

warned.  
Peter Noonan, a former member of the influential Bradley review and adviser on the Dawkins reforms, has called on the government to establish an independent statutory body to advise on the

what powers the independent body had and how it would respond to excessive prices, such as being prepared to cap the sizes of student loans or reducing subsidies in line with higher fee hikes.  
"The mere existence of these

allow the market to create its own guidance."  
Such guidance should include requirements that extra fee revenue was invested in boosting student learning and teaching, and that price increases were tied to

moting the benefits of fee deregulation without addressing how it would deal with the potential risk of excessive pricing when the market was skewed by cheap student HECS loan and where price was

## Reviewing the role of paper reviewers

ANDREW TROUNSON

JOURNAL editors soon find out how collegiate their colleagues are when they try to find someone to review a paper. It is a lot of work but, as Mathieu O'Neil has discovered, sometimes an editor can wait months only to get back a useless paragraph.

Amid the emerging debate over whether and how the work of journal editors and reviewers needs to be better recognised, Dr O'Neil's *Journal of Peer Production* takes a radically transparent approach. He and his fellow editors don't just publish the views of reviewers, who can remain anonymous, they also publish the original work before it was reviewed. It provides a window on how significant that contribution has been.

Dr O'Neil, of the University of Canberra, said it was about encouraging high-quality reviewing, but also about giving due recognition to the task. While the anonymity of reviewers was a challenge, there was nothing stopping a journal providing a list of reviewers it considered were doing good work, he said. "It is all about being as transparent as possible," he said.

Australian journal editors have been increasingly vocal in their belief that the quality of editing and reviewing is being put at risk. They say the work, which is central to the entire research sector, isn't valued by university management, which is focused on research outputs. It means they have little time to do the grunt work that sustains the whole academic enterprise.

They warn the system is driving academics to focus on their own research at the expense of editing and reviewing. To address the problem they want the Australian Research Council to somehow recognise their work in the Excellence in Research for Australia exercise and so get management to take notice.

"The problem is the whole

ecology of scholarly work relies on people being collegial but this isn't rewarded," said Andrew Bonnell, University of Queensland branch president of the National Tertiary Education Union.

"Some people are always more collegiate than others but it's driving management to encourage people to be less collegial and more selfish," said Dr Bonnell, an editor with *Australian Journal of Politics & History*.

Australian Research Council chief Aidan Byrne has suggested that in cases where an editor or a reviewer has made a significant contribution to a work, a journal should consider giving them a byline on the article, which could then be recognised in the ERA. He believes there is particular potential for this in the humanities.

### Journal editors believe the quality of editing and reviewing is being put at risk

But that raises potential problems under copyright law. "Authors might not like someone else claiming credit to their work. It is a tricky issue to contemplate," Australian National University copyright expert Matthew Rimmer said.

Dr Bonnell said the ARC's suggestion wouldn't address the issue because the instances where the work of an editor or reviewer merits a byline would be rare.

Angela Daly, a research fellow at Swinburne, co-edited the latest issue of *Peer Production* and while she enjoyed it, the large amount of work involved meant she wasn't rushing to do it again. "It is satisfying but when it comes to promotions editing a journal isn't something that will give you a leg up." But she said getting internal recognition was less of an issue than the problem of large publishing companies charging high prices for journals off the back of free academic labour.

## Disruption of a d



RMIT vice-chancellor Martin Bean returns to Melbourne

### RMIT's new broom brings a fresh approach to campus

JULIE HARE

HE'S not Professor Bean or even Dr Bean, just plain old Mr Bean. Hold the Rowan Atkinson jokes, please.

Martin Bean, who took over the helm of RMIT last week, has arrived in Melbourne to cause a very different kind of disruption than his bumbling, Mini-driving namesake.

Most recently, Bean was head of Britain's Open University, with

its 300,000 online students, five years, during which time was also the driving force behind Britain's foray into MOOCs, FutureLearn. But for 20 years Bean was on the other side of the fence leading the development of online-based education tools at global giants Microsoft and Novell.

"I thought it was high time I put my money where my mouth was," he says. "Traditional campus-based universities need to face some disruption and embrace learning and teaching in a different way."

He says he was attracted to RMIT's global footprint, with successful Vietnam campus and study centre in Barcelona. He



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