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Passage of TEQSA Bill shows agreement is possible

Passage of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment Bill 2014* by the Senate shows that there can be constructive agreement between the Government, Opposition and other parties about important changes for higher education.

The legislation is an important step in implementing the Lee Dow and Braithwaite report about the initial operations of TEQSA. The amendments assist TEQSA mark a change in attitude and approach to the regulation of higher education, one that engages more with the parties involved. TEQSA will be able to be more targeted in its assessment of the potential for risks and the actions each provider takes to maintain quality, address problems and forge new ways to deliver quality higher education.

TEQSA has an important role that will only grow should the Government's higher education reforms be passed in early 2015. They align the regulatory and funding systems so that every provider is in both at the same time. An effective combination of regulatory powers, funding incentives and consumer power will decide whether or not a provider flourishes or not.

The IRU also wishes to recognise the work of the founding Chief Commission, Dr Carol Nicoll, and her fellow Commissioners, in establishing TEQSA as an effective Agency, with tight timelines and a complex array of past State based decisions to integrate into an effective national system. We thank them for their work and wish Dr Nicoll and Mr Hawke well, following the announcement that both will retire from TEQSA. **END**

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