melbourne)

Dr Oliver Vodebi (RMIT)

What we seek to do

In brief

Apply our cross-disciplinary research expertise to address the causes of, and possible solutions to, the crisis in Australian Universities.

What we seek to do

Particular areas of research and policy interest for APU include

- The history, nature, and current fate of the public university in Australia.
- Academic freedom: nature, limits, and necessary protections.
- Australian university governance structures and cases for reform.
- Financial management and reporting standards and issues.
- Higher Education staff health and well-being, especially mental health

What we seek to do

Particular APU objectives and outcomes include

- Promoting wider public knowledge and discussion of the nature and notion of the public university.
- Developing networks of shared interest and support for the idea of the public university across the media and state and federal governments.
- Suggesting areas for EBA negotiation and reform (e.g. banning the use of non-disclosure and other 'gagging' clauses)
- Supporting complementary organisations and causes such as: Public Universities Australia(PUA), CAPA, AAUP (!) etc.
- Lobbying for a Royal Commission into the Australian HE sector
- Publishing articles, Op-Eds, and research publications...

FORTHCOMING:

“The Collapse and Re-Form of Australian public universities”



Articles

Hil, R., Pelizzon, A., Baum, F., ‘Editors’ Introduction’

1. Lake, S., Joannes-Boyau, R., Lucas, A., McCallum, A., O’Connor, J., Pelizzon, A., Tregear, P., Vodeb, O., ‘A Brief History of Australian Universities’
2. Pelizzon, A., Joannes-Boyau, R., Lake, S., Lucas, A., McCallum, A., Noble, D., O’Connor, J., Orr, J., Schröder-Turk, G., Tregear, P., Vodeb, O., ‘A Crisis of Governance’
3. Guthrie, J., Lucas, A., 2022 ‘How we got here: the transformation of Australian public universities into for-profit corporations’
4. Vodeb, O., Joannes-Boyau, R., Lake, S., Lucas, A., McCallum, A., O’Connor, J., Pelizzon, A., Tregear, P., ‘Australian Public Universities and the Destruction of the Academic Community’
5. Tregear, P., Lake, S., Lucas, A., O’Connor, J., Pelizzon, A., Vodeb, O. ““Enough to make you sick!” Pathological characteristics of the Australian academic workplace’
6. Baum, F., Dollard, M. F., Fisher, M., Freeman, T., Newman, L., ‘The corporate university and its impact on health in Australia’
7. Hil, R., Thompsett, F., Lyons K. ‘Over the horizon: is there an alternative to neoliberal university governance?’

Commentaries

1. Sims, M., ‘Academic leadership in a neoliberal managerial world: an autoethnography of my career’
2. Connell, R., Hil, R., ‘Raewyn Connell on why and how universities need to change, and soon: interview with Richard Hil’