

Dear Vice Chancellor, Professor Mark Scott AO

Thank you for our positive meeting on 14 October. We look forward to your leadership and to working with you for the success of our university. You identified **engagement and trust** as key factors for you. We agree with you and we ask you, as a priority, for a reset of our culture where we have drifted from academic principles and practice. This is a rare opportunity, early in your tenure, for historic renewal and change.

You asked us for feedback. Since the financial crisis in 2008, a corporate transformation of the University has accelerated. There has been an **inversion**, with managerial process now dominating academic research, teaching, student support, service, and international pursuit. Government funding has reduced, overall budget has tripled – spent on buildings and bureaucracy, not people. There is a wide gap between academics and management, loss of trust, disengagement, and low morale. Our reputation and capacity for excellence are threatened. Academics are dedicated to teaching, research and service, not to disputes.

We register our concerns with you. They are shared by our academics and students who have suffered severely from an overbearing administration, systemic injustice, and personal injury. The University is justifiably proud of its comprehensive policy framework, but there are regular abuses of policies, practice, and people. Your leadership itself can influence and shape change. We propose also an independent, part time, confidential **Integrity Commissioner or Ombud** to help restore and rebuild trust and engagement.

We have received a startling number of case histories sent to us by colleagues, including blatant **abuse of policies**: the code of practice, academic freedom, intimidation, across several faculties and central units; **abuse of process**: change management, the APD/PPD, nepotism in recruitment, promotions, and interference in grants and funds without consultation with the grant holder; and **abuse of people**: administrative asphyxiation (smothering), exclusion from key work meetings, bullying and forcing staff from the University. We are absolutely committed to our university - but caught in a serious cultural dysfunction.

There is evidence of “Coercive Control”. Staff are afraid to complain, fearing retribution and loss of their jobs at this difficult time. Management response is that if there is no complaint, then there is nothing to consider. When staff do leave and complain, they are told that they are no longer employees, so the University is not responsible for them. Many still fear exclusion if they apply for a further appointment. “Human Relations” are often not supportive and seen to be mere enforcers and facilitators for managers.

These proposals may not be welcome. The “spin” from management is very different. We prize good managers as gold, but many of these have also been forced out. We do not fear change, but insist on change with integrity. We want to focus fully on an improved future, not an egregious past and present. The Unions and Media are aware of these issues, but we do not wish to pursue that path. We would be pleased to meet you and to serve in a supportive, ad hoc advisory role, if you consider that has merit. **RECOMMENDATION. Please establish an independent integrity review, reporting directly to you, to transform our culture, well-being, academic excellence, competitive capacity, and global reputation.**

Thank you for your consideration. **With respects, regards and support from USAP Council.**

[AFPD Members: Professors Brad Buckley, Manuel Graeber, John Hearn - Chair, Rebecca Mason - Chair, USAP Integrity Committee, Artem Prokhorov.]