



# NSW REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM

Wednesday, 24 September 2003

*Working Together*

Partnership

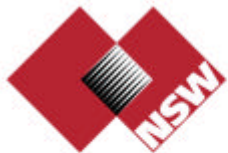
Research & Development

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# The Why and Way of OLA

Stuart Hamilton Chief Executive  
Open Learning Australia

# What is OLA?

- Open Learning Agency of Australia
- company owned by 7 universities
- Undergrad, Postgrad and VET programs
- open access, flexible delivery

# Open, flexible – fine words, what do they mean?

- open access
- no limit on numbers
- no prerequisites
- plan your own study timetable
- study at your own pace
- choose a few units, or to build your own degree
- study on line or with traditional distance materials

# Which Universities?

- Monash
- Swinburne
- RMIT
- Griffith
- Macquarie
- University of South Australia
- Curtin University of Technology

# Who studies with OLA?

- 60% metropolitan, 40% rural
- 55% female
- median age 30
- small number of indigenous people <1%

# How do we work?

- course broker which sources programs and tuition from nearly 30 course providers
- providers accredit and assure quality
- over 90% of programs from shareholder universities

# When can you study?

- Students can study at any time, any place
- Four 13 week Study Periods a year
- For example this year:

Study Period begins	3 MAR	2 JUNE	1 SEPT	28 NOV
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# How do you pay?

- students pay \$435 per undergraduate study unit
- full fees can be paid ‘upfront’
- HECS-style Open Learning Deferred Payment Scheme covers part of cost
- full-time students can access Austudy or Youth Allowance.

# Choices

- students may study individual units or follow designated program to take out a degree
- credit transfer is available for previous studies
- students may credit OLA units to other programs and finish degrees already commenced

# Discipline areas

Nearly 300 undergraduate unit offerings including:

- Arts
- Accounting
- Business, Business Law, Criminology, Marketing, Communications
- Information Technology
- Human Life Sciences

# Expansion plans

- nursing- first bridging units available in 2004
- early childhood and school teaching qualifications being planned.

# On-line or not?

No one preferred way of learning

- some units completely on-line
- some have significant resource based websites, including audio streaming, short video clips, graphics and links to additional resources
- some still traditional print/audio/CD-ROM.

# The Tyranny of distance

- distance education has strengths – but also weaknesses
- need to create ‘learning communities’ for isolated students

# On-line Response

Online Learning Portal provides

- Access to online units
- Access to growing range of online resources
- Discussion forums for prospective students
- Discussion forums for OLA students and ‘alumni’
- Dedicated study groups for each unit whether online or print based

# Learning Centres

- Face-to-face support, may be the essential component for many learners.
- A community based learning culture needs to be nurtured.
- Access to learning support and infrastructure needs to be facilitated.

# Where are they?



## Some Examples

- Kalgoorlie
- Hindmarsh
- Lilydale
- Bendigo
- Shepparton
- Alliance with Learning Network Queensland
- Exploring options in outer suburbs of Sydney & Melbourne

# Conclusion

- OLA a significant player in higher education - can contribute even more
- OLA can work with communities to address learning needs.
- Partnership and community support vital



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