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8 August 2022

Federation University Chancellor Professor Duncan Bentley  
Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Wendy Cross

Federal Minister for Education Hon. Jason Clare MP  
State Minister for Education Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP

### **Re: Discontinuation of Bachelor of Arts degree courses 2023**

Professional Historians Australia was extremely alarmed to learn of Federation University's recent decision to discontinue its Bachelor of Arts degree course in 2023.

Professional Historians Australia represents over 500 professionally accredited historians across all Australian states and territories who are trained to research and present history in many different ways. We work in government departments, universities, schools, museums and galleries, private firms usually in the heritage sector, libraries, archives, local councils, the media and as sole traders and consultants. Almost every single one of our members began their educational journey with a Bachelor of Arts degree which offered a strong foundation to build important and in-demand professional skills. A foundation in humanities can cultivate strong analytical skills, excellent verbal and written communication skills, the ability to process and synthesize vast amounts of information, giving rise to creative, innovative and flexible critical thinking.

Professional Historians Australia is very concerned that this action has come about as a result of the previous Federal Government's Job-Ready Graduate's Package over which we voiced our objections in 2020. Such objections went unheeded and, as a result, those from a regional, Indigenous or low socio-economic background will be further disadvantaged. We urge the current Federal Government to revisit the Job Ready Graduates Package with consideration for the implications on the educational opportunities for all Australians.

We strongly urge Federation University to reconsider its decision. Not only will the discontinuation of a Bachelor of Arts degree disadvantage rural and regional students in Victoria, it will have a detrimental effect on the educational status of Federation University and will set a dangerous precedent for other universities [with cost-cutting agendas]. Without access to humanities and the very significant benefits a Bachelor of Arts degree offers students, the very future of Australia's workforce, economy and society is under threat.

While the consequences of this action may not be felt immediately, they will be far-reaching and ultimately devastating. To deplete the nation of history and humanities graduates and researchers would be a short-sighted move, with negative consequences for Australia's political and cultural fabric, as well as its workforce. A future without critical, creative and flexible thinkers, without the very skills developed and honed through a Bachelor of Arts degree, is a future where we are unprepared to face the coming challenges of a changing world.

Regards, on behalf of professional historians across Australia,



Carmel Black BA (Hons) PhD MPHA  
President, Professional Historians Australia