
Public Consultation Insights Report

Adelaide University Act – Draft Bill

July – August 2023



Government of
South Australia

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise the insights and feedback gathered through consultation on the Adelaide University Draft Bill.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback specific to the draft Bill to establish Adelaide University.

Background

The Government of South Australia made a commitment to determine how the state can be best served by the university sector. In December 2022, the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide signed a Statement of Cooperation with the South Australian Government and the Australian Government to explore the feasibility of creating a new university.

In signing the Statement of Cooperation, the two universities agreed to work together to progress the feasibility and business case of creating a leading, for purpose university dedicated to addressing educational inequality; conducting future making research of scale and focus; and partnered with communities and industry, to become a globally recognised powerhouse for innovation and economic development.

In March 2023, the Universities released 'A Vision Statement for a South Australian university for the future'. The Vision Statement was published on the websites of both universities and distributed to more than 285,000 people including students, staff, alumni, donors, and industry partners.

Following the release of the Vision Statement, feedback from the two university communities and an extensive six-month feasibility phase, both University Councils were presented with a comprehensive business case and associated documentation for their consideration. Both Councils resolved to enter into a Heads of Agreement to support the State Government in the creation of a combined new university for South Australia, to be called Adelaide University.

Following the announcement, a Bill to establish Adelaide University was drafted and was released for public consultation.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Inform a Bill that will be introduced to Parliament later in 2023.
- Facilitate public input into the draft Bill.
- Identify gaps, oversights and opportunities for improvement of the Bill prior to its submission to Parliament.

Following the consultation period, the draft Bill will be updated and introduced into Parliament. Once passed and commenced, it will be the founding Act to establish Adelaide University.

Scope

The purpose of this consultation process was to seek feedback on the draft Bill to establish Adelaide University.

The community was provided the option to give feedback on other aspects relevant to the establishment of Adelaide University by making a submission to the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University.

Mechanism for engagement included:

- YourSay Website Survey
- Direct engagement meetings

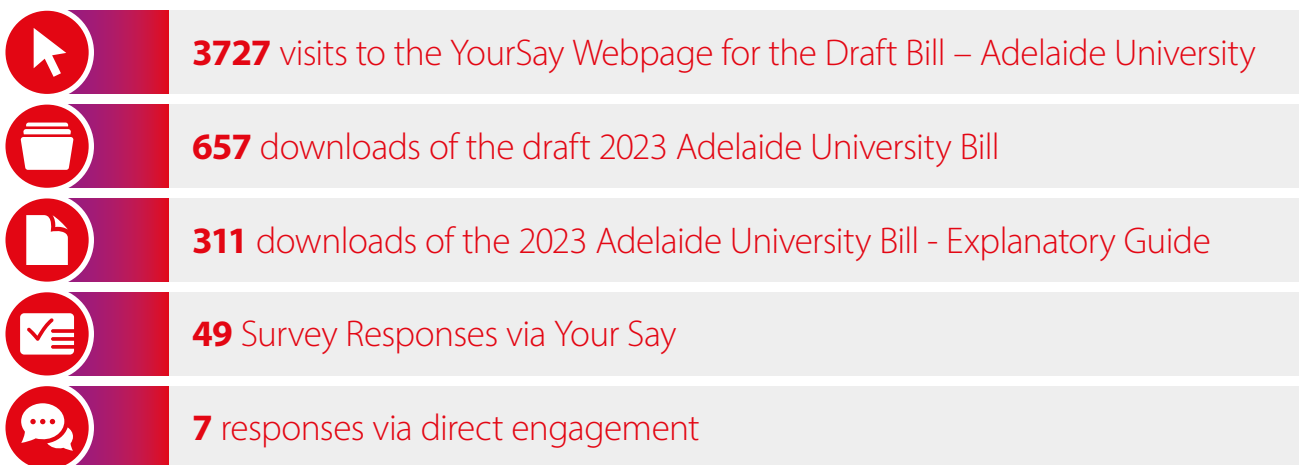
The consultation period was from 24 July - 18 August 2023.

A Survey enabled feedback on each individual part of the draft Bill, the Bill more broadly and any additional comments.

The following documents were provided to assist people to gain background context and a deeper understanding of the draft Bill.

- Adelaide University Bill 2023
- Adelaide University Bill - Explanatory Guide
- Future University Statement of Cooperation
- Future University Vision Statement
- Heads of Agreement

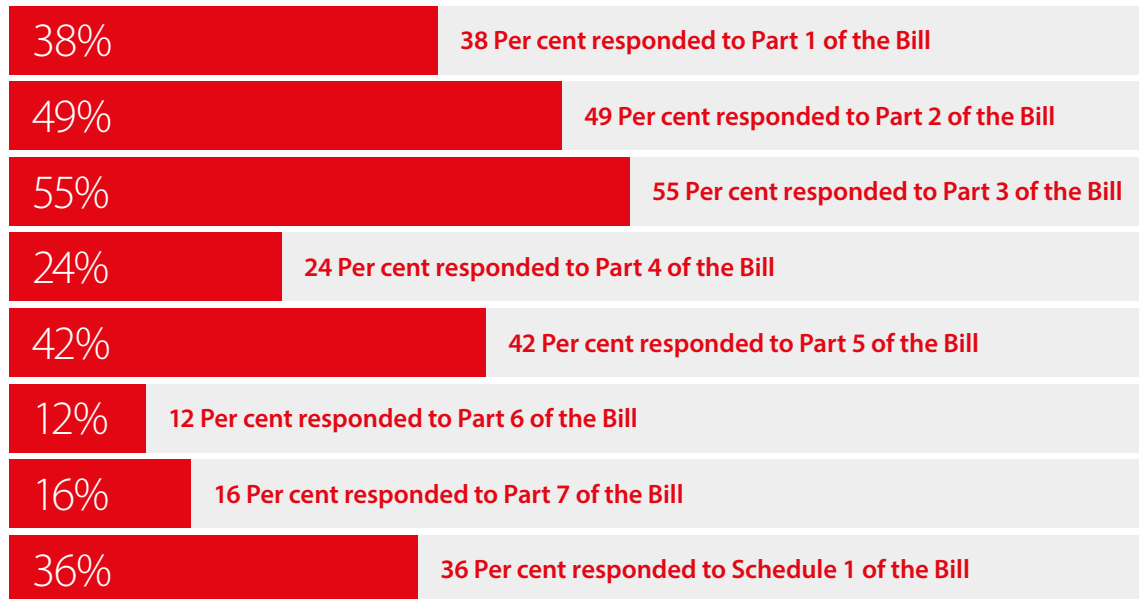
Snapshot of engagement



For the purposes of this report, only feedback that responds directly to the proposed questions about the draft Bill have been included in the summary. Comments about other aspects of the establishment of Adelaide University that do not relate to the draft legislation have been excluded from this insights report.

Summary response rates and themes of feedback

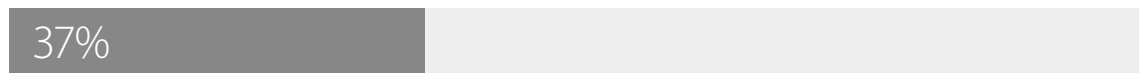
Overall response rates by Part of the Bill



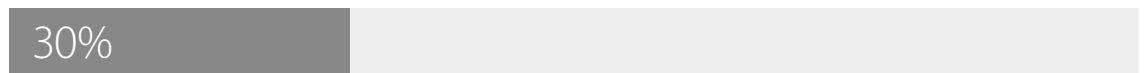
Over 63 per cent of the respondents provided an additional comment and reinforced a position that they had made in a specific section of their feedback.

This consultation garnered a wide range of responses which have been categorised into three response types:

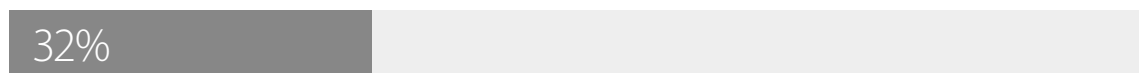
Technical – Technical responses to the draft Bill (37 per cent of responses)



Non-technical – Responses that addressed text within the draft Bill but took a non-technical and usually community focussed approach to their response (30 per cent)



General statements – Responses solely commenting on the establishment of a new University as a concept and not addressing the text or content within the draft Bill (32 per cent)



Overall themes from engagement

Social and cultural equity, diversity, and inclusivity (including within the governance structures)

Transparent and ethical operations and governance

Representation of First Nations people

Consideration of environmental and sustainability commitments

Serving the public interest

*Note that themes are listed in order of frequency of times raised throughout survey

Insight of themes from each survey question

Part 1.

38%

38 Per cent responded to Part 1 of the Bill

Part 1 of the Bill sets out the preliminary matters including commencement, objects of the Act and definitions. Please note, the detailed functions of the University are included in Part 2.

Do you have any feedback on Part 1 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

Responses to Part 1 included utilising the opportunity to amend and introduce stronger references to and representation of inclusivity, equity, and diversity. These related to acknowledgement of First Nations people, regional and rural South Australians (in addition to those residing in a metropolitan area) and diversity, equity, and inclusivity more broadly.

There were also responses related to being more aspirational in Part 1 and introducing a focus on educational excellence and contribution to society.

Part 2.

49%

49 Per cent responded to Part 2 of the Bill

Part 2 of the Bill sets out the functions and powers of the University, including the role of the University, awarding of qualifications, declaration of logos, and use of official insignia.

Do you have any feedback on Part 2 of the Bill? Yes/No

(If yes) What are your views?

Themes of educational excellence and introducing a focus on serving the interests of the South Australian public continued throughout Part 2.

Other themes included a stronger emphasis on the environment, integrity, and service. Equity and access were also areas of focus, with respondents emphasising the need for greater engagement with First Nations people.

Several respondents cited duplicated and redundant content that could be condensed and made more concise.

Part 3.

55%

55 Per cent responded to Part 3 of the Bill

Part 3 of the Bill provides details of the Council, the leadership of the University, the Academic Board and delegations.

Do you have any feedback on Part 3 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

The majority of responses to this part of the Bill related to ensuring the composition of the Council was diverse and fairly represented the interests of the public, students and staff.

Respondents were eager to introduce increased detail around how the members were selected (elected vs appointed), the membership composition (students, academic staff, professional staff and externals) and the experience and knowledge of those members.

Part 4.

24%

24 Per cent responded to Part 4

Part 4 of the Bill sets out the rules that the University can make in relation to governance, administration and operation of the University, including in relation to conduct on University grounds.

Do you have any feedback on Part 4 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

Multiple respondents felt the purposes for which by-laws could be made within Part 4 were too prescriptive, replicated earlier parts of the Bill or could be prohibitive in the future. Respondents cited the need to review this section in more detail to ensure it held suitable value within the Bill.

Part 5.

42%

42 Per cent responded to Part 5 of the Bill

Part 5 of the Bill describes the two funds that will be established – the Adelaide University Research Fund and the Adelaide University Student Support Fund – and provides for the establishment of a Funds Advisory Committee.

Do you have any feedback on Part 5 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

Responses to Part 5 had common themes of transparency in the allocation of the Funds and ensuring the Funds are used to respond to the needs of the community.

There were also comments regarding ensuring the membership and framework of the Funds Advisory Committee is diverse and holds a focus on the public interest, diversity and equity.

Equity, accessibility and serving the public interest continued to be a strong theme within the insights for this part.

Part 6.

12%

12 Per cent responded to Part 6 of the Bill

Part 6 of the Bill outlines the details of the establishment, administration and management of trusts, gifts and property.

Do you have any feedback on Part 6 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

There was a low volume of responses to this question, with respondents citing the need to ensure the legislation upholds the historic conditions of trusts and donations.

Part 7.

16%

16 Per cent responded to Part 7 of the Bill

Part 7 of the Bill covers a range of issues including regulations, indemnities, land tax, and annual reporting and audit requirements.

Do you have any feedback on Part 7 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

Respondents cited an interest in strengthened detail related to the content of the annual report, including data on diversity, equity, and inclusion across not only the student cohort, but also the university's workforce.

Schedule 1.

36%

36 Per cent responded to Schedule 1 of the Bill

Schedule 1 of the Bill allows for the repeal of the University of Adelaide Act 1971 and the University of South Australia Act 1990, and corresponding amendments to other Acts. It also contains transitional arrangements upon commencement of the proposed new Act, including the establishment of a Transition Council, the transition leadership, recognition of graduates, and the transfer of students, staff and assets, contracts and liabilities to Adelaide University. Schedule 1 authorises the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide to facilitate the establishment of Adelaide University.

Do you have any feedback on Schedule 1 of the Bill? Yes/No (If yes) What are your views?

Throughout the responses to Schedule 1, there were strong suggestions on ensuring the membership of the Transition Council was fair, democratic, and suitably represented the vested parties, university communities and the South Australian public.

Respondents also cited the need to protect students, staff and donors throughout the transitional process.

Additional provisions and comments

Are there any other provisions you think should be included in the proposed Act? Do you have any other comments or feedback on the Bill?

- The university should have at the forefront a commitment to serving the public interest.
- There should be references to ethics and integrity in the Bill.
- A Student Ombud should be considered.
- The Bill should include reference to a student association / student union.
- Good governance will be critical in the success of the transition and formation of the new university.



Next Steps

Parliamentary process:

- **July - August 2023** – Public Consultation on the draft Bill
- **October 2023** – Parliamentary Inquiry findings released
- **Proposed Q4 2023** – Bill introduced to Parliament

Subject to the passing and commencement of legislation to create Adelaide University, the proposed timeline is:

- **2024** – Adelaide University to obtain relevant accreditation and regulatory approvals
- **2025** – All core business activities and functions transferred to Adelaide University
- **2026** – Adelaide University is operational

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