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In a sector where evidenced-based data is absolutely the most critical element of research outcomes, the Group of Eight (Go8) welcomes the expansion of the HILDA survey to capture additional graduate outcome information, but is perplexed and disappointed that skewed results on graduate earnings using this data was accepted for publication in the latest HILDA Survey Statistical Report.

Go8 Chief Executive Vicki Thomson said the Go8 had already made strong representations to the HILDA survey project director because the results are so clearly anomalous with previous studies. “We absolutely question the veracity of the methodology adopted,” said Ms Thomson.

“When results are so very different from everything that has gone before, even when using the same survey data, surely some explanation is required, especially in a sector that lives and dies by the rigor of its research,” she said. “One example which illustrates our concerns is the ignoring of field of education. This has previously been demonstrated to be a major contributing factor to graduate earnings, but it has not included. Why?

“While we have been advised that the views expressed in the report are entirely those of the author and not the Department of Social Services, the Melbourne Institute or the HILDA Survey Group that makes them no less damaging to the sector.”

“We do understand that analysis in this summary report is not exhaustive, as it skims a broad number of topics from the survey, and that further and more detailed analysis is required to address the shortcomings identified. However that does not assist us in dealing with the report’s conclusions as they stand which are clearly disappointingly suspect”

Contact: Vicki Thomson, Group of Eight Chief Executive on +61 417 808 472