strategy to 2030. This work posed indirectly the question what regions, what is a region? Here as throughout Australia, the geopolitical reality is of metropolitan concentrations of people and power, fringed by wide and often spreading urban peripheries - the peri-urban, or urban frontier. Beyond these lie the rural and the more or less remote. DOI found a tier or layer between greater metropolitan and remote rural: the inner Victorian growth area not much more than an hour from the City, where country towns prosper, and local authorities look more toward Melbourne then outward to more distant regions. Melbourne may be envied or resented. Either way, there is a sense of shared destiny and shared planning needs. Further out the links are more tenuous and the culture more distinct. Hard-nosed economists have suggested abandoning the more economically non-viable remote areas rather than propping them up, letting the free market of internal migration take its course.

We need to be clear what kinds of regions we are talking about. We should also be clear which ‘clients’ are involved in the regions. They may be industrial and economic communities, whole regions of growth or decay, other kinds of stakeholder interests and groups. Or they may be the university’s more traditional ‘clients’. These are still in essence individual enrolled degree-getting learners for whom universities compete. If ‘regional provision’ means study opportunities for geographically remote individuals then the regional proposition may boil down to a simple one – simple in principle if complex in execution: how to equalise individuals’ access and opportunity between bush and City.

In practice it is more complicated, as the international OECD Conference on Learning Cities and Regions held in Melbourne in October 2002 showed. Built round
and going beyond a keynote OECD report published the previous year, that meeting made abundantly clear that learning city and regional thinking has moved way beyond the earlier equality of individual opportunity paradigm. Individual equity of access and opportunity remains a valued plank of an Aussie fair-go tradition, but other social and economic dimensions also make regional provision a new ball game. Regional equity for individuals and for communities has an imperative in depressed inner city and outer metropolitan localities and regions as well as in the outback and places between.

While asking which regions, clients and communities, we ask also about modes of provision – or to use a favoured term, what kinds of engagement. Are partners essentially distribution channels for university wares? To use an expression common in North-South overseas development assistance (ODA) circles, are they mainly recipient systems? Or do we mean learning partners in the newly acknowledged world of knowledge production, ownership and use, as required in a fast-changing knowledge society? Looking at partnership from the world ODA and the Asian regional level, down to the national, then the State and down again to very local levels, for example the responsibility region of the local shire or LLEN, one thinks of fractals – reproduction at each level within the whole of the elements of the larger system.

**Context - Victoria and the nation**

In his consultative Crossroads review of higher education, especially the third discussion paper, Federal Minister Brendan Nelson foreshadows more planned, purposeful and probably directed regional engagement by the nation’s universities in a context of more collaborative rationalisation of provision, along with sharper differentiation or diversity within the system. Each university must come to terms with what this means for its particular mission and priority. It remains to be seen at the time of writing what priority this will attract and what incentives, premiums for special provision, and sanctions for non-achievement may be implied, also what understanding of region the federal Government will adopt. Various sticks and carrots have been used in other countries with varied success and widely varying acceptability.

In Victoria, Education Minister Lynne Kosky led a State consultative response to Crossroads. Her response, published in October 2002, foreshadowed ‘Improving Regional and Rural Higher Education Provision’ initially by means of a Working Party. This was announced following the State Election (December 2002) and Professor Geoff Wilson assumed the leadership role on demitting office as Vice-Chancellor of Deakin University early this year.

Kosky sees universities as catalysts for future development. She calls for enhanced participation and access to higher education, together with stronger HE-VET sector links, and demands improved regional and rural higher education provision. ‘The opportunity exists for substantial collaboration between regional communities, regional industries, institutions and government to cooperate on a long-term strategy for the provision of higher education in regional and rural Victoria.’ Community engagement must be promoted. The strategy was to be ‘grounded in the concept of community partnerships’, something in which Victoria’s particular strength was demonstrated through case study presentations to the OECD conference in October last year. The remit of the Wilson review is higher education in non-metropolitan Victoria. A day-long meeting at the La Trobe Valley Churchill campus of Monash University in February 2003 was seen as the first meeting of the embryonic Working Party.

There appears to be new seriousness and specificity here about coordinating and nurturing regional provision. Looking at the wider world environment of globalisation, with accelerating technological, especially ICT, innovation and obsolescence, we see politicians expressing urgency and anxious to build a competitive knowledge society, but lacking sophistication as to how this is to be achieved. By implication universities have a new order of responsibility – not just for regional provision but also for collaborative regional development.

In the now familiar words of Michael Gibbons and others ‘mode two knowledge production’ is required. This is the kind of creation and utilisation of knowledge which depends on sustained reciprocal partnership between universities, as powerhouses of expertise, and their symbiotic communities. Together these must be able to create, own, and use knowledge for economic and social prosperity. Engagement is becoming a new mantra. In association with ideas about networks and innovation clusters, as well as ‘softer’ notions of social capital and social inclusion, this gives a quite different twist to the question of regional provision, away from individual study opportunities and hand-me-down outreach for those suffering the tyranny of distance towards sustained co-production of knowledge and prosperity. For universities regional provision is coming to mean sustained partnership, even preserving degrees of freedom of action through interdependency.
RMIT – from community service to regional partnership and engagement

An institutional snapshot puts flesh on these bones. RMIT takes pride in a history of having helped Melbourne achieve prosperity with its sleeves rolled up since the late 19th century. Only recently designated a university, it has never been an ivory tower. The current mission of this blue collar institution is to make a difference. It seeks to do this by dissolving the boundaries between academic disciplines where these stand in the way of asking new questions and meeting new needs, and between itself and its many partner communities. Having a long history of community service does not however absolve it from review and renewal in a global era, or from exploring again its own meanings and modes of regional.

In 2002 the University took stock of its partnership work. A complex matrix of regions, partnering processes and partners was needed to span the breadth and diversity, and to appraise the quality and productivity, of regional provision. For RMIT region is a strong axis on a matrix mapping across different fields and modes of provision, and different kinds of learner and partner. The regions include two at extremities of the State which are clearly ‘rural remote’, East Gippsland and Hamilton, as well as other rural localities. They also include strong and sustained multifaceted engagement with the northern Melbourne metropolitan and peri-urban region, which is written into the University’s statutory obligations, with the inner City, and overseas in Vietnam and South India.

As befits a time of audit and accountability, key performance indicators (KPIs) are being developed and tested for this work. The task is not simple. Or rather, to treat it as simple is to trivialise. What matters most is often uncountable. What can be counted is often not worth counting. There is no great difficulty about counting memoranda of understanding and other agreements, but these are means to an end. Like committee meetings they are not worth counting as an end in themselves. More tangible and sensible are ‘below the line’ products of partnership. These are products in the form of provision, measured for teaching by the number, kind, and achievements of students, and in terms of training and consultancy contracts and income, research commissions and outputs. This quantifies core business of the university, although causality between the partnership and the outputs is not always self-evident. That is to say, how much does the volume and value of such work depend on true partnership? A more valid answer will be found by tracking longevity of partnership, in commercial terms repeat business.

RMIT tracks and measures output activities across its core business of teaching and research by region and in other ways. ‘Above the line’ there are other important but less tangible products. There is longevity of involvement. Partnerships need trust, won and held over time. Learning from partnership converts into curriculum and course renewal, and into new research capability, programmes and teams. It thus builds institutional capability. For the region economic and social performance indicators measure health and prosperity, although the direct benefit from having a university regional partner may rely more on faith than in numbers.

Some regions catch an updraft of economic improvement, enhanced confidence and social wellbeing – an upward spiral where success feeds success. For others the spiral seems to twirl inexorably down. There is a technical problem about measuring and proving the University’s direct contribution to growth through its networks of activity and its direct provision. If local and regional judgement are to be believed, participation is vitally important. The very act of wanting, believing and having a university in local engagement may materially alter regional prospects. Aspiration is one key to success for a depressed region as for any individual and family who always thought that university was for other people.

RMIT holds three domains vital to its mission. It calls these prime, the core activity of teaching and learning, pathways into and through the University for students, and research. Each involves regional provision. Each is informed and strengthened by partnership. Unless there are tangible gains across these areas, regional engagement has little value and meaning. Currently in taking stock of modes of engagement for example, the University is reviewing the workings of its Programme Advisory Committees (PACs) and the role of Adjuncts. How far are these modes of external relationship enabling RMIT to work more accurately to serve, support and lead the development of different communities of interest and region?

Even this inquiry poses new questions for these new times. For example, is the proper focus of the PAC the provision or programme, as at present, or the provider, that is the academic unit which creates the curriculum and teaches the courses, or, rather, the recipient? And is the recipient, or client, or partner, chosen in today’s, or is it rather in tomorrow’s, configuration of that industry sector? Regional provision is not a simple matter of

‘Partnerships need trust, won and held over time. Learning from partnership converts into curriculum and course renewal, and into new research capability, programmes and teams.’
supply and demand when needs change, and the client and its business are continuously changing, often in unpredictable ways. Shared planning of valued provision means looking ahead, and joint forecasting.

Conclusion – towards a new art of engagement

What other lessons does the RMIT experience of regional provision suggest for universities generally? In terms of the State review of non-metropolitan provision it provokes a question about scope – all regions or just the truly rural regions? – and about narrower and wider understandings of regional provision – individuals’ learning opportunities, or partnership in integrated regional development? Hamilton is the RMIT flagship for the latter, a participatory laboratory and living test-site which others are welcome to visit, share and consider selectively replicating.

RMIT is not always seen as a regional university even when this was crudely equated with being an ex-CAE. But one way or another we are all regional now, from remote NT University to the most venerated city centre Sandstone.6 If the new UK White Paper initiative to widen access and successful participation is anything to go by, the most prestigious elite as well as the nominally ‘teaching only’ may be called to account.

More could be said if space permitted. Dissolving the boundaries is the title of the current RMIT strategy document. For boundaries to dissolve the networked university as Mark Latham and others have called it is necessary – internal open boundaries between academic units go in hand with vital capacity for external networking and partnership.7 RMIT is beginning more systematically to attempt transfer of learning experience across regions locally and internationally, for example by developing and comparing learning resource centres (LRCs) in different cultural settings. Shared-use LRCs may be a key to effective regional provision in a competitive resource-lean environment.8

Systematic study of these phenomena is scarce. Such research as exists from other sectors however suggests that simple competition is often ineffectual at enhancing diversity and occupying niches. It produces not diversity and specificity so much as homogenising competition for the most popular product lines. Hence the plethora of similar undergraduate degrees and MBAs, and the paucity of tailor-made provision developed out of partnership to meet unique regional needs and to enhance unique regional capabilities to prosper and to compete. If full market regulation and full free market competition are each incompetent to achieve requisite functional diversity then a third way must be found. Others are also looking for such a third way, which engages the special competence of private, government, not-for-profit and community sectors. Until this is found, effective, affordable and necessarily diverse provision to meet unique regional needs will elude us. Higher education ‘system diversity’ will still feel like dysfunctional hierarchy.

The October 2002 OECD Conference on Learning Cities and Regions sought to address four questions: how to achieve economic development, how to build social capital and bring about greater social inclusion, what is the role of (higher and other) education in creating learning regions, and what are good forms of governance to achieve these ends. We have work to do before all the answers are known, and before the nation and its different States can strut the WTO stage confident about our shared future.

3 In the UK HEROBA (Higher Education Reach-Out to Business and the Community) has evolved under Blair to become ‘3rd stream funding’, while the ‘Access Regulator’ promised in Minister Clarke’s January 2003 White Paper is widely reviled throughout the HE sector.
5 M. Gibbons et al. The New Production of Knowledge, London, Sage, 1994. Fittingly, Gibbons as Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities has moved on to create and lead a dialogue about university engagement which while having universal application he sees as having particular purchase for ‘new’ universities, which approximates one meaning of the Australian ‘regional’.
6 This is demonstrated by the participation of all Victorian universities (including ACU) in a voluntary network of universities known as VURCON which was created in 2002 to take the initiative in respect of regional collaboration.
8 The City of Shepperton is currently seeking State regional infrastructure development funding for such a centre which will ideally be an access point for the resources of many different providers.
The recent Federal budget highlighted the Government’s view of the importance of regional campuses to Australia’s well-being. Regional campuses provide intellectual, physical and economic resources to their regions and help address inequities of access to universities by country students. In recognition of the benefits universities bring to regional Australia, the Costello budget and the Nelson higher education reforms outlined in it contain a suite of opportunities for rural communities and the universities which serve them.

Deakin University was Victoria’s first regionally based university and was established to provide quality higher education opportunities to off-campus students, as well as to serve the needs of students living in and around Geelong in an area that could be broadly termed south central Victoria. Now Deakin University is a thriving institution with over 30,000 enrolled students (including some 13,000 off campus students) and another 40,000 corporate-based students enrolled through Deakin’s private arm – Deakin Prime. As well as two metropolitan campuses, Deakin has three campuses based in regional Victoria:

- Geelong campus at Waurn Ponds
- Geelong Waterfront campus
- Warrnambool campus.

Deakin University has become known for its being progressive, innovative, responsive and relevant. Indeed, it is fair to say the 38 public universities have specialized to some extent in areas of their strengths. Those features of Deakin described above differentiate it from other universities and are best exemplified by its collaborative partnerships with industry, professional associations, government and schools. The University has a strong commitment to rural and regional engagement as illustrated by the creation of a position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Rural and Regional) with specific responsibilities for addressing the higher education and research needs of communities essentially from Werribee through to Mt Gambier. This position, incidentally, was established well before the May budget which identified the Government’s investment in regional universities!

Deakin’s commitment to regional higher education will see it build on its excellent partnerships with local schools. It acknowledges rural-based students have fewer opportunities to attend universities and that their lower rates of participation in higher education represent a real loss of opportunity to the nation. Deakin University has recently embarked on a major initiative in delivering its programs on-line via the internet. We believe this will improve access to tertiary students living in remote areas as well as prepare all our students for life-long learning. Providing incentives is one area we would like to investigate as a possibility of encouraging rural students to attend university. Deakin is also exploring ways of building on rural students’ experience with university life; for example, eleven secondary schools in south-west Victoria send their year 9 science students to Deakin’s Warrnambool Campus to engage in learning about Water Quality in Aquaculture as a way of increasing interest in and teaching about important concepts in the physical sciences. A similar scheme (The Chemical Detective) involves Geelong-based schools using Deakin University’s resources and skills in Forensic Science.

Whereas Deakin’s presence in the Geelong area has been strong, secure and highly regarded, the same could not always have been said of its Warrnambool operations. The lack of economic incentives for small, isolated campuses saw the closure of several programs at Warrnambool in the 1990s. A reduction in enrolments from about 1,700 in the 1980s when the campus was a College of Advanced Education was reduced to fewer than 1,000 in the late 1990s and the local community saw courses removed, staff lost and responsibility for operations transferred to another site. Some regarded the Campus as being remote and disengaged and worse, there was a perception that the programs at Warrnambool were somehow inferior in quality to those offered at a ‘proper’ university.

Deakin University’s Warrnambool Campus – a Major Turnaround in Success

In 1999 the University assessed its strengths at Warrnambool and mounted a campaign to change the perception of low quality of programs by enhancing and publicizing its excellent research outcomes. To most people, research is the feature which distinguishes
quality universities from other tertiary institutions. A University Research Priority Area was established, based at Warrnambool, which specialized in sustainable natural resources management. This research group embarked on a research program in partnership with local industry, government agencies (for example, catchment management authorities) and community groups which addressed environmental problems confronting the region. Figure 1 shows the number of research partners who have made a serious commitment in terms of money, infrastructure or personnel, to the research and Figure 2 shows the total research income received by staff at the Warrnambool Campus from 1999 to 2002.

![Figure 1: Number of ‘serious’ research partner organisations (those which invest significant resources) collaboratively undertaking funded projects with Deakin University’s Warrnambool Campus from 1999 to 2002.](image1)

![Figure 2: Research income for Deakin University’s Warrnambool Campus from 1999 to 2002. Numbers on abscissa refer to number of actual grants received in each year.](image2)

Some examples of the successful, partnership-based research are presented below.

**Case Study 1: Elmac Hydroponics**

Deakin University’s School of Ecology and Environment and the local tomato growing company, Elmac Hydroponics, are engaged in research into innovative hydroponic mechanisms which produce significant environmental benefits and export potential. The small company of four staff have developed an innovative drip-feed watering system which results in no effluent from the production centre. Two doctoral students are working on-site with the company to perfect the system which one of the students invented.

![Drip-feed watering system at Elmac Hydroponics, the basis for research funded through an ARC Linkage grant with Deakin University.](image3)

**Case Study 2: Regional to Catchment Scale Indicators of Sustainability**

Another ARC Linkage grant was awarded to Deakin University’s School of Ecology and Environment in partnership with 16 organisations from regional industry and public sector agencies to investigate indicators of sustainability in South-western Victoria. This research is being undertaken by a post-doctoral research fellow whose survey of partner organisations developed a suite of ranked, potential indicators grouped under environment, social, economic and implementation & monitoring. A PhD student is now testing the relationships between indicators which need to be examined at different geographic scales. South-western Victoria is a major food producing region and partners are keen to be able to demonstrate to their markets that their products and processes are indeed ‘clean and green’.

![An ARC funded project with 16 partners is investigating important indicators which can be used to measure sustainability in South-western Victoria.](image4)

**Case Study 3: Joint Appointment of a Senior Research Fellow in Remote Sensing and GIS**

The Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority has contributed 50% of the salary of a senior research fellow in remote sensing and geographic information systems to generate tools to measure changes in land use, water quality, salinisation and other problems addressed in the National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity. The partner organisation is keen to be a leader in the field of developing a suite of novel techniques which can be used to detect problems and monitor changes. Its Regional Catchment Strategy was the first to be accredited by government.
Research at Deakin University’s Warrnambool Campus has been successful in raising the profile, relevance and standing of the campus in the region through it being:

- Focussed and specialised (in the field of environment)
- High quality, internationally benchmarked
- Applied to meet the needs of the region’s industry, government and community groups
- Multidisciplinary – it can tackle broad environmental problems using expertise in biophysical sciences, environmental economics, engineering and sociology
- Carried out locally by researchers who live in the region, have a sense of ownership of the problem and are on hand long-term to assist the partners
- Often based in adaptive management in which the experimental results feed into management practice
- Designed to "make a difference".

Other important examples of partnership-based research include the recently announced $2.06 million grant to Deakin University’s Warrnambool Campus for a Sustainable Aquaculture Systems facility by the Victorian Government’s Science and Technology Innovations Initiative in partnership with three regionally-based private companies. Last year, the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health was opened by Minister Kay Patterson. This is a partnership of Deakin and Flinders Universities with two regional hospital groups and is designed to engage the community in rural health initiatives, undertake research relevant to the region, provide professional training for health workers and enhance students to undertake work experience in regional Australia.

One submission to the Crossroads Higher Education Review noted there was a danger of research becoming too locally-focussed and ‘over parochial’ and that, whilst research at regional universities must address the needs of those communities, the nature of sound academic scholarship also demands that the research be of international standing. Research which is too introspective and is totally limited to the local conditions lacks wider applicability to novel situations. The case studies described each provide evidence of quality research which has wider applications and which can be internationally benchmarked. For example, the successful STI grant in Aquaculture will produce a diversified enterprise for Australian farmers raising native fish for the retail market. Whilst the research has immediate and local benefits for farmers living in salt-affected landscapes, it was strongly underpinned by scientists with outstanding research records and who are recognised as international leaders in Aquaculture.

The creation of a Vice-Chancellor’s Warrnambool Community Reference Group has been crucial in marshalling support from community, government and industry leaders and in ensuring there is genuine engagement of the Deakin community with the wider community in south-west Victoria.

Since 1999 we have witnessed a major turnaround in the community’s perception of the success and quality of the Warrnambool Campus by its regional community. Enrolments have significantly increased as the Campus becomes more highly regarded for its quality in teaching and research. New initiatives, such as the establishment of the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health and the excellent research efforts with local partners have received good media coverage. The latter aspect needs to be emphasized; good media relations required effort and a reciprocal respect.

**Deakin University’s Future Regional and Rural Commitment**

Part of Deakin’s distinctiveness is its important campuses located in regional Victoria. Deakin University celebrates its presence in Geelong and Warrnambool and its opportunity to serve not only communities from Werribee to Mount Gambier, but also students who are living and working in remote parts of Australia through its highly regarded off campus programs, enhanced by an on-line learning environment. Our recent international partnership with three other world class distant learning providers (producing the WADE Alliance) will internationalise the opportunities for our students.

Deakin University’s regional campuses offer a safe and exciting alternative to metropolitan campuses for international students. Niche programs at targeted locations and partner universities have already seen increases in international student load at Geelong and Warrnambool. The local municipalities have been important in helping provide information kits, accommodation and facilitating part time work and in integrating the students into the community’s diverse recreational activities.

One of the challenges facing universities is selling their capabilities and strengths to the wider community. Deakin University aims to use its community reference groups to highlight opportunities for business, professional associations and government and to more closely integrate its operations with those of the regional communities it serves. Already, there are significant community events held on campus. For instance, in 2003 major Relay for Life fundraising fun runs/walks were held at both Geelong and Warrnambool. These events raised significant money for the Cancer Council of Victoria, but also importantly, raised the knowledge of and familiarity with Deakin University by members of the public who would normally not have contact with a university. Indeed, our aim is to have Deakin as Victoria’s pre-eminent rural and regional university and part of this means such strong engagement with the community that it comes to view the campuses as community assets.
Introduction

This paper begins by outlining a well documented shift in the way in which universities view and interact with the communities in which they are located.

Traditionally, universities have practiced what is often called ‘outreach’ – a benevolent dictatorship in which the university decides what the community needs and gives it to them. Increasingly, however, there has been a shift towards ‘engagement’, where universities work in partnership with stakeholder groups and individuals within their communities to maximise their capacity to value add in social, economic and cultural development activities.

In my view, this new ethos of engagement is particularly relevant to regional universities headquartered in their region and with a commitment to develop that region and retain students to contribute to that development.

I’d like to outline why this shift from outreach to engagement has occurred, using the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) as an example where appropriate.

New demands, new emphasis

During the mid 1990s, the OECD undertook a project, under the auspices of the programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education, on the response of higher education to regional needs. This project focussed on how universities can best handle a new set of demands being placed on them by actors and agencies involved in regional development.

In his background paper, Professor John Goddard of the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne (1997) discussed the context within which this new set of demands has developed.

In the past, higher education in most OECD countries was primarily funded by national governments to meet labour market, research and technological development needs. This regime was characterised by:

- relatively secure, long term funding
- predictable student cohorts
- solid infrastructure in support of research and scholarship
- limited demands for accountability by government, and
- easy maintenance of an ethos of self management and collegiality.

Several factors combined to upset this comfortable and predictable arrangement:

- The move from an elite to a mass system of higher education and with the imminent prospect of universalisation
- An increasing emphasis on lifelong learning
- The pursuit of efficiency gains in public funding
- The rise of new modes of knowledge production and distribution outside of universities, challenging their monopoly, and
- Opportunities for new ways of delivering education and training – and a consequent blurring of modes – made possible by information and communication technologies.

As these changes were taking place, increasing policy emphasis was also being placed on the importance of economic and social development which is regionally focussed.

The intersection of these movements has resulted in calls for regional universities to fill critical development roles in:

- Locally relevant knowledge production
- Acting as a gateway to global information resources
- The development of human capital through the creation of a flexible, adaptable workforce, and
- Providing leadership in local governance initiatives.

The Scholarship of Engagement

Initial responses by universities to this new set of demands frequently involved the creation of intermediary organisations (eg technology transfer and regional development offices) to act as a ‘gateway’ to their region.

Although often yielding tangible benefits for the university and its region, such responses do not go far enough.

Instead, what is needed is a way to bring engagement into the mainstream and embed it into academic life more generally.

This challenge has been taken up at a conceptual level by institutions such as the influential Carnegie Foundation in the United States, which has recently moved to reconceptualise what they term ‘scholarship’ to bring it into line with the demands of engagement.
Traditional views of excellence in scholarship emphasised:

- Research funding
- The number of postgraduate research programs
- Invention/discoveries
- Size, and
- International reputation.

New traditions of excellence, however, are increasingly based around:

- Distinct missions based on intentional balance among teaching, research and engagement activities
- High importance given to undergraduate learning
- Emphasis on performance and accountability
- Articulated objectives for teaching and research, and
- Responsiveness to emerging issues.

Carnegie’s *Scholarship of Engagement* provides a unifying conceptual framework for connecting the intellectual assets of universities to public issues such as community, social, cultural, human and economic development by:

- integrating teaching, research and outreach/service
- recognising diverse faculty interests and valuing/fostering multi disciplinary approaches and
- giving scholarly work a public purpose.

Staff and students apply their professional knowledge and academic expertise to public purposes, as a way of contributing to the fulfilment of the mission of the institution.

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**Regional universities in partnership with their communities**

In its Position Paper No 7 – Greater Involvement and Interaction Between Industry and Higher Education – B-HERT pointed to the need for a ‘transformation’ in the relationship between industry/business and the university, and identifies strategic partnering as a powerful element in driving regional economic development.

The use of strategic partnerships in addressing economic development plays a key role in ensuring viable and vibrant regional communities. The extension of strategic partnerships in support of cultural, social and environmental development can ensure that a region develops in such a way as to make it an attractive place to conduct business, work and live.

From my experience at USC, universities located in non metropolitan regions are subject to intense pressure to engage with their region, and the impact of that engagement is direct and obvious. For example, the impact of the Innovation Centre and small business incubator, located on campus at USC, has already been felt after only one year of operation.

Opened for business on 7 February 2002, The Innovation Centre is a $7 million project, which has been supported by $1 million in funding from the State and Federal Governments, and through a partnership between the University, Queensland State Development, Maroochy Shire Council, the Business Development Corporation and the Area Consultative Committee.

The Centre is a 3000 square metre development containing a 600 square metre small business accelerator or incubator and a sub divisible auditorium with a seating capacity of up to 2000 people.

Of particular interest to the business community on the Sunshine Coast and beyond is the small business incubator. The mission of the incubator is to support promising high tech businesses on the Sunshine Coast during the traditionally fragile start up phase.

Its aim is to accelerate the growth of high tech firms on the Sunshine Coast, thus driving growth in the regional economy.

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‘From my experience at USC, universities located in non metropolitan regions are subject to intense pressure to engage with their region, and the impact of that engagement is direct and obvious.’

The incubator does this by nurturing start up companies, providing mentoring services and access to business and technical advice, and through the operation of a research ‘bridge’.

The ‘bridge’ serves to translate initiatives arising from Research Centres within the University’s three faculties – Arts and Social Sciences, Business and Science – into practical support for start up companies within the incubator.

It also has involvement in curriculum development activities on campus in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Although an incubator on the Sunshine Coast had been the subject of studies and discussions over a number of years, financial support was always inadequate and no champion had emerged to take a leadership role.

In 2000, a Consortium involving the University, Maroochy Shire Council and the Business Development Corporation took leadership of the project and developed the proposal, which resulted in the construction of the Innovation Centre.
Highlights from its first year of operations include:

- **February 2002**: Opened by the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Minister for Innovation
- **April 2002**: First selection panel resulting in the recruitment of two client companies – Flametree Software and Typéfi Systems
- **August 2002**: Action Controls establish R&D Centre at the Innovation Centre
- **August 2002**: Launch of Innovation Centre Advisory Network (iCAN) with 11 founding members (now 16 members)
- **September 2002**: Recruitment of Kook Multimedia as client company
- **December 2002**: Launch of $20M investment fund by Genesis Technology Development
- **January 2003**: Flametree Software becomes the Centre’s first ‘graduate company’
- **February 2003**: Recruitment of Infoworx eBusiness and Advanced Marine Vision as client companies

One of the most important elements of the success of the Innovation Centre lies in the Innovation Centre Advisory Network or iCAN. Established in August 2002, iCAN currently has 16 members – successful entrepreneurs, investors and partners from professional service firms. Network members participate in client company selection and mentoring and the value of their in-kind support was estimated at around $150000 in our first year of operation.

A key task for the Innovation Centre has been the development of strong contacts with business angel and venture capital investors – on the Coast, in Brisbane, Sydney and overseas. Connections to the investment community are vital in supporting the growth of high potential companies and a new economy for the Coast. The most significant achievement in this area to date was the signing of an agreement with Genesis Technology Development which resulted in their launch in December 2002 of a $20M investment fund that will particularly target Innovation Centre companies which meet their investment criteria.

As part of the Sippy Downs Urban Design Master Plan, developed for Maroochy Shire Council, the Innovation Centre will provide the pivot point for a Technology Park – a venue where firms can locate in a strategically desirable area with key infrastructure already in place. This infrastructure will be both ‘soft’ in terms of the provision of specialised inputs needed by growing enterprises such as R&D capabilities, and ‘hard’ in terms of the provision of a variety of quality serviced accommodation options for commercial and public sector occupants of the park.

The Innovation Centre has been welcomed by the Sunshine Coast region, in which there has historically been a high proportion of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and a correspondingly high failure rate. Proposals for a State wide incubator network can only serve to further catalyse regional developments in which universities have and continue to play a key role.

**Bibliography**


What’s so special about the regions? We share with other urban and industrialised peoples romantic notions of an idyllic sylvan past, and give it a woolly Australasian significance in acknowledging that Europeans’ early economic development rode on the sheep’s back. Yet it is not clear that the special role that regional campuses serve is unique to campuses located outside the major cities.

‘Regional’ in Backing Australia’s future

The Government’s new higher education policy released as part of the 2003-04 budget Our universities: Backing Australia’s Future proposes a regional loading for regional campuses to compensate for their lesser potential to earn income from fee-paying students and commercial partnerships, and for their higher costs as a result of their location, size and history. For this purpose the Commonwealth defines the Northern Territory as a unique region and a regional campus outside the Northern Territory as one located outside a mainland State capital city in a population centre of fewer than 250,000 people. The Commonwealth proposes a base regional loading of 2.5% and an additional 2.5% for any combination of small size (less than 10,000 equivalent full time student units) and distance from a mainland capital.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Loading</th>
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<td>Regional – located outside a mainland State capital city in a population centre of fewer than 250,000 people.</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<td>An additional 2.5% loading for any combination of – more than 300km from a mainland capital</td>
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<td>fewer than 10,000 EFTSU</td>
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<td>TOTAL possible regional loading</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<td>Regional loading for Northern Territory</td>
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This regional loading would apply just to the Commonwealth course contribution. So for discipline cluster 2 accounting, administration, economics and commerce the standard funding rate would comprise the estimated Commonwealth course contribution of $2,481 per EFTSU plus the projected HECS rate for 2005 of $5,490 to give a total direct funding of $7,971 per EFTSU. The regional loading would apply only to the Commonwealth course contribution of $2,481 per EFTSU.

While it is true that regional campuses have the financial limitations noted in Backing Australia’s Future, so do many other campuses located in outer metropolitan areas and urban fringes. The Government’s targeting of financial support suggests that the regional loading is essentially a rural loading. It has so far missed the opportunity to relate the proposed regional loading to a special role that might be expected of regional campuses aside from their contributions to local economies by local purchases by the institution, their staff and their students. Such a role is not necessarily unique to campuses located outside the major cities.

Learning regions

Richard Florida (1995) developed the idea of a learning region to explain regions’ role in moving from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy, an economy based on the new information, computing and communication technologies. It is thought that much of the economic benefit from the knowledge economy derives from innovations in organisations’ processes, in more productive interactions within but also between organisations. An obvious example is electronic commerce such as EFTPOS and financial transactions over the internet. While the new communications technologies greatly improve communications over long distances, there is evidence that spatial proximity is an important advantage in interactive learning, in developing systems of innovation and in learning how to take advantage of the new technologies.

A learning region, then, is a geographical area in which collaboration, interaction, and inter-relations both within and between its organisations – a system of innovation – is fostered to develop a knowledge economy. A learning region may be a rural or metropolitan area. Thus the OECD included cities in its recent study (2001) Cities and regions in the new learning economy which established empirically the relationship between learning and economic performance. Parts of cities, too, may be learning regions, the obvious Australian candidates being the western regions of Melbourne and Sydney. So every university campus is potentially part of a learning region, and Government might have a role in encouraging universities to develop this aspect of their community service.
US partnerships for urban renewal

The prominent US regions of southern California’s Silicon Valley, North Carolina’s research triangle and Massachusetts’ I-495 technology corridor have encouraged numerous attempts to establish ‘Silicon somewhere’ throughout the world. Yet some of the most active US regional developments have been by urban universities responding to the problems caused by high unemployment, high crime rates and social fragmentation in their local communities. Thus major partnerships in urban renewal have been conducted by the University of Chicago, Columbia University in New York city, Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and the University of Pennsylvania in west Philadelphia.

While Australia doesn’t have the concentration of social problems of some of the US inner urban areas, many Australian universities have a similar role in assisting their local communities manage significant economic restructuring. An urban example is Redfern’s block which is adjacent to the University of Sydney’s main Campendown campus. And Australian universities have been prominent in contributing to the economic restructure of Ballarat, Newcastle, northwest Tasmania and Wollongong.

Engaging different communities

If Australian university campuses located in the big capital cities tend not to define their local service by geographic region, many structure their local service by shared interests – in a vocation or profession, in a language or culture, in a discipline – or by need such as membership of an equity group. The motive for this engagement is not economic or even social development, but self improvement in Birkbeck’s tradition of public education, the religious tradition of doing good works, the promotion of cultural values and life, and the promotion of active and engaged citizenship which dates back at least to Dewey. This is the rationale for the galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls, conferences, public access to libraries and public lecture series that all public Australian universities support to varying extents.

Brisbane and the Gold Coast

Griffith University relates to Brisbane through communities of interest, as do the other universities located in Brisbane. Thus Griffith mounts public concerts, festivals and exhibitions through the Queensland Conservatorium and Queensland College of Art located in Brisbane’s cultural precinct on the south bank of the Brisbane River opposite the central business district. Griffith also mounts a wide range of professional, cultural and general education activities at its Nathan and Mount Gravatt campuses in Brisbane’s southern suburbs.

Griffith’s relationship with the Gold Coast is in an interesting transition. When Griffith’s Gold Coast campus was established as Gold Coast college of advanced education in 1986 much of the local community’s interest in higher education was little more than the cargo cult that currently seems to preoccupy Cairns and is shared to a lesser extent by many smaller provincial cities. The Gold Coast community is still very interested in the direct economic contribution made by its university campus and its students, particularly international students. But after several years’ participation in the university’s Gold Coast advisory council, the local community is developing a richer and more multifaceted appreciation of the potential benefits of a university’s engagement with its region.

Thus the Gold Coast City Council is a strong supporter of the university’s proposal for a technology precinct to relate the Gold Coast campus’ world class research to the region and thus to broaden the regional economy. The Gold Coast community is increasingly aware of the benefits of a Griffith medical school and teaching hospital in developing specialist medical facilities and services locally rather than continuing its dependence on Brisbane for expertise and specialist infrastructure. And while no-one is yet claiming the Gold Coast as Australia’s Ibiza, the Gold Coast campuses’ contemporary art and music programs attract considerable interest from students and the general community.

Logan: node in the Brisbane-Gold Coast conurbation

Logan is some 25 kms south of the Brisbane CBD adjacent to the main southbound freeway about a third of the way to the Gold Coast. It has many of the characteristics of a satellite dormitory suburb of a big capital city, such as rudimentary social and cultural infrastructure and economic underdevelopment. Associated with this, of course, is a low rate of participation in higher education. Some 14.6% of Logan city residents participate in higher education, considerably below the national higher education participation rate of 24% and 249th out of 290 regions. While Logan is still surrounded by semi rural land, urban development is fast filling to Brisbane in the north and to the terminus of the metropolitan rail service at Beenleigh some 7 kms to the south.

Griffith’s Logan campus arose from the Logan community’s enthusiasm and aspiration to increase its social and economic development. The site and its programs were developed in consultation with local campus planning committees, and the campus maintains close relations with the local communities and its institutions. The Logan Institute of TAFE offers a tertiary access certificate IV that prepares graduates for entry to programs offered at the Griffith University Logan campus, and there are close interactions with regional secondary schools. This has resulted in the Logan campus attracting around 80% of its students from its local region, an unusually high proportion.

Over the next 10 years the Griffith corridor from the border with New South Wales to the Brisbane River will
have a population of a million people. The northern end of the Gold Coast just south of Logan is the fastest growing region in Queensland and one of the fastest growing in Australia: it is expected to attract more than 100,000 new residents over the next 20 years. Over time the Griffith corridor will become a conurbation – an almost continuous strip of cities clustered around freeways, train lines and soon broadband data cable.

The vision is southern California, and the model is the catalytic role the University of California system played in fostering advanced industrial growth in what was once a string of scattered coastal settlements. By bringing quality research to the region and by encouraging diversity within a unified network, the University of California has contributed to the development of the conurbation which runs from the southern suburbs of Los Angeles to the border with Mexico as among the most prosperous and economically advanced parts of the world. At the southern node of this region, and responsible for much of its development, is the University of California San Diego which the US News and World Report ranks 31st out of 249 US national doctoral universities.

Such a development would involve a change in the relationship between the Logan campus and its community, from the campus’ present strong orientation to community service and educational development, to membership of a network in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor and then to participation in global economic, educational and research exchanges. It would change our view of the region from a recipient of services to a partner in cooperative development and then to a stimulus to the highest international achievement.

Conclusion

It is not sufficient for regional campuses to be just vehicles for providing social services and conduits for financial transfers to their local regions, since this role could be served equally well by a range of social services, such as retirement villages and nursing homes. For regional campuses to reach their full potential and for them to maximise their contribution to their regions they must be agents for social transformation. While this does not seem to inform the Government’s current policy on the regional provision of higher education, there is no obstacle and every reason for universities to continue developing this more sophisticated role for their campuses.

References


REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PROFESSOR GERARD SUTTON

Vice-Chancellor, University of Wollongong

Australia’s regional universities have the potential, indeed the responsibility, to provide much more than higher education to their communities.

At the University of Wollongong, we see our role as being the engine to drive the economic as well as the social and cultural development of the Illawarra region of New South Wales. We have the capacity to generate increased employment and to attract new industries and investment to the region, and a responsibility to utilise that capacity.

That responsibility is set out in the University of Wollongong’s Strategic Plan, and has become an increasingly important focus for the University in recent years.

To put this into context, the City of Wollongong has a long history as the industrial heartland of the nation, with its economy based on steel production and associated heavy engineering, manufacturing and coal mining through much of the 20th century.

That reliance was severely tested in the 1980s, when the then BHP started a rationalisation program at its Port Kembla Steelworks that has seen the workforce cut by around 75 percent from more than 23,000 to around 6000. That process has been crucial to the continued viability of the steel-making operation, and has seen the plant emerge as one of the most modern and efficient in the world, producing cost-effective, quality steel for domestic and international markets.

Taking up the challenge

The University of Wollongong has taken up that challenge. From a student population of around 3000 in 1982, UOW now has 14,000 students and 1500 staff, who contribute an estimated $1.3 million daily into the regional economy directly and indirectly in the form of wages and the consumption of goods and services. This translates into an estimated employment impact of close to 6400 direct and flow-on jobs and means we are one of the most significant economic entities in the Illawarra Region.

Capitalising on our established reputation as a centre for research and development in Information Technology and Telecommunications, we are now working with all tiers of government as well as corporations to secure a major role for the region in the “knowledge economy” of the 21st century. We work in close collaboration with a
number of major telecommunications companies, including the Canadian-based Nortel Networks, which has its largest Southern Hemisphere research facility located on our campus, developing new technology that it uses across its international operations.

We are the driving force behind the Wollongong Innovation Campus, an IT and T research and development precinct that will cement the Illawarra Region as a national Centre of Excellence in this field. The New South Wales Government is a strong partner, having contributed $16 million in infrastructure funding late last year. Presenting the cheque, the Premier Bob Carr said the campus would “power the growth of highly skilled jobs and new business opportunities” and that the new jobs would be the “economic dividend for the Illawarra”.

This project will eventually employ more than 4500 people, and represents a potential capital investment of $300 million. It will indeed provide a significant economic dividend for the region.

A 2001 New South Wales Government report Regional Impacts of Universities in NSW concluded that the State’s regional universities injected $830 million in direct spending into regional economies each year; provided direct and flow-on value of approximately $1.1 billion to regional NSW; and generated more than 28,000 direct and flow-on full-time jobs.

Those figures confirm that regional universities are an extremely significant contributor to the national economy, as catalysts for development and by providing jobs as well as educational opportunities for the regions.

International connections

Regional universities can also provide their communities with international links on a scale that would not otherwise be possible for areas outside capital cities. At the University of Wollongong, we see ourselves as providing a bridge for the region to the international community.

There are now around 3000 overseas students from 70 countries enrolled at the University, who will be forever connected with Wollongong. In years to come, many of those graduates will attain positions of influence around the globe in politics, industry and other fields. They will remember the University where they gained the qualifications that set them on their career paths, and the region and country where they lived. We will forever be part of their lives. Our aim is to make their experience with us as rewarding and memorable as possible, as well as maintaining our links through Alumni connections.

Australian universities, particularly Monash and the University of New South Wales, benefited by forging strong international links through the students who came to Australia from South-east Asia and the Indian subcontinent under the Colombo Plan in the 1960s. Many of those students are now government ministers or captains of industry who have not forgotten their links to those universities, and the cities in which they studied. This has provided an enormous benefit to Australia.

At the University of Wollongong we are building those kind of links for the 21st century. Our connection with Thailand, for example, is a powerful one through the Thai students (currently around 350) who study at Wollongong and our formal links with five Thai universities which include staff exchanges and research projects. To mark the importance of our connections, last year His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand graciously accepted an honorary doctorate from the University.

The Young Environmental Envoys Program, jointly developed by the University and the United Nations Environment Program for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok, has also been a remarkable success bringing a number of young environmentalists from Thailand and elsewhere in South-east Asia to Wollongong on regular study trips.

We also regularly host international visitors including senior government ministers, politicians and academics, who gain an important awareness of Wollongong and what the city has to offer.

Strong partnerships

On a regional level, we have strong partnerships in research and co-operative programs with Illawarra-based industry. Significantly, we have a long-standing relationship with BHP Steel and work closely with that company on a number of important initiatives and projects, including the BHP Steel Institute for Steel Processing and Products. Other local partners include the Illawarra Area Health Service, Integral Energy and Metal Manufacturers, a major international supplier of copper products based at Port Kembla, which is involved in our Institute for Superconducting and Electronic Materials.

They complement our national and international research partnerships with major corporations, foundations and government agencies, from Australia and overseas.

The University also has extensive and growing links with companies that provide our students with scholarships and work placement opportunities for the practical components of their degrees. A similar story can be told by each of Australia’s regionally-based universities.

Unique challenges

Regional universities operate in communities that often lack the infrastructure advantages of the state capitals. This provides special challenges.

In many instances, regional universities must drive the provision of that infrastructure that universities in capital cities take for granted – from broadband communications links to scientific, artistic and sporting facilities. Providing that infrastructure can have major spin-offs for the communities in which they operate, and there is, I believe, a strong case for focused funding for what are, generally, non-dollar producing activities.
Take sport for example. The University of Wollongong’s top quality sporting facilities that include a swimming complex, gymnasium, synthetic hockey field and cricket and football fields, are available for community use. They also attract major national and international sporting teams who base themselves in Wollongong while preparing for major competitions. These have included the United States swim team and the Wallabies, Australia’s national rugby union team, as well as visiting Super 12 rugby union teams from South Africa.

Or science. The University’s Science Centre and Planetarium not only provides Wollongong with an outstanding scientific facility and observatory, but also a significant tourist attraction. Around 80,000 people visit the Science Centre each year – many from outside the region. Its public observatory, sponsored by the US-based Duke Energy, is the only one in Australia that gives visitors the chance to use a research-quality telescope.

In the arts, the University plays a leading support role with Wollongong’s Conservatorium of Music and other cultural organisations. It has also been a long-term supporter of the region’s professional theatre company, Theatre South. Our Faculty of Creative Arts makes a major cultural contribution to the region through its visual and performing arts programs.

Core responsibility

Clearly, though, regional universities’ most important responsibility is to provide higher education opportunities to the students from their areas. Statistically, high school students in regional Australia are naturally disadvantaged, with University Admission Index scores lower than their capital city counterparts. There are a number of reasons for this, including the fact that many students in regional areas come from homes where their parents don’t have tertiary qualifications, so they lack educational support mechanisms at home. Some also come from high schools that are classified as disadvantaged, for socio-economic reasons.

The University of Wollongong currently offers Illawarra students a bonus of three UAI points to address disadvantage and help them achieve entry to our courses, but such a system has limitations.

It is preferable to cater for this natural disadvantage by a combination of support mechanisms that will lift the UAI across the region. These include working with high schools to provide specialist support for teaching staff and students, by providing bridging programs through TAFE colleges, and by instituting summer schools in subjects like mathematics and chemistry designed to lift standards among local Higher School Certificate students.

Therefore, an important responsibility of universities in the regions is to provide aspirational leadership through the pursuit of excellence in education, because it is only through education that socio-economic disadvantage can be removed and each person achieve their full potential.
involved in country contracting arrangements, in the delivery of distance education, and as a partner in the activities of Open Learning Australia. It is estimated that another 500 EFTSU of regional enrolments may be undertaking programs with Curtin University via these modes.

Curtin has successfully pioneered a number of approaches to delivery of rural and regional education. These include alliances with other universities, secondary education sectors, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Commissions, Rotary clubs and Telecentres.

For example, Kalgoorlie has benefited from the successful co-location of the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School senior campus alongside Curtin’s higher education and vocational education activities. In Geraldton, through the Geraldton Universities Centre, in partnership with Edith Cowan University and UWA, and supported by both the Central West College of TAFE and the community, Curtin is delivering a range of higher education courses into the local region.

Both VTEC and CCHE programs are also being delivered at Curtin’s Esperance campus, and at the Esperance Community College where Curtin is an operating partner with the Esperance Shire and the WA Department of Education. At Margaret River, Curtin will be in partnership with Edith Cowan University, the South-West Regional College of TAFE and the Margaret River Senior High School in the delivery of Muresk Viticulture programs and higher education programs through CCHE.

Curtin is currently developing partnerships with UWA, CSIRO and the WA Department of Agriculture in order to more fully utilise the Northam Campus presently occupied by Muresk and CCHE. Planning for delivery and research and development into the Pilbara region has also commenced.

Curtin’s commitment to regional education has been established as a strategic direction of the University, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, WA’s economic wealth lies within the regions and Curtin aims to contribute to economic growth and development through research, education and training. Location in the regions assists Curtin in developing strong partnerships with regionally based industries, such as mining companies, which gives Curtin a competitive edge in education, and in research and development activities.

An example of the sustained interaction of VTEC staff with company employees. VTEC’s partnerships with mining companies throughout the Goldfields in providing on-the-job training and assessment, requires regular on-site interaction of VTEC staff with company employees. Muresk’s current engagement with the wine industry through the development of the Margaret River Centre for Wine Excellence is another example of these sustained arrangements.

Secondly, through the delivery of VET and university programs, Curtin can play a community role in raising the overall expectations of regional areas. These areas have the lowest tertiary education participation rates in Western Australia, and are a relatively untapped market for higher education. All universities, and particularly Curtin, have a mission to support equity and access, as well as diversity, as part of their social responsibilities. Rural and regional areas are significantly educationally disadvantaged, and regional engagement is seen as fulfilling an important social role.

Thirdly, there is strong support within the WA State Government for co-location and integration of education. Curtin’s Kalgoorlie Campus, for example, features the co-location of school, vocational and higher education, and involves a proactive approach to integration of curriculum to facilitate a ‘seamless’ movement between the sectors. Moves towards an integrated administration are commencing, facing the challenges of negotiating the legal restrictions of three separate Acts of Parliament before this can be achieved.

Moreover, articulation through high school, vocational and higher education on a single campus, not only provides education for students at all levels, but exposes students to the wide range of opportunities at an early age, leading to informed choices through participation in a diverse educational community.
Finally, delivering appropriate programs directly into the regions has a significant role in value-adding to the regions. As well as being a major regional employer in its own right, Curtin provides graduates in areas such as nursing, teaching, agriculture and mining, who are educated partly or wholly at regional centres, and are likely to remain in those areas. In WA, where attracting professionals to regional areas is an ongoing challenge, Curtin plays an important role in meeting community needs for such graduates.

The development of CCHE over the past three years has brought expertise and consolidation of delivery to a range of higher education programs in regional education. CCHE acts as the regional ‘delivery arm’ of Bentley-based Schools, and provides a coordinated, creative approach to the challenges of delivering to small groups of students in geographically dispersed areas, whilst maintaining close relationships with originating schools to ensure standards of delivery and moderation are achieved.

The challenges of economically viable and educationally appropriate provision to small groups of students are met in a number of ways, such as videoconferencing, travelling lecturers and tutors, intensive workshop delivery, iLectures, cross institutional enrolment, use of OLA units, ‘lead lecturer’ and campus-based tutor arrangements, and distance education combinations.

However, the cost of delivering regional education is significant. Not only is there a high cost in running and maintaining multiple campus operations, but it is estimated that the cost of academic delivery is around 30 percent higher than at metropolitan campuses.

Students in regional areas are far more likely to be mature-aged, part-time, concerned about commencing a challenging study program, less likely to have family experience with tertiary studies, and proactive in requesting significant levels of support. This places enormous demands on administrative support systems, which must meet the multiple needs of far more students than an EFTSU count would suggest (for example, CCHE delivers 180 EFTSU to more than 300 individual students.)

While education precincts now have become well established politically and technologically, with computer networks and videoconferencing allowing the delivery of education to regional areas on a much more available and reduced cost basis, establishment and infrastructure costs are high and must be duplicated at each regional location. Students are also less likely to have high levels of computer literacy prior to commencing study, and support and education to achieve satisfactory levels is required.

In addition, the operating costs associated with the provision of campus services / infrastructure / accommodation comprise a fixed cost component not sufficiently recognised within current funding models. While these costs can be offset through co-location and partnership arrangements with other education providers and industry partners, establishing such arrangements requires complex negotiations through differing legislative and operational structures.

In conclusion, although rural and regional education is seen as important to the community, it still needs to be identified and accepted as a mainstream role for a city-based University. This requires a stronger degree of ownership across the whole of Curtin. Historically, activities in regional education have developed as a result of taking opportunities as they appeared, creating challenges in planning and due diligence. In future, developments in terms of regional involvement need to be determined strategically, more in line with the University’s vision and mission statement, to consolidate this activity as a flagship program for Curtin’s regional engagement.

‘... although rural and regional education is seen as important to the community, it still needs to be identified and accepted as a mainstream role for a city-based University. This requires a stronger degree of ownership across the whole of Curtin. Historically, activities in regional education have developed as a result of taking opportunities as they appeared, creating challenges in planning and due diligence’
When a title such as *Regional Provision of Higher Education* is suggested the immediate reaction is to begin thinking of regional being defined as “non-metropolitan”. Such a definition downplays the significant role played by large metropolitan Universities both within their own immediate communities and, as my comments below will indicate for the University of Sydney, a significant role that extends well beyond their metropolis. This is not to say that non-metropolitan institutions may not seek to build a special relationship with their own regional communities, but I fail to see this as being a unique circumstance.

Much was said in the Ministerial discussion paper *Higher Education at the Crossroads* and elsewhere (eg. Garlick, *Engaging Universities and Regions* DETYA Monograph 2000) about the special role that "regional universities have in Australia and their need for some special nurturing". The assumption that regional (or rural) institutions and those universities with a metropolitan base have a different relationship with their communities should be challenged. It can easily be argued that perhaps a majority of Australian Universities now have a presence and responsibilities in both regional and metropolitan areas, thereby having potential to exercise influence well beyond their home base.

The Crossroads Paper *Varieties of Excellence* acknowledged that there are problems in defining what is a regional university, especially given the fact that metropolitan universities may have regional campuses. Many submissions to the Review seriously argued that any policy framework for regional engagement should be one that incorporates all higher education institutions and should make incentives and support for regional engagement potentially available to all institutions. With the recent budget papers there is now recognition of the capacity of institutions to engage in partnerships with their regional communities to achieve significant, economic, social and cultural benefits and to improve access and participation. It should be noted that while regional universities have argued for additional funding to meet their regional needs, to date their funding has not hindered their delivery of courses through metropolitan campuses.

The Crossroads paper commented that there are currently few incentives in terms of funding or support for the creation and growth of partnerships between institutions and their regions. Importantly, the Group of Eight submission to the Review called for a regional incentives program provided that it did not define regional universities as non-metropolitan universities.

It should be noted that Dr Nelson’s Paper, *Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future*, released with the Federal Budget Papers now argues for a regional loading with the justification for such a loading based on perceived higher costs and less potential to diversify revenue sources, a smaller capacity to compete for fee-paying students and a narrower industrial base providing fewer opportunities for commercial partnerships. On the surface, this would seem to be a reasonable position to take, but does it go far enough?

Let me describe the position at a large University with a metropolitan base, the University of Sydney. *The University of Sydney Act* includes as a function of the University the commitment to the development and provision of cultural, professional, technical and vocational services to the community. One of its Major Goals states: “by providing knowledge, opportunity and encouragement, the University of Sydney will maintain and enhance its position as a leading contributor to the opinions and ideas, cultures and lifestyles of the many communities it serves locally, nationally and internationally”.

How does the University of Sydney interact with its many communities? In a variety of ways and at a number of levels. First, it interacts positively with schools seeking to establish and meet their needs. This has led, for example, to the University’s offering specially developed HSC courses for talented students. It has put considerable resources into developing programs for Science and Mathematics teachers and providing additional resource material. It has joint appointments in schools where lecturers provide specialist teaching and staff development. Visits by schools to the University’s Camperdown Campus are a regular feature of day to day life. This sort of engagement extends to the University’s non-metropolitan campuses.

At the newly established Centre for Regional Education at Orange (CREO), which is a joint initiative of the University and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training with financial support from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, the University is running HSC Extension Days for Year 12 students from schools across the Central West, a Teachers’ Information Day and will shortly begin offering its University Developed HSC courses.

CREO is an example of how the University of Sydney is responding to needs outside the metropolitan area. First year programs in Arts, Science and Liberal Studies, a
Bachelor of Pharmacy (Rural) are being offered and a Bachelor of Nursing Program is expected to be offered from 2004. These offerings are in part supported by video-conferencing of lectures from Sydney. Incidentally, video-conferencing is also enabling us, through our Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to provide one on one instrumental tuition to secondary students all around New South Wales.

Much has been written about the importance of knowledge-based economies to communities. World-class, research-intensive universities have played a pivotal role in developing and sustaining knowledge economies. They are important in promoting the development of high-technology firms in their regions through training the engineers and scientists needed by industry and by science and technology expertise and infrastructure for the region. The University of Sydney is a major force in the regional economies of a number of areas across NSW including Orange, Narrabri, Lismore as well as in the greater Sydney area.

Sydney is a sprawling city which itself has diverse regional economies. The Faculty of Health Sciences at Lidcombe, the major Veterinary and Plant Breeding research centres at Cobbity and Camden, the clinical and dental schools at Westmead, Concord, Nepean and Royal North Shore are all examples where the impact of this University on regional Sydney economies has been remarkable. There are also clinical schools in Canberra (now developing into a Medical Faculty of the Australian National University) and Dubbo, and our Department of Rural Health has established a productive presence at both Lismore and Broken Hill.

The main campus near the centre of Sydney is one of Australia’s leading research hubs. It is seen as a resource for the whole of the greater Sydney region and beyond. Part of the University’s planning for the future will inevitably require detailed examination of how capacity for future growth can be created and the problems of a landlocked University in the heart of a large metropolis might be overcome. The possibility of locating part of the activities currently in Camperdown to Western or other regional Sydney areas would provide a significant opportunity to stimulate the economies of outer Sydney.

Given the University’s research performance in terms of ARC and NHMRC grants and its achievements in terms of Discovery and Linkage Project schemes, it is obvious that partnerships in new ‘regional’ areas with major R and D firms would be critical in establishing and growing further the required scale of enterprise, initiative and critical mass essential for producing major outcomes of national significance.

The University is involved with twenty-one Cooperative Research Centres, many with nodes operating in regional Australia and involving local industry, although they may have originated from research at the main Sydney campus. These include the CRC for Innovative Diary Products, the CRC for Biological Control of Pest Animals, the CRC for Sustainable Rice Production, the CRC for Mining Technology and Equipment and the CRC for Value Added Wheat. CRCs are fine examples of how the University cooperates with industry, other universities and research institutes for the purposes of research and development. Another and different example of partnership between metropolitan and regional universities is the new Australian Graduate School of Education – a partnership between the University of Sydney and Charles Sturt University, bringing together complementary strengths in the field of Education. Perhaps this is the way of the future, post-Crossroads.

Universities benefit local economies not only by supporting existing large and small companies but by their involvement in the formation of start-up companies. These form the basis for high-growth industries, usually located within the region of the universities which create them. In recent years the University of Sydney has been responsible for the formation of an increasing number of new companies - at least six companies per year and more than any other Australian university (National Survey of Research Commercialisation 2000, published September 2002, see www.arc.gov.au). Companies originating from University of Sydney research include ResMed which employs about 700 people in Sydney. The company is building new facilities near Windsor where it will have a significant effect on the economy of this outer Sydney region. Another example is a company, formed to commercialise University of Sydney technology, and which builds high-technology devices "WeldPrint" to detect welding faults for the world automotive and other industries. The company, Wti, located at Guildford in Sydney’s West, recently won the $100,000 Peter Doherty Prize for Innovation at the KCA Commercialisation Forum and Fair of Ideas in Sydney. Benthic Geotech at St Mary’s and NuFlora International at Macquarie Fields are other examples of University of Sydney spin-offs located in outer Sydney regions. As these companies grow and raise capital they create new high quality jobs in their regions.

The US Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) has been conducting surveys for more than ten years (see www.autm.net). These surveys have consistently reported economic benefits from academic commercialisation to be more than 40 times the direct financial benefits to universities in terms of commercialisation revenue and in excess of the total research expenditure by the universities. Similar positive outcomes are highlighted in a very recent report entitled Engines of Economic Growth: the Economic Impact of Boston’s Eight Research Universities on the Boston Metropolitan Area (Appleseed 2003). It is interesting to note that in the US it is common for cities to be regarded as regions as is the case in this publication.

In Australia, the first National Survey of Research Commercialisation (see www.arc.gov.au), showed similar levels of licensing income (as a proportion of GDP) to institutions in North America. It could be assumed that the resulting economic effects were significant and
locally based – in fact in Australia 91% of spin-off companies are located in the same State as their founding research institution. There is very strong evidence that research-intensive universities are most successful at producing commercialisation outcomes and therefore are the most important in terms of generating economic benefits in their regions. In the post-Nelson Review era it is to be hoped that the contribution made by the research intensive universities to the State economy will gain greater appreciation from Government.

The purpose of this paper has been to put the view that defining universities as "regional" may serve to limit our appreciation of how broad-ranging a university’s influence can be. To illustrate the point, the experiences of a large university with a metropolitan base have been used to highlight the dangers associated with taking a narrow view of "regionalisation".

While the emphasis in this paper has been more on economic and research benefits, we should not forget the cultural impact universities, wherever they are located, can have. The University of Sydney, for example, is a major contributor to the cultural life of Sydney through public lectures, museums and sports events, and in particular through its Continuing Education program, the largest of its kind in Australia. The large number of international students it has as part of its enrolments themselves both contribute to the cultural enrichment of the nation and provide real economic benefit to the region. The University is always keen to explore new ways in which it can enhance this broader cultural contribution. For example, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra will host a two-week contemporary music festival in July 2003.

The B-HERT Report to the Higher Education Review raised the need for universities to embrace more fully their role in community engagement and leadership in terms of a region’s social, economic and cultural development. The account I have provided would indicate agreement with this point of view, no matter where the University is located – but some will enjoy greater success with more far reaching impact than others as we all pursue this worthwhile outcome.

Introduction

Like many regional areas throughout Australia, the north-west of Tasmania has faced significant social and economic challenges over the past decade or more. While these circumstances might make depressing reading, the north-west of Tasmania has responded positively and is now looking to its future with great optimism. The University of Tasmania, through its North-West Centre established in Burnie in 1996, has played a significant and ongoing role in this turn-around. Furthermore, its role has not been limited to the provision of educational programs. Through its deliberate strategy of developing partnerships with local businesses and the community in general, the University of Tasmania is seen as a central player in the development of a vibrant economic future for the region. This paper is a case study of what is possible when strong partnerships are developed between a university and a regional community.

Tasmania’s Cradle Coast Region

Tasmania’s north-west, known as the Cradle Coast Region, covers about a third of the State’s land mass and has a dispersed population of 108,236, or 23% of Tasmania’s population. The communities are concentrated in coastal towns closely linked to the main centres of Burnie (population 19,000) and Devonport (population 24,000), and also extend to the more isolated west coast (Matheson 2001). The region is categorised principally as rural, with some isolated pockets, and has a socio-economic status classified across the low and medium ranges. The region’s
The regional higher education participation rate is estimated at 2% of the 15-64 age cohort, about half the rate for Tasmania as a whole, which is in turn among the lowest in Australia (2000 est. figures). Higher education has not traditionally been considered a pathway for school leavers, leading the Cradle Coast region to be considered one of the most educationally disadvantaged regions in Australia, in terms of higher education participation.

**A Commitment from the University of Tasmania**

During the early 1990s, the University of Tasmania made a commitment to the Cradle Coast region in order to redress some of these issues. However, universities are not always readily accepted for the role they might potentially play in such a context. Regional communities, including business and industry, often operate quite parochially. There is evidence of distrust of organisations with headquarters in metropolitan areas. It is generally believed that government and management from a distance will be to the advantage of the parent organisation and to the disadvantage of the local community. Trust in new players, including educational institutions, must be developed through deliberate strategies designed to demonstrate genuine long-term commitment from the organisation to the regional community.

When the University’s North-West Centre opened its doors in 1996, its first priority was to establish undergraduate course offerings. In 1997, there were approximately 300 students enrolled in degree courses, at first year level in Arts, Commerce, Education, Computing and Science. Through an ever-increasing flexible approach to delivery and the advances made in technology, the University is now able to offer a more diverse range of programs and at higher levels. In 2003, over 400 students are studying undergraduate courses which have been extended in number and diversity to include Tourism, Natural Environment and Wilderness Studies, and Police Studies. A further recent development is the establishment of the North-West Rural Clinical School, through a partnership between the State and Federal governments and the University. Most importantly, the number of students from the Cradle Coast region now studying at the University’s main campuses in Hobart and Launceston has also increased by 35% in the past three years (1,698 students in 2003).

**Strategies for Regional Engagement**

Notwithstanding this pleasing growth in enrolments, the University’s contribution to the region and its development is about more than offering educational programs. To contribute fully to the economic development of a region, a university must establish strong and sustainable partnerships with local businesses and the local community.

Strategies specific to the region’s context and responsive to local needs have included:

- developing community ownership through providing opportunity for input to decision-making and program development;
- providing relevant research leadership through the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research;
- partnering with business to increase the number of professionals in the regional workforce; and
- working with community leaders to promote higher education as a key strategy for economic development.

The following examples demonstrate the practical implementation of these strategies in the regional community. In each case, the result of this engagement with the community has had positive results for both the University and the region.

**Facilitating Community Input**

The formal body through which the University listens and responds to the needs of the regional community is the North-West Advisory Board, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. This community committee provides advice to the University about higher education needs that are peculiar to the Cradle Coast. Its membership includes eight local community representatives, drawn from throughout the region and selected from the professions, the general community, regional business and industry. The North-West Advisory Board has facilitated a lively communication channel between the University and the regional community, resulting in several worthwhile projects and valuable links with community leaders.

The establishment of a West/North-West University Bursary scheme is a direct outcome of the North-West Advisory Board’s support for the University. Initiated by the Board in 1996 with five bursaries provided by Board members and their business colleagues, the scheme has grown to include eleven bursaries awarded in 2002. In addition to this specific scheme, 79 University students from the region this year received financial assistance totalling $250,000, through a range of other scholarships and bursaries largely provided by regional businesses, government, individual benefactors and the University itself. People in the region identify the provision of financial assistance as a practical demonstration of their support for the region’s young people and for higher education.
Promoting Agricultural Research

The Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR), a joint University/State Government initiative, has a node at the North-West Centre. Through its many industry-based research projects in dairy and vegetables, TIAR makes a major contribution to the development of agricultural production, a mainstay of the region. The team of 22 researchers and associated support staff is a clear and public demonstration of the important role that higher education can play in the regional economy. Through field days, demonstrations and working groups, researchers are able to influence agricultural practices as well as community attitudes towards the value of higher education. Ongoing financial support from industry groups for jointly funded projects clearly indicates the success of this partnership with farmers, agricultural consultants, producers and processors.

Attracting Professionals into the Workforce

Attracting professionals into the regional workforce is a challenge for many local employers in the Cradle Coast region. In some cases, it is difficult to find graduates willing to work in a rural community. In other situations, the value of a university graduate to the business is not well understood. The University and the business community are developing strategies together that they hope will improve this situation. Employers now advertise to potential employees the availability of university study and the University’s contribution to the cultural life of the region. Some local businesses are providing work placements for students and discovering their value as future employees. Others offer orientation programs for students, highlighting the advantages of the regional lifestyle. One such approach is a cadetship program in local government, which commenced in 2003, in which current University students are provided with a $3,000 scholarship and paid work experience. The purpose is to encourage graduates to return to the region to work as young professionals.

Promoting Education as a Key Strategy in Economic Development

The University has sought to have education placed high on the agenda of economic development in the region. Establishing relationships with economic development organisations and local government has effected a change in attitude amongst many business and community leaders who are now recognising the important role education must play in order to achieve growth in the region. Strategic plans of several development organisations and local governments include a significant focus on education and training. Advance Burnie has been established as a partnership between business, industry, education providers and the Burnie City Council to advance the economic development of the city in which the University Centre is located. The first key strategy of this local government authority is a jointly funded Chief Executive Officer position, to which the University is making a significant financial contribution for three years.

A major step forward in the region has been the establishment of the Cradle Coast Authority. The nine local governments in north-west Tasmania created this Authority to initiate regional programs, with the intention of reducing competition between Councils and providing leadership towards achieving a regional development plan. As well as Directors representing business, agriculture and local government, one of the eight positions on the Authority is a Director representing education, held by the University of Tasmania. Strategies of the Authority give a priority to increasing levels of participation in tertiary education and to increasing access to education and training relevant to economic initiatives for the region.

Conclusion

The tide is beginning to turn for Tasmania’s Cradle Coast. The region is working to make changes to its economic base which are expected to generate opportunities in new emerging industries, including natural resource management, wind farm component manufacturing and a significant increase in the tourism sector. There is evidence of a growing optimism in the community. The uptake of higher education at the University of Tasmania from the region is increasing. The University of Tasmania is now well positioned to contribute to this regional development, through educating a workforce for the new economy and providing intellectual capital to support the region’s response to future opportunities. The concurrent strategies of building trust, delivering relevant programs, and establishing community and business partnerships have been effective. Community leaders are realising the benefits they can reap from associating with and supporting the University. Initiatives are beginning to emerge in which the University is sought out as a key player in the region’s future development.

References

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REGIONAL PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: 
UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

The creation and application of knowledge, and innovation, are the prerequisites for sustainability. In the emerging era, where participation in the knowledge economy will increasingly determine the productivity and well-being of individuals and communities, universities (and other post-secondary education providers), will be critical agents connecting regions with national and international agendas. For regions (and nations) to prosper, a high proportion of their people will be able to pursue and apply new learning. This paper is a brief overview of engagement by the University with the rural and regional communities that form its primary constituency. Universities are inexorably linked with one another and with other education sectors, and the University, as Australia’s only regional dual-sector institution providing both TAFE and Higher Education courses, is uniquely positioned to draw on its broad experience of relevant and responsive engagement.

The Way Forward for Regional Australia

Within our regions there is both contraction and expansion. While some towns decline and services move elsewhere to larger, more distant locations, many regional towns and cities are growing, attracting investment and experiencing net internal migration gain. These cities and towns, especially those relatively close to state capitals, provide focal points for provision of education, health and community services, business and industry, enterprise and innovation. The growth of major regional centres is indicative of new configurations in the regional landscape. These centres stimulate, in turn, networks of smaller centres that provide services, consumers and employees for the larger centres. We suggest that this pattern of regional realignment provides signposts for a positive and productive way forward, toward decentralisation from otherwise ever-increasing big cities, and toward regional well-being and sustainability.

Of central importance are region-specific policies and strategies that are responsive to the unique circumstances of particular regions, and are best generated by the regions themselves in the full knowledge of the force of global change. Local approaches, devised and driven by local leaders, agencies and institutions, are more likely to be effective in capturing and growing regional capacity. In this environment, good regional universities have the capacity to play a major role in supporting local initiatives because of their international perspective, knowledge focus, relative size, longevity, and independence from particular vested interest groups.

The University of Ballarat and its Region

The University provides diverse educational programs across all levels of the Australian Qualifications Framework. Total enrolments are around 22,000: 15,500 in TAFE; and 6,500 in Higher Education. Equivalent full-time student load (EFTSUs) for Higher Education is about 4,900; for TAFE about 4,480.

Our primary geographic region extends from just west of Melbourne through western Victoria to the South Australian border. The Central Highlands comprises 12,000 and the Wimmera 30,000, square kilometres, with approximately 130,000 people in the Central Highlands and 50,000 in the Wimmera. Ballarat, in the east of the Central Highlands, is 200 kilometres from Horsham, and just over 100 kilometres west of Melbourne.

The primary focus of the University is on its regional and rural communities. It plays a major role in advancing the learning of these communities and the generation and timely application of new knowledge relevant to the needs of those in the region. Our youngsters have significantly lower participation rates (habituated) and higher indicators of disadvantage than metropolitan youngsters. By focussing on the communities in our region, particularly students, the University enhances equitable access to post-secondary education and learning excellence.

Over 70% of our recurrent Commonwealth-funded undergraduate Higher Education students are from our region (80% from regional and rural Victoria). Nearly all Victorian Government-funded TAFE students are from our region. Over the past five years, approximately 80% of our Higher Education undergraduate students at the University belonged to one or more (of the Commonwealth defined) equity groups. Average ENTER scores are significantly below state and national averages.
But, remarkably, our graduates achieve retention and progression rates, employment outcomes and commencing salaries, at or above the national average for graduates from other Australian universities. 70% of respondents to the University 2002 Higher Education Commencing Student Survey indicated that our University was their institution of first choice. The “value-adding” to our citizens, and therefore to our region, is a defining characteristic of the University of Ballarat.

The University is a large organisation within its region. Total operating budget is about $110 million. Earned income, excluding capital, is about $30 million. Staff numbers (equivalent full-time, including casual staff): 221 academic staff, 244 TAFE teaching staff and 387 general staff. In total, approximately 3,000 staff (including casual and sessional) are employed annually. The University, therefore, is a major employer and consumer within its region. The multipliers of its activities are extensive, contribute to local wealth and stimulate local investment.

The University of Ballarat Approach

The University of Ballarat has its “head” and its “heart” in regional Victoria, and is explicit in its commitment to its region. Its mission is to use education, training, research and consultancies to promote the growth and well-being of the communities in our part of Australia. Its vision is to be a regional University of international standing, highly regarded by the communities we serve.

The University is striving to achieve engagement that emphasises mutuality and exchange. It provides local leadership and collaboration on many fronts and forges partnerships, locally and elsewhere, that play a major role in helping develop the skilled hands and clever heads our region needs to prosper. In addition to building skills and knowledge through its teaching, it provides enterprise-based skills training, consulting services, regionally useful and relevant research, technology transfer through its IT Park, regional connectivity initiatives, and support for small business. Significant elements of this engagement are described below.

The University aims to ensure that the many courses it provides are relevant to the needs of the students and communities of the region, and are of national relevance and international standing. For example, course profiles for the TAFE Division are reviewed annually in the context of projected labour market demand and regional strategic growth opportunities. In Higher Education, the funding model for budget allocation explicitly includes community responsiveness criteria. The University aims not to be just located in the region, but to be of, and for, the region. Universities mobilise "head power", in both big cities and rural and regional areas. Those who live in capital cities are generally much better served by universities than those in rural and regional areas. For regional universities, the focus must be on rural and regional communities rather than Australia as-a-whole.

Substantial effort is devoted to liaising with and relating to local schools and students. Open days are held at all campuses throughout the region, and parent information days are provided to enhance understanding of post-secondary learning options. A variety of scholarships are provided to local students. Work placement and practicums occur within the region.

Technology Transfer

A great success story for the University (and for our region) has been the development of the Technology Park on the Mt Helen Campus in Ballarat. The Park continues to develop momentum as an IT focal point for Ballarat and western Victoria. In addition to extensive IT incubation facilities, the Park boasts IBM Global Services and the State Revenue Office as major tenants, with Rural Ambulance Victoria committed to establishing its headquarters on the Park. Soon, more than 1,000 people will be participating in the development and application of technology on the Park.

These enterprises bring significant IT focus to our region, and build connection between the University, the region, and the global knowledge economy. In the context of regional Victoria, this is a remarkable achievement, made possible by active collaboration between business, State, Commonwealth and local governments, facilitated by the University.

IBM Global Services, already a lead tenant on the Park, is extending its partnership with the University by the establishment of a Regional Software Solution Centre to be located in the former Arts building on the University’s Mt Helen campus. The Centre, which will service the Southeast Asian region, will facilitate the capture and exploitation of knowledge/innovation exchange between industry and the University.

Also located on Technology Park is the Greenhill Enterprise Centre, which provides a facility and an environment within which to incubate and breed world class IT start-up businesses. The activities of the Centre are complemented by the new Global Innovation Centre, which will also support the further development of new businesses in the IT and related areas.
In the region, the University has facilitated the dissemination of ICT utilisation and the role of the internet through the Regional Connectivity project in which some twenty-five distributed IT community enterprise centres make available, with support from the University, and State and Commonwealth governments, ICT processes to connect people to the new ways of communication.

**Partnerships: Industry; Other Providers**

The University has actively pursued partnerships with industry and enterprise to enhance the relevance and currency of our education, research, training and consultancy. We deploy our capability in our primary region, but we also sell our services elsewhere, thereby enriching our knowledge and capacity. We have been strategic in developing strong alliances with organisations such as Transfield Services, BHP Steel, Rail Infrastructure Corporation (NSW), Southern Health, Empire Rubber, Department of Defence and many others. It is the long-term engagement and interaction with both large and small private and public organisations that ensures the University remains relevant, responsive and reputable. While operating regionally, the University thinks and acts globally. Indeed, some 30% of the University’s Higher Education students are international students, taught in Ballarat, elsewhere in Australia, and overseas. We also have productive partnerships with other universities and post-secondary providers in Australia and abroad.

**Research**

As a regional university, engaged with its communities, the University of Ballarat sustains and enhances its research profile by focussing on applied research that is regionally relevant, useful, and internationally generalisable. The University is linked with research projects amongst businesses and organisations across the region. To co-ordinate its research, the Institute of Regional and Rural Research (IRRR) has been established to focus the activities of staff in contributing to the social, environmental, economic and cultural development of the region.

Within the IRRR, the University has established four closely-linked Research Centres that pursue research on environmental management, regional innovation and competitiveness, community health outside urban Australia, and informatics and "intelligent" computing (exploiting the IT focus of the University).

**Culture Transfer**

Universities directly and indirectly enhance the cultural life of their communities. University staff are consumers of, and contributors to, the performing and visual arts, food and wine, history and literature, and to the social dialogue that enriches community life and political comment. The development of the University’s Camp Street Campus in central Ballarat is a fine example of a regional university enriching the cultural life of its community. Costing some $30 million for new buildings and the refurbishment of historic buildings dating back to 1870, the campus was officially opened in 2002 and provides the home for the newly formed Arts Academy, incorporating both TAFE and Higher Education programs. The Academy provides cutting edge courses in fine arts, graphic design/multimedia and performing arts that have already won international acclaim and are attracting a broad range of students.

**Conclusion**

To succeed in regional engagement requires a whole-of-university commitment. Together with its regional, national and international partners, the University of Ballarat is moving well beyond isolated, project-specific initiatives (valuable though they are), to continue fostering an approach, driven by explicit strategic priorities, committed leadership and responsive, expert and responsible staff. Apart from direct "in-house" contributions, the "brokering" role of the University in connecting those in the region with the best expertise nationally and internationally, through various cost-effective linkages, is crucial to the prosperity, well-being and sustainability of the region.
Charles Sturt University is one of the largest non-metropolitan higher education institutions in Australia, the most successful provider of distance education and, through its multi-campus structure, has a major educational, social, cultural and economic influence serving the higher education needs of western and south-western New South Wales and north-western Victoria.

The University’s course profile is a deliberate mix of courses that on one hand works to specific regional and rural needs and on the other hand caters to an increasing national and international market.

With traditions established by its predecessor institutions, CSU has also made an outstanding contribution to Australia’s development. Its innovation in introducing new professions within higher education, its ability to creatively utilise new technology, its leadership in developing high profile courses that meet regional, national and international needs all demonstrate the University’s success as part of a national model.

**Productive Partnerships**

Charles Sturt University has sought to enrich communities in its regions through the establishment of productive partnerships which engage rural communities, organisations and government departments and provide teaching and learning opportunities.

One such partnership, the Productive Partnerships for Quality Teaching Project has received almost $1 million in funding from the Federal and State Governments and is being conducted in partnership with the University of New England and the NSW Department of Education and Training. The project is investigating the relationship between teacher education and rural schooling and communities, with a view to improving both educational outcomes and teacher retention in rural NSW.

Another innovative partnership is that between CSU and four hospitals in Moira Shire in north-eastern Victoria which has been established to address the shortage of qualified nurses in regional centres. Under the arrangement, 25 enrolled nurses will upgrade their qualifications to a full Bachelor of Nursing degree on a part-time basis over the next four years.

Innovative biotechnological research in agriculture is the focus of a five-year partnership between CSU and the Centre for the Application of Molecular Biology to International Agriculture (CAMBIA). The partners share resources and expertise in a field that has enormous implications for Australia’s primary producers, agriculture and business worldwide.

These partnerships exemplify CSU’s mission to create a responsive and collaborative relationship with regional Australia. This is further illustrated by governments choosing the University to test innovative projects.

The NSW Government’s recognition of the importance of the role of universities in regional development is seen in its Communities Partnership Program. The Government chose CSU to establish the first program and has committed funding to the University to provide expertise and research capabilities in order to provide additional skills to develop innovative economic development ideas in the regional centres at Parkes and Blayney in Central West NSW. The program, which operates under the auspices of the Western Research Institute located at CSU’s Bathurst campus, allows the University to work with both centres to stimulate growth by engaging the community in trying to get a more collaborative approach to help local business.

In partnership with key industry groups, CSU has established new Professorial Chairs which will enhance the University’s focus on developing and promoting professions in regional areas. In collaboration with the CSIRO, three new Chairs in Water Science, Systems Aquatic Ecology, Water Policy and Integrated Environment Management will be established and Chairs in Rural Nursing, Rural Pharmacy and Irrigation are already providing gains for industry and regional communities.

CSU has also reaffirmed its commitment to excellence in allied health professionals in regional Australia with the opening of the Allied Health Clinic in Albury. The clinic offers comprehensive podiatry services to clients and provides senior students with opportunities to put the skills that they have learned in their studies into practice.

Another exciting partnership which has both cultural and educational benefits for the University and the regions served by it, and which is setting a new benchmark for regional leadership, is the Somerville Collection Project. The Collection is an internationally significant compilation of over 10,000 dinosaur, fossil and mineral specimens from throughout Australia and overseas. The University established a partnership with the Bathurst City Council, Professor Warren Somerville (the donor of the Collection), the New South Wales Government, the Australian Museum and the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy to
establish a museum to become the permanent home for the collection which is due to open in 2003. Real life experience in promoting the Collection and the museum and assistance in fundraising is provided to the University’s students through Kajulu, the student advertising agency and PRomulgators, the student public relations agency.

Regional Research Opportunities

CSU has further established its profile as a regional asset through its development of research opportunities. For example, CSU is a partner in four Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) which focus on a range of rural issues – the CRC for Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity, the CRC for Viticulture, the CRC for Sustainable Rice Production and the CRC for Weed Management Systems and is also the lead partner, with the University of Melbourne, in an ARC Special Research Centre, the national Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE).

The University’s location in the heart of the Murray Darling Basin gives it an unparalleled advantage in undertaking leading edge research into issues relevant to rural landscapes. The University supports two major research centres, the Farrer Centre for Sustainable Food and Fibre Production and the Johnstone Centre for Research in Natural Resources and Society, whose focus is the viability and sustainability of rural landscapes.

In addition, the Centre for Rural Social Research focuses on the social aspects of living and working in rural and regional Australia. A typical example of their work is a current research project examining the social impacts of the drought which is being undertaken in regional communities with researchers from the Centre interviewing businesses, farm families and community members about their experiences in the current drought. Funded by NSW Agriculture, the $75,000 project which aims to catalogue the service and welfare needs of drought affected residents and communities will provide valuable information to policy makers, industry and government about the management of welfare and health services in future droughts.

Links between Education and Services

CSU has a longstanding commitment to regional education and rural NSW and the relationship between the University, business, industry and community groups in providing links between education and services in regional communities.

The University’s Centre for Cultural Research into Risk and the Bathurst City Council have entered into a collaborative agreement to establish a Youth Coordinator/Researcher position that facilitates action research into youth needs and issues. The position provides strategic planning to strengthen community resources and ensures that there is integrated provision of youth facilities, services and activities for the young people of Bathurst.

As the largest provider of higher education to students from Far Western New South Wales, CSU is acutely aware of the issues facing many of its students and their families affected by the drought. As a service to existing students, their families and to the communities served by the University, CSU established a drought resource website which provides updates on the drought, information about applying for drought assistance and services that CSU can offer to both people considering tertiary study and those who may be facing hardship because of the drought.

The University also has a collaborative relationship with NSW Sport through the Western Region Academy of Sport which is located on the Bathurst campus. The Academy identifies, develops and provides pathways for talented sportspeople in the Western Region of NSW. In turn, through its use of University facilities, the Academy provides opportunities for CSU students to gain professional practice in a number of fields and offers the use of athlete data for research projects.

In the arts government funding is provided for regional art projects through Arts Out West at Bathurst, the Wagga Wagga Writers Writers and Booranga Writers’ Centres at Wagga Wagga and Albury.

CSU’s broadcast journalism students produce a daily news bulletin for National Regional News (radio), print students work with local newspaper editors on byline articles and reports and advertising students work closely with regional and national companies in developing viable advertising campaigns.

The University has also developed many productive relationships with regional schools and TAFE Colleges as a means to provide vital services to the regions and effective teaching and learning environments for students undertaking courses at the University.
A Regional Philosophy

As already identified, the notion of regional engagement is embedded in the strategic plan and in the philosophy of CSU’s teaching and learning practices. The University has pro-actively embraced the communities in western and south-western New South Wales and northern Victoria, regions that correspond with the footprint of the Wiradjuri people, as an integral part of its strategy and mission, publicly stating that they are "integral to, and part of CSU’s identity".

Today in 2003, the University’s history based on the explorations of Australia’s hinterland by the great explorer Captain Charles Sturt continues to be seen in its mission and strategic planning. Underpinned by the principle in the words of Charles Sturt and as stated in the University’s motto "for the public good" the University’s strategy cohesively guides the organisation in working with its regions to foster quality and sustainable economic development, to contribute to the social and cultural fabric of its communities and to prepare its communities to participate in a globalised society.

‘The University has pro-actively embraced the communities in western and south-western New South Wales and northern Victoria, regions that correspond with the footprint of the Wiradjuri people, as an integral part of its strategy and mission, publicly stating that they are "integral to, and part of CSU’s identity".’

More than this the University embraces the enthusiasm, self reliance and creative ingenuity that are the hallmark of rural and regional communities - and work to reinforce the innovative qualities that have made Charles Sturt University into the leading regional university it is today.

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) has a unique responsibility to the Greater Western Sydney region with a well-understood social contract between the region and its University – one based on loyalty, reciprocity, pride and mutual benefit. UWS aims to be a leading institution, "bringing knowledge to life" and providing a contemporary education that is focused on our students’ gaining employment and building successful careers, while conducting research that speaks to the development of urban and rural regions, the new economy, cultural life and professional practice. Seeking engagement with the business and industry sector is a key element in the University’s strategy in meeting this responsibility.

Greater Western Sydney

Greater Western Sydney is an urban region already housing 1.7 million people - half of metropolitan Sydney and one tenth of Australia - and facing substantial increases in population. Current estimates of growth for Sydney indicate that the western part of the city will grow to 2.4 million in twenty years and over 3 million by the middle of the century. The region is now a substantial, dynamic economy with increasing industry sophistication. It contains a national park with world heritage listing. While the region is outgrowing its history of deprivation and disadvantage, spatial inequality remains a feature with pockets of declining employment and real income.

Where once it may have been possible to identify a University’s territory, new technologies and globalisation have changed all that. Communities are now multifaceted, ranging in scale and scope from local to regional to national to international. Both “eastern” and “western” Sydney are interconnected in the “global” Sydney. The challenge for UWS is one of fostering effective and self-critical ways of deepening the University’s roots in the region and extending its branches to the world.
The UWS Approach

A distinctive feature of the UWS approach is the incorporation of regional and community engagement at the heart of the University’s mission and activities. Outreach and community service were central to the operations of each of the three previous member institutions of UWS as a federated ‘entity’, but now as a unified institution it is taking the next step in integrating engagement into the University mission and infusing it into its academic endeavour. University-Community engagement will be one of the hallmarks of scholarship at UWS. This short paper introduces initiatives that have emphasis on the University’s relationship with business and industry.

UWS Regional Council

This Council, established in 2001, is the principal standing committee of the University dealing with its participation in strategic social agendas of the region such as health, housing, educational opportunity, equity, employment, small business, women, and environmental management. As such, it provides an interface between the University and its communities through: monitoring and evaluation; advocacy and development; promotion and communication; and advice and reference. After wide ranging consultation twenty-five people from Greater Western Sydney were invited to form the inaugural Council. The Vice-Chancellor chairs the Council, which meets three or four times each year and reports to the Board of Trustees. Several regional engagement initiatives were incorporated into the work of the Regional Council and several new ones have emerged.

Regional and Community Grants Scheme

The Council has a significant role in selecting projects to be funded under the Regional and Community Grants Scheme. The University allocated $250,000 per year for three years to foster innovative university/community partnership projects. These projects, while they may have a research element and must maintain standards of excellence, are not meant as another source of internal research funds. A key feature of the project must be real and active participation with a regional partner. In the first year (2002) eleven projects were funded. Among the projects is the School – Parents Alliance, a collaborative project between UWS, the Premier’s Department and the NSW Department of Education and Training, which facilitates interactive efforts between schools and parents in order to improve the educational outcomes for Lebanese-background students in high schools in South West Sydney. Another project is piloting an action-learning network for managers of non-profit human service agencies in Greater Western Sydney to develop their management skills. The Assistive Technology Seminar and Expo, the first event of its kind in NSW, attracted 420 people who participated to learn more and share information about educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Projects such as these reflect the engagement of UWS academics with the broader Greater Western Sydney communities.

Business and Industry Advisory Panel

In 2002, at the instigation of experienced and successful business leaders from the Region who were members of the UWS Regional Council, the University set up a Business and Industry Advisory Panel. Three of the members have won prestigious awards in the NSW Government’s Western Sydney Industry Awards. This group is forging a productive interface between the University and industry, providing a ‘think tank’ to develop innovative ideas and strategies that will broaden the University’s involvement and collaboration with industry. The Panel provides industry with a voice to indicate its knowledge, and education and training needs, to UWS while increasing the University’s profile with industry, as well as enhancing the reputation of UWS as a provider of relevant solutions to industry problems. Members also assist in identifying opportunities for industry to contribute to building the capacity of the University through scholarships, research, sponsorships and events.

UWS Partnership Awards

The UWS Regional Council also hosts the UWS Partnership Awards. These Awards acknowledge outstanding University partnerships with external organisations and individuals to support regional development and community engagement in Greater Western Sydney. By acknowledging our partners we are recognising their contribution to the University and region, while encouraging our staff to recognise the advantages of having mutually beneficial relationships within the broader community. Examples of Partnership Award winners include Infomaster, an industry partner with UWS and Hawkesbury City Council in the project GWSpatial. GWSpatial is a data management system that will lead to improved policy and planning development in local government across Australia, including allowing more rapid response in managing disasters such as bushfire and flooding by utilising spatial data across a number of emergency utilities. The Macarthur Area Health Service formed a research collaboration with UWS in 1999. Dr Stephen Wilson shared the vision of UWS and Macarthur Health Service becoming a centre of multidisciplinary health research. Prior to this there was a limited track record for this type of research within the health care service. Dr Wilson worked with UWS academics and researchers on innovations in research, including mandatory orientation for evidence-based practice for all employees of Macarthur Health Service and development of a training
program for emerging researchers.

Judy Reizes established the Manly Environment Centre (MEC) in 1991. Almost since inception UWS students have used its extensive environmental resources for their studies. Many have undertaken final year projects with MEC as client or external supervisor. For the last five years at least five students each year have utilised office space, computing facilities, phone and fax as well as publications and in-house expertise in third year Honours and Masters (Research) projects.

These few examples highlight the diversity of the partnerships that UWS enjoys and celebrates.

**Cooperative Program**

A key strategy in regional learning is the UWS Cooperative Program. It has operated since 1995 having been started with Commonwealth funding to establish an industry-linked program based on the RMIT model. Over the past six years the RMIT model has been modified to suit UWS’s needs and additional programs have been developed. Judging from interactions across the sector the UWS Cooperative Program is an Australian leader in this field. The Program has provided research opportunities to over 600 students and aims to provide for an additional 600 over the next three years. It has established links with over 250 industry partners and successfully established the Summer and Winter Research Award programs which offer research opportunities to students during summer and winter vacations.

**Science and Technology Transfer**

**Innovative Technology Network**

The Innovative Technology Network (ITN) is a project that brings together industry representatives in Greater Western Sydney to exchange information and ideas on, innovation and new technologies. ITN is facilitated through the University with funding provided by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development supplemented by membership subscriptions. ITN focuses on real business challenges for small and medium enterprises and has been operating successfully for four years. Over two hundred and fifty local enterprises participate on a regular basis attending monthly seminars at the University’s campuses or local industry sites. All enterprises visited provide relevant case studies and are leaders in their field. Many are winners of Western Sydney Industry Awards.

**Nanotechnology Project**

UWS is engaging the business and industry sector through the Nanotechnology Project. This Project, funded partly through the Federal Government’s Sustainable Regions Program, is focused on assisting the businesses of the Campbelltown-Camden region to understand and take advantage of the opportunities that exist in the emerging field of nanotechnology, particularly in nanomaterials.

**High Performance Computing**

A new High Performance Computing Node located at UWS Penrith Campus provides UWS with specialist research facilities that enhance PhD programs in Advanced Systems Engineering and are fostering new collaborative links between the University and local industry and services. The new supercomputer is the equivalent of 50-60 standard laptops, has around 40 gigabytes of memory and 800 gigabytes of fixed disk storage. This is a significant resource for businesses in Greater Western Sydney, especially those in innovative and information-intense industries.

**E-transformation**

Advance Metal Products (Aust) Pty Limited, a medium-sized business in South West Sydney, has participated in UWS’s “E-transforming Western Sydney” Project. This project aims to help transform Western Sydney region small and medium enterprises into e-businesses. Teams of academic staff, research and coursework students are working to assist in formulating Advance Metal Products’ goals by defining a strategic path for the business through the development of a methodology and information technology framework that aims to transform its traditional business model to one that is competitive in a global economy.

In many ways Advanced Metal Products provides evidence of the linkages between UWS and its industry partners. Mr. Ian Stone, owner and Managing Director stated recently at the Financial Review Higher Education Summit in March 2003 ‘the necessity for qualified personnel has become more apparent, and to stay in the global race, ahead of our competition, the employment of University-qualified employees has become essential’. Advance Metal Products have employed a number of UWS graduates of the Design & Technology and Information Technology Programs. The company also engages Cooperative Program students, participates in the Information Technology Network and provides student scholarships.

**Small and Medium Enterprises**

There are approximately 72,000 businesses in Greater Western Sydney and it is a great challenge for UWS to engage effectively with such a large number of businesses. Utilising its academic strength and industry liaison experience, UWS is working with the small and medium enterprise community through a process of community education, information sharing, networking, cluster development, industry visits, seminars and the application of UWS intellectual property to industry needs. These links are radiating out into the Region...
and drawing in partners and associates of diverse small and medium enterprises.

These are some of the areas in which UWS has been working to involve business and industry with higher education. Much of this success has come from UWS’s embeddedness within the region and our commitment to its educational, cultural, social and economic development. There is strong identification by Greater Western Sydney businesses with UWS as ‘our University’. The theoretical, research and educational resources UWS provides, together with the practical, entrepreneurial and business acumen of the business and industry sector are mutually beneficial.

While it is pleasing to be able to highlight the success of UWS in engaging the business and industry sector in Greater Western Sydney it is important to recognise that what we have achieved to date is only a beginning. As a New Generation University, UWS is a relatively new player forging an identity and developing credibility within the business and industry sector of the region. These partnerships will undoubtedly both intensify and diversify in the years to come, through the targeted efforts of the University community, the diffusion of information among local graduates, government agencies and industries, the growth of professional friendships, and the emergence of new modes of collaboration between a Region and a young institution which aims to be a “University without walls”.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks go to Kevin Sproats and Kim Leevors of the UWS Office of Regional Development for their significant contributions in the development of this article.
to tempt us (buildings, prime land, facilities, funded chairs) but the decision was out of our hands.

After some to-ing and fro-ing about the location, the Western Australian state government chose Murdoch to be the university of the region. It was an exciting moment for us.

With federal government capital funding, we built a brand new cluster of buildings on a site that is just a few minutes from the beautiful Rockingham beach and foreshore on one side and, on the other, almost adjacent to the most productive industrial zone in Western Australia. This is “the strip”, the Kwinana strip, that brings in more than 30% of the state’s GDP, and sits on the coast just south of Perth.

From the beginning we saw the new campus as an outward focussed venture – to serve the region by becoming enmeshed with the region, as a caring and responsive partner. Symbolically, the campus library embodies this spirit of friendship because it is a very successful joint venture between the City of Rockingham, Challenger TAFE and Murdoch. In fact, it has been recognised by a Prime Minister’s award for this very reason.

In 1996 we started with 26 students. As one of the strong supporters of the new Rockingham campus, I put my hand up to teach Australian literature there (to a class of 5) in the neighbouring TAFE buildings, even before we had any buildings of our own on the site. It was an unforgettable experience. For the surrounding community our presence was a dream come true and the local students reflected this feeling in their boundless enthusiasm and commitment.

After a slow start, our campus grew at a steady rate and now it is suddenly going through a dramatic growth spurt. We have 910 students and demand exceed supply. This year we had to raise the entry score and turn qualified students away. The Rockingham campus is doing what it set out to do.

But what about our regional engagement as a whole? Did it turn into a rich and mutual relationship? And what are the lessons that we have learned?

The answer to the first question is a definite yes. There is no doubt that we have made a difference to the local community’s opportunities and aspirations, especially for young people. However, we initially thought of this as something we would do for them. We are now much more aware than when we started, of how our success is dependent upon others – local government, state government agencies and departments, local industry, the Chambers of Commerce, community groups and other education providers. We exist day by day in relationship with them – and like any good relationship it deepens and changes as time goes on - and it needs constant nurturing and building.

We have learned, on the job, the real and practical value of actively seeking strong links with our surrounding community. Some of those links are formal. Many give us tangible support. For example, the unique (as far as we know) Kwinana Industries Education Partnership (KIEP) has supported scholarships for year 12 students to take some of our University units and the Peel Development Commission and Mandurah City Council have done the same in another part of our region. Major industries from the Kwinana Industries Council (KIC) provide scholarships and special support for research projects. There are many research projects, planned or underway, funded by linkage grants or supported by our partners and designed to serve the direct needs of the community. In order to be in touch with what those needs are there is constant contact between the region’s leaders- in education, government and industry - and the University. We hold Think Tanks to consider local problems and issues, we meet socially, we serve on each other’s key committees. Many other relationships are informal – friendships that form because there are common goals and interests. The overriding goal is to improve opportunities for young people in the region and it is exciting and rewarding to be part of a community that passionately believes that this can and will happen.

Presently, only 24% of students in the Rockingham, Peel and Kwinana regions pursue a tertiary education, compared to WA’s average of 56%. As one of its strategies Murdoch is promoting the development of pathways that forge closer links between senior secondary education, VET and higher education in the Rockingham, Peel and Kwinana regions. We believe that this will significantly increase the tertiary participation rate of young people in this area, and our record enrolments in 2003 suggest that it is already beginning to happen.

Based on the Rockingham experience we have decided to take the plunge again and create another new campus in Mandurah, a further half hour south, to serve the fast growing Peel area. In fact, we have been offering some enabling and access course on our future campus site for two years, using the buildings of the collocated Challenger TAFE and Mandurah Senior College, our partners in the new venture.

With these partners, Murdoch won the Inaugural Education and Skills Development category of the Premier’s Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management (2002) for the collaborative work we are doing, with the support of the community, to help with retention, with access to education and with participation in higher education and training. In the

‘From the beginning we saw the new campus as an outward focussed venture – to serve the region by becoming enmeshed with the region, as a caring and responsive partner.’
same round of awards Murdoch University’s Clinical Legal Education Program provided by SCALES (the Southern Communities Advocacy Legal and Education Service) received a High Commendation in the category of Social and Community Development.

We have learned a great deal about regional engagement from the Rockingham venture. Most importantly, we have learned that we need to be inspired and driven by a common community goal and that this helps us to pool our resources with our many partners and supporters. This often involves getting out of our comfort zone and taking a risk. It also involves a great deal of trust and goodwill. We have learned that if we put the community’s needs first – in choice of courses, in research, and in practical contributions to the economic, cultural and social life of the community, then we become accepted as their university and we win ongoing loyalty and support. This is perhaps the most satisfying aspect of regional engagement – building (and enjoying) relationships, in a region to which you are deeply committed for the long haul.

Murdoch University and the City of Mandurah recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding confirming this mutual commitment, and Rockingham Business Development Organisation also signed a memorandum with us with a view to pursuing international technology and bio-enterprise opportunities together. Mostly, however, no memorandum is needed because we have common goals that are increasingly overlapping in each others’ strategic plans.

Now we are planning our new Mandurah campus – Murdoch’s second offspring about to be born in one of the fastest growing regions in the state. And as is often the case with the second, we are more relaxed about it all. We know what we are getting into this time and we are ready for it all – the long labour, the sleepless nights, the cost, the sacrifices, the crises, the sibling rivalries and the many other tensions – but we are also ready for the immeasurable rewards and the great adventure that lies ahead.

THE SOLUTIONS ARE OUT THERE, IN THE COMMUNITY

MIKE DONAHUE
Corporate Communications Project Officer, Central Queensland University

We have been told that universities in “regional” Australia are constrained in making lasting connections with key external agencies because of their distance from capital cities.

We have been told that we face an up-hill battle against investors, politicians and so-called task forces that only have an occasional interest in “regions”.

We have seen “vital” linkages break, “committed” people forget, and political agendas change…

We have experienced all of this. It happens.

But these challenges are just distractions.

The biggest challenge for any regionally-based university, like CQU, is to recognise that its true mission is to serve and lead the community. Those other problems can be addressed along the way.

Central Queensland University is based in Rockhampton, Central Queensland, a “regional” community of about 60,000 people. From here, we serve more than 20,000 students and customers across a dozen communities in Australia and the Asia-Pacific (Brisbane, Bundaberg, Chengdu (China), Emerald, Fiji, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Hong Kong, Mackay, Malaysia, Melbourne, Singapore and Sydney).

Our unique organisation allows us to respond, replenish and resonate within and far beyond the remote boundaries often associated with so-called regional universities.

Do we have 12 different missions? No. It does not matter where we operate. CQU strives to be acknowledged as a leader in flexible teaching and learning and well-focused research contributing strongly to the development of all the regions and communities in which we work and live.

CQU believes everyone – in capital cities, remote properties, and other countries – should have access to and benefit from the educational, research and community initiatives that can only be offered by a regional university with high standards.

For example, proceeds from our international and commercial operations allow us to support our regionally-specific research and to provide unmatched opportunities for people who may not otherwise have a chance to attend university: people other universities may not have time for or interest in.
By offering bridging programs, establishing research centres, training professionals, building local and international partnerships, developing the Arts, enabling the disabled and employing the latest communication technologies we are finding new growth opportunities, quietly reversing the gradual decline of regional cities and tangibly enhancing the lives of thousands of individuals.

That is why former day-labourers get PhDs in social work from CQU. It is why we perform trial studies on sugar cane and coal processing; why we work to refine railway technology and increase concrete stability; why we collaborate with industry on new light-metal structures and environmentally sound housing; why we study physical inactivity of Australians and explore ways to prevent family violence, and more.

**Regional Engagement & Flexibility**

The only way regional universities can respond to the needs of its communities is to engage, partner and collaborate with the members of the community in every level.

As a matter of fact that is how we started as an institution in 1967. Local engineers advocated for establishment of the Queensland Institute of Technology (Capricornia) to respond to the growing needs of Rockhampton.

CQU – through forums, personal visits, lectures, industry meetings and government liaison – often identifies a broad spectrum of issues and assembles multi-disciplinary teams to explore and deliver solutions.

The Institute for Sustainable Regional Development at CQU, for example, focuses on issues critical to industry and community liveability: transportation, health, education, affordable housing, economic development, environmental resources, cultural resources, socio-economic and racial diversity, and fiscal policy.

We actively seek out opinions and expert advice from residents, industry and business owners, advocate for specific issues (such as affordable housing or water quality) and others. In doing so, we identify the key opportunities, challenges and choices that face us as a regional community.

Through collaborative arrangements such as these, CQU is uniquely positioned to offer postgraduate researchers access to our region’s potential – areas of national significance matched to our local capabilities. That includes primary industries like agriculture, extractive and processing industries, biodiversity and climatic studies, civil engineering, animal sciences… even the synthesis of new molecules.

This level of CQU community engagement and CQU innovative learning strategies allow us to adapt to a more highly skilled and demanding global economy.

We do this by:

- establishing strong ties to industries, including the $3billion Central Queensland light metals industrial network;
- instituting flexible and responsive, year round learning: customised times, places, methods, and content;
- providing unique interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs;
- investing in knowledge and promoting cultural awareness by catering to more than 20,000 students, who come from more than 99 countries (7,923 students from overseas are helping to build our profile as Queensland’s leading international education provider);
- responding to an evolving student base. (Almost 40% of our students come from a low socio-economic background. 50% of our students are mature age. 50% school leavers. 50% international, and more than 40% distance learners.

CQU operates in an increasingly demanding commercial and competitive marketplace. Everyday we demonstrate our adaptability and innovation by empowering our students, involving our community and providing vital research results to local industry and government agencies.

Research at CQU makes a significant contribution to the development and resource management of our communities by addressing the unique challenges and issues associated with "regional" Australia and similar locations.

Our clients have access to five faculties and more than a dozen research organisations committed to delivering results that have practical applications to industry. More and more companies in our communities are entering agreements with CQU to conduct essential basic research, long-term analysis, even product development. We offer specialised expertise and use state-of-the-art equipment. A partnership with CQU minimizes the investment required to create competitive products and it cuts down on development time, which makes CQU research more relevant to the immediate needs of our clients.

A recent example of an innovative research project is 10,000 Steps Rockhampton, a health initiative promoting walking in conjunction with the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, the National Heart Foundation and Queensland Health. Other partnerships are the driving force behind research on gambling, the quality of life of drivers and their families who have been involved in motor vehicle accidents, and therapeutic recreation for people with serious mental illness.

CQU’s Primary Industries Research Centre caters to the needs of regionally located agricultural (horticulture, broad- acre, grazing, beef, pest-management, revegetation), extractive (coal, nickel, magnesite) and processing (aluminium smelting, coal processing and more) industries.

Our Centre for Environmental Management at CQU Gladstone concentrates on marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecology; eco toxicology; coastal
hydrodynamics; environmental economics and associated social studies.

The Centre for Molecular Architecture at CQU is conducting an extensive investigation into solar energy and related cell design that places it among the world’s leaders in light-capture research and technology.

Australia’s railway industry conducts research and consultancy services at the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Railway Engineering and Technologies, located at CQU Rockhampton. The CRC, a joint venture between industry and Australian universities, and the CQU Centre for Railway Engineering provides a wide range of global services aimed at optimising railway performance and capacity, improving railway safety, track structure, traffic control and innovative system design.

CQU also offers professional development training services to corporate and government organisations, including purchasing, nursing and education.

**But there is more to being a "regional provider of higher education."**

Beyond the laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls and laptop computers, CQU is engaged in projects and services that give everyone in our communities a sense of ownership in and belonging to their university.

The Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music reaches out to the community through associations with hundreds of local cultural and social events. Our Central Queensland Community Sports Centre provides full community access to one of the best facilities in the region. The Central Highlands Science Centre brings a world of discovery to thousands of primary school students in rural and remote locations. CQU Press produces scores of books every year about our Australian heritage and the Outback. We host more than 25,000 people every year at the Central Queensland Multicultural Fair. We have programs dedicated to meet the needs of our Aboriginal communities. We have reversed a national education trend by increasing the participation of indigenous students across our campuses.

Regional universities, like CQU, are as much about the pursuit of the public good of regional communities as they are about educating school leavers and delivering research results. They should be seen as the lifeblood of their communities.

Regional universities cannot and should not want to be "sandstone universities". With appropriate funding, specialised operations, unique partnerships and collaborative efforts regional universities will continue to creatively drive change and expand knowledge in regions vital to the economic growth and success of all Australia.

**Editor’s Note:** Central Queensland University was presented with the IDP Education Australia Education Award for 2002. It received the Premier of Queensland’s Export Award for Education in 2002 and 2001. ■
school leadership. Courses in Ballarat include specialisations in Middle School Mathematics, Science for Primary Teachers, Early School Mathematics, Religious Education and Educational Leadership. Some postgraduate courses are also delivered in face-to-face mode in a number of other regional centres, to facilitate access for teachers in more remote areas. Nursing, Management and Theology are other areas where relevant postgraduate courses are provided.

In Ballarat, Nursing training serves particular needs of the region; and similarly Social Work training meets professional needs in Canberra. Clinical placements in the undergraduate Nursing program are generally undertaken in regional and rural areas (although students have the opportunity to undertake some placements in a metropolitan centre if they wish to do so) in order to foster a commitment to health care in non-metropolitan areas. Postgraduate courses in Nursing and in Midwifery are offered online, providing for the needs of busy professionals working in rural and remote areas.

As the only social work provider in the Australian Capital Territory, ACU National’s Canberra campus has a strong relationship with the local social work community, which provides placements for the University’s students. On the other hand, ACU National plays a major role in the ongoing professional development of the local social workers. A range of research projects are also being undertaken jointly by University staff and community practitioners.

In a recent initiative, ACU National has expanded its provision in Ballarat to include an undergraduate degree in Theology in face-to-face mode. Ballarat offers the only campus-based Bachelor of Theology course outside of the State capital. In ACU National students of all denominations are welcomed and our aim is to develop and foster a richly ecumenical context in the course. The course is currently attracting predominantly mature-age students, people who have not had the opportunity to take up higher education or who are returning to study, and people wanting a more informed approach to their work in local regional and rural church communities. The University sees this initiative as a rich and valuable source of support for regional and rural communities. A similar program is offered at the Canberra campus.

Regional consultancies are a vital arena for community engagement and development and frequently involve partnerships with other key stakeholders and community organisations. By way of example, ACU National has recently undertaken the following projects:

- Early numeracy research project – assessing and developing young children’s mathematical strategies, a project including schools in rural Victoria, commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training, the Catholic Education Office (Melbourne), and the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria
- ‘Reaching the Unreached Learner in Rural Victoria’, a research project and conference sponsored by Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) and the Centre for Lifelong Learning (ACU National)
- ‘Lifelong Learning – Reaching Out,’ an initiative of the ACU Centre for Lifelong Learning in collaboration with the Ballarat Regional Association for Continuing Education (BRACE) to provide opportunities for lifelong learning for a group of unemployed citizens
- A national project which undertook the first mapping of the Catholic welfare sector in Australia – training needs for the sector were also identified
- Professional development for school teachers (primary and secondary) in regional Victoria and NSW
- A history of the establishment of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia

The evidence of the need to improve provision of higher education in regional, rural and remote Australia and of its potential benefits in terms of regional development is compelling. There is considerable unmet higher education demand in non-metropolitan Australia and a serious ‘gap’ between communities’ aspirations and the actual provision of higher education. An analysis of higher education provision shows substantial per capita inequities. Isolated areas are the most under-represented in this regard. Public policy needs to address this as a matter of serious inequity in our community. It is important to ACU National that consultation is undertaken from the outset with the communities themselves as to what they perceive to be crucial. Planning takes into consideration issues of generalist but also specialist programs in higher education provision.

The programs ACU National offers meet new models to satisfy regional higher education demand. The University assumes that public interest and common good will be better served by models of provision which promote cooperation and collaboration and which discourage competition in the higher education sector. Programs are consistent with the need to encourage and support collaboration (i) between higher education, TAFE and the local community, and (ii) between the higher education sector and the business sector.

Cooperation and collaboration in the higher education sector is, however, not a simple matter. Current funding arrangements, together with issues of institutional branding and reputation in an increasingly competitive higher education market, serve as resistors to optimally productive collaboration and to rationalisation in the provision of resources to meet rural and regional needs effectively. A careful investigation and analysis of the impediments and difficulties as well as the potential benefits of more systematic and structured cooperation between higher education providers would be useful in identifying and assessing possible and practicable options for new and ongoing collaborative models that will affect cooperative and inclusive regional educational provision.
FOCUS ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT: AN ECU PERSPECTIVE

PROFESSOR MILLICENT POOLE
Vice-Chancellor, Edith Cowan University

Introduction

In its relatively short history as a university, ECU has been an active member of the local, national and international community. However, continuing changes in the Higher Education scene have made it necessary for ECU to engage more strategically in order to continue to differentiate itself in a highly competitive environment. To this end, ECU defines itself through the key themes of Service, Professionalism and Enterprise. The University’s level of community and professional engagement is one way in which ECU aims to differentiate itself from its competitors in higher education, especially in Western Australia. Indeed, in its new 2003 – 2007 Strategic Plan one of the five overarching strategic priorities for the University is Building Partnerships, Pathways and Precincts, while another is Engaging with the Professions and Professional Life.

Regional Higher Education – ECU in the WA Context

The Perth Metropolitan area, and Western Australia more generally, provide challenges for the provision of Higher Education. The State contains vast regions where service delivery of all forms is made substantially more difficult by distance and lack of economies of scale. Even Perth, though a fully fledged urban centre and a state capital, suffers to some degree from problems of isolation.

Western Australia’s State Labor Government has recognised the extent to which regional issues impact on services in the state and has recently released a Regional Policy Statement. The Statement includes specific commitments to Lifelong Learning in regional WA, including Higher Education provision.

In line with the State Government’s aims for regional development, ECU is undertaking a process of campus consolidation. The campus consolidation has a two-fold purpose; firstly, to allow ECU to focus its efforts more coherently and utilise its resources more effectively, undertakings which were difficult when the University was scattered over five major campus locations; secondly, to engage more effectively with the communities and the regions which the three consolidated campuses will service. This process is being guided by a concept which is known internally to ECU as the Three Precincts.

In pursuing this process, ECU has adopted a broader conception of Regional delivery than is typically used in policy discussion. Whereas the word regional typically describes areas that are not a part of metropolitan Australia, ECU has chosen to recognise that even metropolitan areas can display regional distinctiveness and that regionally tailored responses need to be developed in these instances. This is true in particular of the North West Metropolitan Corridor of Perth, where ECU has chosen to establish its new corporate headquarters, at Joondalup.

The Three Precincts

By 2007 Edith Cowan University will occupy three main campuses. Each campus forms the hub of a "precinct", which is a system of relationships developed to maximise the campus’ service to its students. Plans are already being implemented to develop distinct cultures and identities for each of the Precincts, with a view to tailoring each campus culture to the needs of its region. The Precincts are Central Metropolitan, North West Metropolitan and South West Precinct (Bunbury).

The Central Metropolitan Precinct, centred on ECU’s Mount Lawley campus, caters increasingly for the growing number of professionals working or residing in the inner city suburbs and central business district, a group who frequently wish to undertake post-graduate studies in areas of business, education and communications. The Precinct also includes the Mount Lawley Senior High School and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) under the auspices of the Faculty of Communication and Creative Industries. The high profile Academy is the State’s premier provider of education for the performance industry and as such draws students from across the Perth metropolitan area and beyond. The Academy offers both Higher Education degrees and Vocational Education and Training programmes. ECU’s Mount Lawley campus aims to become an arts, culture and entertainment education centre. It provides leverage through the Academy for the Mount Lawley High School to pursue its aim of becoming the performing arts high school in Perth. It maintains regular contact with the community through public performances in theatre, music and jazz and public exhibitions of art, film and photography.
Technology and innovation will characterise the North West Metropolitan Precinct, centred on ECU’s Joondalup campus. The North West Metropolitan Precinct is strongly oriented towards service professions with such community service oriented programs as youth work, psychology, education, children’s studies, police and justice studies. The Joondalup campus offers the large undergraduate courses popular with the school-leaver student cohort, for example education, and by 2007 nursing. The North West Metropolitan corridor of Perth is the fastest growing region in Australia, with a high proportion of first generation university goers. ECU therefore sees the Corridor as a genuine region with a distinct identity and distinct needs. ECU’s corporate headquarters is located at this Precinct. ECU’s Joondalup campus is also distinct in that it is co-located with the West Coast College of TAFE and the WA Police Academy, offering unique opportunities for cross-sectoral pathways and enhanced service provision. The Precinct enjoys substantial support from regional leaders, most especially the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup, who have invested resources in becoming the first Learning City in WA.

The academic profile of the South West Regional Campus is centred around Health, Education and Community Services and is co-located with the Bunbury Health Centre and the South West Regional College of TAFE. Its programmes are tailored to regional delivery for the entire South West, offering a range of courses specialised in areas such as Regional Social Work, Indigenous Studies, Information Technology, Small Business Studies and Visual Arts. The Faculty of Regional Professional Studies (FRPS) operates the Bunbury campus and is a recognition of the importance of engagement with regional needs. FRPS has the highest proportion of Indigenous students of any of the Three Precincts (4.5%), with the majority of these studying in Kurongkurl Katitjin, the School of Indigenous Australian Studies. FRPS has been configured in the Three Precincts plan to be, not only a regional provider, but to become the lead institution in best practice in regional delivery in Australia. An excellent example of the Faculty’s work in this regard is the recently established Bachelor of Surf Science degree. Based on similar degrees that have been offered overseas for some years, the Surf Science course has generated substantial local, national and international interest.

Besides the Three Precincts, ECU does have a presence in other parts of regional WA, including Geraldton, Broome and Margaret River. In Geraldton the State Government, through the Mid West Development Commission, has worked with the local community and the Higher Education sector to develop the Geraldton Universities Centre. ECU, along with two other Perth universities (Curtin University of Technology and the University of Western Australia) is collaborating to bring a greater range of Higher Education services to the State’s mid-west.

Engagement – What it means at the institutional level

In the past universities have focused on "Community Service". This approach is now seen as somewhat paternalistic and out of step with the communities it purports to serve. Like other universities, ECU is moving away from a "community service" focus toward a focus on "engagement with the community". This new focus is based on a two-way relationship in both community activities and in links with the professions and other stakeholders. ECU has a long history of active engagement with the service professions and is now working toward a model of "Community Engagement" which is based on mutual deliberate and considered collaboration.

As a university with many professional areas of knowledge, ECU has a strong tradition of integrating theory with practice and focusing on work-based or practice-based approaches to learning in professional contexts. ECU staff actively pursue interaction with their respective professional communities for mutual benefit.

ECU is moving away from a "community service" focus toward a focus on "engagement with the community".

Engagement should not however be limited to areas of strength where the market is considered to be mature. ECU is actively engaging with the community and professionals from new and emerging areas. Many viable niches such as aviation and security science are new opportunities for universities. ECU recognises its capacity to significantly influence professional practice in these emerging fields.

In order to meet the priorities in ECU’s own Strategic Plan, as well as the social, cultural and economic needs of the Three Precincts and other more remote locations, the University is ensuring that it focuses its internal resources effectively.

At Faculty and School level ECU has strong professional networks. At an institutional level the Institute for the Service Professions (ISP) is achieving success in raising the profile and level of professional engagement across the University. Its strategies include:

- working closely with professional associations to recognise outstanding achievements of graduates within the first 5 years of their employment,
- developing strategies for benchmarking the ‘health’ of Australia’s key professions of teaching, nursing and policing, and
- building collaborative research and development partnerships to position ECU as a leader in professional knowledge.
ECU is also looking to develop more sophisticated "enabling tools" to help make engagement more effective. One such "tool" is a Stakeholder Relationship Management System (SRM). To some extent a SRM system has already been utilised to great effect by the University’s Marketing Division. Dr Scott Gardner from ECU’s School of Management has developed a formal Stakeholder Relationship Management (SRM) model, whose application is being investigated at ECU. The SRM model provides a means to identify, map, and account manage key relationships in order that resources can be more focused on strategic priorities. The model provides a framework for network mapping (who do we know?) and knowledge asset audit and portfolio creation (what do we know?). Dr Gardner’s model is two-tiered, reflecting the nature of the different kinds of stakeholder relationships in which the University engages. Tier 1 relationships consist of two or three peak bodies for each profession/industry. Approximately 12 Tier 1 associations have been identified for the University as a whole, with whom it seeks major engagement. Those relationships categorised as Tier 2 are generally with smaller bodies, which have less influence in the current environment. Obviously this system is dynamic, and designed to be responsive to change.

Engagement was the topic of discussion at a recent Association of Commonwealth Universities-sponsored seminar in March 2003 which I attended. At this seminar ECU was invited to join a project case studying leading-edge engagement across the globe. The Joondalup Learning Precinct will be the focus of the ECU submission to this international project.

**Conclusion**

ECU shares the convictions of both the State Government and the Federal Government that Higher Education in regional Australia is a priority that has been too long neglected in policy and in fact. The University is already well placed to play a substantial role in redressing this, most especially for the communities of regional WA, but also for the benefit of Australia as a whole. While much of the detail is still awaited on the recent Higher Education Reform Package, ECU is pleased to see that the Package contains acknowledgment of the special costs of regional delivery, as well as foreshadowing funding for the development of collaborative projects, like those which ECU is fostering in its engagement with the regions.

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1 A fourth campus at Churchlands will continue to service students until 2007. The other major campus at Claremont is being divested as a part of the campus consolidation program. ■

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**GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AWARDS**

**B-HERT is delighted to announce that the major sponsor of the 2003 Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration in Education and Training is the Department of Education, Science and Training.**

See below for details on the 2003 Awards.

**Purpose**

A program of prestigious awards initiated in 1998 to recognise outstanding achievements in collaboration between business and higher education in the field of Education & Training. The objective of the program is to highlight at a national level the benefits of such collaboration, and enhance links between industry and universities.

**Eligibility**

The award is made to a program or project involving a collaborative partnership between business and higher education. Therefore, the collaborating organisations nominated for the award must come from business and from higher education. At least one of the collaborating organisations must be a Member of B-HERT.

Each submission must be signed by all participating partners.

**Frequency**

Awards are made bi-annually and presented at the B-HERT Awards dinner in November each year.

**Number and categories of Awards**

This year’s Awards are for (a) new initiatives, i.e. projects or programs in train from 18months – 5years, and for (b) established initiatives, i.e. projects or programs that have been in train for more than five years. These categories are further divided into projects or programs which involve small-medium sized companies and large companies. Small-medium sized companies are less than $100m in sales or less than 500 employees. This provides four Awards.

In addition there will be an Award for a project or program with a regional focus. This Award will be chosen on the same criteria as the other Awards but without any reference to the categories mentioned above.
An application may be submitted for an Award in one or both Groups, provided it meets the appropriate criteria. However, no application can win more than one Award. Unsuccessful applicants for an Award are eligible to apply for an Award in a later year.

Criteria for Assessment

1. Innovation – has the project or program produced new products or services; how innovative is it in its concept or idea, design, delivery or content; what new barriers has it surmounted; what new challenges has it identified?

2. Strength of Relationship – (a) what is the extent of involvement of the partners? (b) how has this grown over the life of the project or program? (c) how do the partners work together in a productive partnership? (d) are there obstacles and barriers the partners have had to overcome to make the collaboration work? (e) what other spin-offs have there been from the project or program for participating organisations?

3. Outreach Inclusion – has the project or program attracted new participants since its inception; has it become a model for other projects or programs?

4. National Benefits – these may be economic, financial, social, educational or community benefits: may include for example, growth in exports, creation of new jobs, outreach and provision of services to new community sectors and participants, and so on.

5. Cultural Impact – what impact has the project or program had on the cultures of the participating organisations? What changes have occurred in what is done and the way it is done in the participating organisations? What changes have there been in attitudes, behaviour or values in the participants?

Process

1. Applications for 2003 are now being sought from all Members of B-HERT.

2. Deadline for applications is 27 August 2003.

3. Judging panel is:

   Professor Leon Mann, Pratt Family Chair in Leadership & Decision-Making, Melbourne Business School (Chairman)

   Dr Annabelle Duncan, Chief of Division, Molecular Science, CSIRO

   Dr Bob Frater, AO, Vice-President for Innovation, ResMed Ltd

   Ms Lesley Johnson, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Australian National Training Authority

   Mr Peter Laver, Chair, Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission

   Dr Jane Munro, Principal & CEO, Firbank Grammar School

Dr Peter Scaife, Director, Centre for Sustainable Technology, University of Newcastle

4. Evaluations will be completed by 24 October 2003.

5. Awards will be presented at the B-HERT Awards Dinner on 25 November 2003 in Melbourne.

6. Submissions to be no more than one page on each of the five criteria.

B-HERT wishes to acknowledge the generous support of the following organisations:

Award Sponsors

2003 Award for the Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year

B-HERT is delighted to announce

FOR THE THIRD SUCCESSIVE YEAR THAT
THE MAJOR SPONSOR OF THE BEST
ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATOR OF THE
YEAR AWARD FOR 2003 IS THE
AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY NETWORK

Purpose

To recognise the importance of education in the process of developing and nurturing entrepreneurs; and to showcase best practice in entrepreneurial education.

Eligibility

Educators of students beyond the age of compulsion from final years of schooling, vocational education, training institutions, universities, employment programs to adult education programs are eligible.
**Frequency**

Awards are made annually and presented at the B-HERT Awards dinner each year.

**Award**

The Award will include a Qantas voucher to the value of $3000, valid for 12 months, which is intended to be used by the winner to visit some appropriate overseas institutions.

**Criteria for Assessment**

1. Effective involvement of industry in the design, implementation and evaluation of entrepreneurial educational activities.
2. Encouragement of students in the practice of entrepreneurship.
3. Is the educator’s work a model for others?
4. Demonstrable outcomes of the educator’s work – development by students of new products, processes or services.
5. Has the educator’s work made a difference to the attitudes, self esteem, behaviour, life chances, values and employment outcomes of their students?

**Process**

1. Applications for 2003 are now being sought from all eligible applicants. Applications may be submitted by the nominee personally, or by a third party on their behalf (with the nominee’s consent).
2. Deadline for applications is 1 October 2003.
3. Judging panel will be chosen from the Board of Directors of the Business/Higher Education Round Table:
   - Dr Mark Toner, President, Business/Higher Education Round Table
   - Professor Denise Bradley, Vice-Chancellor, University of South Australia
   - Professor Kerry Cox, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ballarat
   - Professor Ruth Dunkin, Vice-Chancellor, RMIT University
   - Professor Gavin Brown, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney
   - Mr Russell Cooper, Chief Executive, SITA Environmental Solutions
   - Professor Helen Garnett, Chief Executive, ANSTO
   - Mr David Hind, Managing Director – South Pacific, BOC Gases Australia Limited

- Ms Judy Howard, General Manager, Woolworths Academy
- Professor Michael Osborne, Vice-Chancellor, LaTrobe University
- Professor Millicent Poole, Vice-Chancellor, Edith Cowan University
- Mr Rob Stewart, Chairman, Melbourne IT
- Professor Iain Wallace, Vice-Chancellor, Swinburne University of Technology

4. The Award will be presented at the annual B-HERT Awards Dinner on 25 November 2003 in Melbourne, along with the Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration in Education and Training.
5. Submission to be no more than one page of each of the five criteria.

Completed submissions for Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Collaboration in Education and Training and Award for Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year are to be sent to the Business/Higher Education Round Table at the following address:

**1st Floor**  
**24 Brunswick Street**  
**Fitzroy Vic 3065**

**Ph:** +61 3 9419 8068  
**Fax:** +61 3 9419 8276  
**Email:** bhert@bhert.com

**APPLICATION FORMS FOR ALL AWARDS CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE SECRETARIAT OR DOWNLOADING FROM THE B-HERT WEBSITE ON WWW.BHER.COM**
Recent B-HERT Publications

As a unique group of leaders in Australian business, professional firms, higher education and research organisations, the Business/Higher Education Round Table (B-HERT) sees as part of its responsibility the need to articulate its views on matters of importance germane to its Mission. From time to time B-HERT issues Papers in this context – copies of which are available from the B-HERT Secretariat at a cost of $9.90 (GST incl.) per copy.

B-HERT Paper No. 6 (February 2003) – Research Issues for the Service Sector, particularly for Community Service Professions and Export Services

The service sector contributes some 80% in value added terms and 81% of employment. It is the sector which will provide the greatest opportunities in employment growth with export of services becoming increasingly vital to the future of the Australian economy.

This paper identifies 20 priority research projects of which eight are in the area of community services and twelve focus on the development of export service industries. Research areas addressed in community services include educational and training requirements, the development of a health of the community services professions index, quality assurance and the monitoring of community services interventions, and the unintended outcomes flowing from downsizing, outsourcing and privatisation. In the export services industries, research is needed on more comprehensive data on export services industries, a National Export Services Strategy, and ways to maintain global competitiveness.

Position Paper No. 10 (September 2002) – The Importance of the Social Sciences to Government

Commonwealth Government expenditure on social security and welfare, health and education amounts to some 65% of total expenditure and indicates the importance and persuasiveness of social policies. The social sciences and policies are important in ensuring the maintenance and functioning of a stable society by attempting to provide a more equitable distribution of wealth and income and ensuring an understanding of governance and institutions of civil society. Universities play a key role in providing social science courses which educate graduates in a philosophy, knowledge and the new developments of social science.

Position Paper No. 9 (August 2002) – Enhancing the Learning and Employability of Graduates: The Role of Generic Skills

In an era when various new kinds of partnerships and relationships are developing between industry and higher education, and between the different sectors in education, a paper on generic skills is timely.

This paper outlines the nature and scope of generic skills before discussing the reasons why they have become a focus of policy interest. The benefits of paying attention to generic skills for learning and employability purposes are considered in relation to relevant research findings. The holism, contextuality and relational level of generic skills as well as the links to lifelong learning are highlighted. Examples of the incorporation of generic skills into higher education structures and courses are also described.

There is also discussion of ways to close the ‘employability’ gap.

The paper then suggests a learning framework for generic skills at different levels.

Finally the paper makes some recommendations in respect of further work that would be valuable in pursuit of the agenda to enhance the learning capability of employability of graduates.

Position Paper No. 8 (July 2002) – Higher Education in Australia – the Global Imperative

This paper is B-HERT’s submission to the Nelson Review of Higher Education.

B-HERT Paper No. 5 (June 2002) – THE FACTS (Higher Education in Australia – today compared with yesterday and the rest of the world)

A compendium of statistics on higher education. ($19.95 per copy)

B-HERT Paper No. 4 (February 2002) – The Knowledge-Based Economy: some Facts and Figures

An update to B-HERT Paper No. 2 which provides some useful and interesting comparative data on Australia’s relative global position within the context of the knowledge-based economy.
**Position Paper No. 7 (January 2002) – Greater Involvement and Interaction between Industry and Higher Education**

This paper looks at the need for a more enhanced partnership between the business community and higher education.

**Position Paper No. 6 (August 2001) – Sharing Administrative Functions at Lower Costs**

This paper highlights an innovative approach to achieving savings in administrative activities.

Position Paper No. 5 (June 2001) – What is Needed to Make Australia a Knowledge-Driven and Learning-Driven Society?

This paper aims to identify major public policy challenges that stem from a proper understanding of the nature of knowledge and learning.

**Position Paper No. 4 (February 2001) – The Critical Importance of Lifelong Learning**

This paper aims to establish the significance of lifelong learning in the Australian context. Drawing on analyses of lifelong learning policies and practices in Australia and other OECD countries the paper seeks to identify a number of policy priorities for government, particularly in the areas of lifelong learning, business and higher education.

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**Discussion Papers:**

- How Should Diversity in the Higher Education System be Encouraged?
- The Role of Universities in the Regions

(Refer B-HERT website: [www.bhert.com](http://www.bhert.com))

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**B-HERT Meeting Date for 2003**

Please note the following date for the remaining B-HERT meeting for 2003:

**Tuesday, 25 November 2003**

*Sheraton Towers Southgate, Melbourne*

2.30pm – 5pm

(inclusive of Annual General Meeting),

followed by Awards dinner.

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**Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Championships Showcased in Melbourne**

Over the weekend 19/20 July, the 2003 Arnott’s SIFE Australia National Competition will be held at the Hilton On the Park-Melbourne, 192 Wellington Parade East Melbourne. Up to 32 teams from universities in all states and territories will challenge for the title of Qantas SIFE Australia National Champion and the right to represent Australia at the SIFE World Cup in October.

SIFE’s mission, as members will recall, is to challenge university students to make a difference in their own lives by developing their leadership, teamwork and communication skills. They are encouraged to do this through learning, practicing and teaching the principles of free enterprise so as to empower others in their communities and enhance their economic prospects.

With the support and encouragement of B-HERT and the assistance of our Executive Director, Professor Ashley Goldsworthy, who is Chairman of the Board of SIFE Australia Ltd, the scope of the program and the number of teams in competition continues its rapid expansion to twice the number of teams in contention in 2002.

All members of B-HERT, but particularly those in Melbourne, are invited to look in on any part of the proceedings, which run from Friday evening through to Sunday afternoon. The main competition will take place between 9 am and 5 pm on Saturday, with a final round between 9 am and 12.30 pm on Sunday. Advance warning would be appreciated by calling 0417 811877.

At the Awards Ceremony lunch on Sunday, in addition to announcing the Champion Team, awards will be made to the Most Supportive Vice-Chancellor, Most Supportive Dean, Most Supportive Business Advisory Board Member and the $2,000 Woolworths Leadership prize will be presented to the Most Outstanding Mentor. B-HERT members may attend at a subsidized cost of $50.

The 2003 Champion Team will win a travel award provided by Qantas, $5,000 cash from Arnott’s and the right to represent Australia at the SIFE World Cup which will be held in Mainz from 12 to 14 October and will be contested by the National Champion teams from the 35 countries with active SIFE programs.

SIFE Australia’s aim is to see the establishment of a SIFE team on each campus of every Australian university and to develop a cooperative network through which the corporate sponsors of SIFE are provided with a ‘first choice’ opportunity to recruit these outstanding students.

University and corporate members of B-HERT who are not already involved in SIFE are strongly encouraged to contact the CEO of SIFE Australia, John Thornton, on 0417811877 or by email to john.thornton@sifeaustralia.org.au for more information on opportunities provided by the program.
In 1995 Defence was, to most Australians, a relatively theoretical concept. That is no longer the case; the landscape has changed. We have just been heavily engaged in Iraq with 2000 Australian military personnel, and a number of my people from Richmond, and others, are still there. Recent operations involved the SASR, who performed superbly, both Hercules squadrons (36 and 37 Squadrons), a large number of support personnel from Richmond and other bases, the Commando Regiment (4 Battalion), 75 Squadron flying Hornet fighters, the Warships Kanimbla, ANZAC, Darwin and Sydney (which rotated through two at a time), and a national command element. Australia deployed 2000 people, the UK deployed 48,000, and a total of 466,985 US personnel were at one time or another deployed. We were therefore a relatively small part of a huge effort, but we played a key role. It should be noted that 45 countries in total made contributions.

We are now working in changed strategic circumstances. Some of the key changes since the middle nineties include:

- the prominent part now played by non-state players, particularly various terrorist organisations;
- the large potential for religious and race hate to gain a hold – in fact, producing just this outcome was a probable intent of the 9/11 attacks;
- a large potential for wholesale transfer of grievance to the "enemy", or onto a whole people, as a result of terror attacks – this is a huge challenge for the West, as it denies the basis of our type of civilisation.

In addition, there are a number of other, often related, factors including:

- Mass refugee flows – the numbers in Europe are astounding;
- An inability to clearly identify threats as frontiers become meaningless;
- The threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (and a sub-issue – why did Saddam pretend to have them if he did not?);
- The conclusions North Korea may draw from recent hostilities – put yourself in the Dear Leaders’ place;
- A widening gulf between aspirations and possibilities throughout most of the world;
- The intransigence of the problem of maladministration and corruption over most of the globe;
- The difficulty of establishing democratic institutions where they are despised; and
- Our dependence on unhindered movement of trade goods and payment – we should carefully note Australia’s dependency on export, especially through the Indonesian archipelago and South China Sea.

All of this has led to a big change for us in uniform. The ADF is clearly now required to be an expeditionary force, operating with coalition partners, far from home. This is a far cry from the Defence of Australia doctrine, and it will be a difficult task for us to cope with these changes.

There has also been great technological change in warfighting methods in the last ten years, and some of these changes pose ethical dilemmas. The first of these changes are precision and stealth. Airpower weapons can now strike in almost any conditions, to within less than a metre of the intended spot, at will. An important part of this ability is derived from the use of space, which allows real-time surveillance, instant and secure communications, and excellent security. Western military forces now depend heavily on the new high ground – space. Unmanned aircraft are providing new ways of thinking about risk, and a new set of ethical dilemmas about robots being allowed to shoot. These dilemmas get a great deal of attention by USAF planners, but less attention elsewhere, I suspect.

Yet there are even more dramatic technologies coming, including electromagnetic guns with unheard-of muzzle velocities which may provide sub-20 minute response, worldwide, with centimetre accuracy. These systems could allow God-like retribution to be meted out by the powerful who have them.

Also coming are tiny flying and crawling devices suitable for a host of missions which should cause any ethicist to think carefully. Non-lethal methods in development for controlling a populace provide similar cause for careful reflection.

Taking all of this into account, it is clear that military ethical dilemmas for the ADF, and all Western military forces, will abound. Much of the technical change we
have seen has led to improved ethics. Precision in bombing for example, has made the sort of area bombing seen in World War II unnecessary – and today we would regard it as totally unacceptable.

Yet we should note that automation and precision have limitations, particularly in the ethical sphere. It is now possible to create drones which would be like a pack of loose Rottweilers, but clearly we shouldn’t – unless we can control them.

The ethical basis for all our Defence activity should always be firstly, direction from Parliament; then the inherent right or wrong of a given action, Rules of Engagement, and the Geneva and other Conventions to which we are signatories. These provide a great deal of ethical protection, yet we now live in an age of unspeakable fears – biological weapons or the widespread use of mines for terror purposes are chilling prospects, yet our ethics must be up to these challenges.

Despite all this, I think our biggest responsibility is the assessment of the new environment and timely development of a Defence structure and Force appropriate to our circumstances. This is a big challenge – we tend to prepare for the last war, and things are changing too rapidly for us to allow that mistake.

It is a challenge not only for us in uniform but for the wider Defence beauracracy – and the record is pretty patchy in places. We need to learn to think much faster, and much smarter, particularly in acquiring equipment and anticipating threats.

In this field, there is added complexity and uncertainty – does the threat of terrorism make conventional force redundant? Clearly, conventional military force has been chosen as the means of denying "sanctuary countries" to organisations like Al-Qaeda.

Time will tell whether this is effective, and time will reveal the consequences of the course of action we have embarked on. And yet, turning the other cheek was probably an impossible course. And I suppose, Saddam isn’t killing and the Taliban are not running Afghanistan.

While we have been successful, I am disconcerted by the present situation to some extent. My Staff College training taught me to analyse Enemy Intent, and I think I see Bin Ladens’ intent – to radicalise the Muslim and Judeo-Christian worlds, and bring on a state of implacable hatred and war between them. I hope he doesn’t get what he wants.

Let’s not forget, also, that many old problems remain, and a military force trained and structured appropriately can not only act as an insurance policy, it can prevent problems and shape events by its very existence.

Sun Tzu pointed out that the pinnacle of the art of war is to win without fighting. It’s easy to see his point, but hard to see how it could be achieved in our post-September 11 world.

Citizenship in This Environment

I think it’s now harder for citizens to decide a sensible Defence and Security policy. For the time being, it is likely that hi-tech equipment will remain the province of Western governments, but history tells us this may change. Rome dominated for centuries thru superior organisations and discipline. These were eventually emulated by enough enemies to topple her – combined, of course, with the decay which is almost always an inevitable result of being the dominant power.

Can the West survive its’ superiority? There is clearly widespread resentment at the accelerating cultural disintegration being experienced in the “non-Western” world. This is one of the roots of the Wahabi movement, of course, (and there are many other causes, including some fairly severe individual personality disorders), and we in the West should be thinking very carefully about a lot more than crushing “them” by military might with neat new weapon systems – although there is a time for force to be threatened or used, and punishment serves its purpose, particularly in Old Testament countries.

Careful thought and wise action is needed now more than at any time since the major threats of World War II, Korea and the Cold War faced the West.

Professionals in uniform and in the beauracracy need to think carefully and act wisely, but so does the wider population and our Parliaments. If things get worse, it will be difficult to resist panic and over-reaction, and tempting to over-simplify, but I think Australians are probably better than that as a people.

The Australian Defence Force is well-equipped ethically; our recent ethical performance has been extremely good. I suspect the prominent place women now take throughout the ranks is a big factor in this.

It would be quite hard to get Australian professional troops to act unethically to any organised degree – they would be highly offended. This characteristic is a tremendous protection for us all, and must be preserved – it takes effort to select and train a force like this.

In a wider citizenship sense, a lot hangs on our response to the attacks on us. We should choose wisely, but not shrink from the hard tasks which might be necessary.
Who should attend?

This is a course designed to be user friendly and practical in its content. The Diploma in Business Principles is suitable for new starters to the world of business, recent graduates (particularly but not exclusively) from non-business disciplines such as law, engineering, the arts or the health sciences, and small to medium business operators.

What is the Program?

The Program has been carefully structured to address the most common area of activity in business where, irrespective of the level at which an employee is working, there is every likelihood that person will need to understand what constitutes sound business practice. The list of topics covered is comprehensive and it is difficult to dismiss any one of them as not basic to business activity.

The subjects covered include:

- **Financial Management** – this module introduces participants to the principles and practice of basic accounting and finance. The emphasis is on accrual accounting and the transactions most likely to be encountered by the participants.

- **People Management** – participants are introduced to the systems for people management in organisations, including recruitment, training, and performance management including coaching.

- **Working in Teams** – participants will understand the importance of effective teams in the business environment of today and are introduced to team dynamics and preferences within teams.

- **Leadership** – this module provides participants with an understanding of the similarities and differences between management and leadership; the need for leaders to be able to vary their style; and the challenges facing leaders in the business world.

- **Financial Institutions and Markets** – an overview of Australian financial institutions and markets is provided, including the banking system, stock market and associated financial markets. Included in this module is a session on superannuation.

- **Contract Administration** – this module is aimed at providing participants with a basic knowledge of contract law and the processes associated with the efficient administration of contracts.

- **Sales and Marketing** – Participants will understand the difference between sales and marketing and the development of marketing, from strategy to earning customer loyalty.

- **Corporate Ethics and Values** – issues of corporate ethics are considered, together with the importance of clearly defined values in creating successful corporate cultures.

- **From Data to Knowledge** – participants will understand the importance of knowledge management as a key competitive edge in today’s business world and the relationships between data, information and knowledge. The role of IT as a business enabler is also dealt with.

- **Communication** – participants are introduced to the practice of effective business communication, including presentation skills and managing meetings.

- **Corporate Law** – Participants are given an overview of the principles of corporate law, legal structures, and the roles and responsibilities of Board of Directors.

- **Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship** – this module deals with the mindsets and skills associated with creativity and innovation as well as the qualities and practices associated with successful entrepreneurship. Participants consider how to apply these mindsets and skills in their organisation/business.

- **Practical Taxation** – participants develop a basic understanding of the Australian taxation system, including company tax, PAYG and GST. The role of the Australian Taxation Office is considered, including its regulatory and audit functions.

- **Personal Effectiveness** – participants are introduced to techniques such as time management, project planning and career planning to enable them to maximise their personal effectiveness in the workplace. Their role in the delegation process is also considered, and participants are encouraged to set personal and professional goals.

- **Workplace Health and Safety** – this module deals with a range of issues which participants need to be aware of in fulfilling their responsibilities, including OH&S legislation, Equal Opportunities, stress management and maintaining a balance between work and social life. Participants consider practical issues within their own workplaces.
What is the Need?

A number of research studies have been conducted in recent years relating to the attributes and quality of graduates/new starters entering the workforce. A consistent theme that emerges in each study is the lack of practical business skills and the surprising lack of understanding of day-to-day business practices.

The purpose of the DIPLOMA in BUSINESS PRINCIPLES is to provide to new graduates, particularly (but not exclusively) from non-business disciplines, others entering business for the first time, and small to medium business operators with a basic introduction to practical business. New graduates and new starters enter the workforce often with little or no understanding of the day-to-day operation of business and face the daunting task of learning on the job, often with embarrassing or even serious consequences. Small to medium business operators face a similar task of ‘learning on the go’ often diverting them from more immediate matters.

The need for this sort of program has been identified on a number of occasions, but little action has been taken to address the need.

B-HERT sees this as an important educational and training initiative in enhancing, in a very practical and user friendly way, the knowledge and skills of graduates, business operators and others entering the workforce for the first time.

What are the Benefits of the Program?

To the participant

To most people entering the workforce for the first time there are numerous aspects of business and the workplace which are completely foreign or unknown. Their productivity is obviously adversely affected by this, as is their personal sense of well-being and job satisfaction. In many instances it may take years before an employee comes across some of the aspects covered in these topics.

The aim of the program overall, is to provide graduates, new starters and business operators with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for them to be effective in the professional world of today. In a program of this nature, it is not possible to deal with topics in depth. Where participants wish to pursue topics in greater depth, we shall provide them with links to business schools and other providers as well as reference material.

The benefits to participants include:

- Access to highly qualified and experienced consultants with whom they can discuss their real life issues as they make the transition from study to the world of professional work;
- Access to leaders from their own organisation to whom they may look for advice on an on-going basis;
- Access to advice and material which supports their on-going learning, including contacts with business schools and other providers of management education and development.

To the employer/business owner

This program fast-tracks the employee to a level of understanding of the way business operates which would otherwise take months or even years. Many large organisations conduct similar induction programs for their own employees, which are usually spread over a period of months or in some cases a couple of years. For those employers who do not have the resources or the inclination to do the training themselves this program provides the ideal solution at a reasonable cost. As the program is conducted out of hours the employer does not lose out on employee productivity.

Given the importance of service delivery it is now employee skills that can provide the differentiating value between businesses. Such a program also complements the change in organisational structures and flexible work patterns that have developed over the last decade. THE DIPLOMA in BUSINESS PRINCIPLES is a cost effective and practical way of endorsing and supporting employee empowerment.

Course Schedule

Melbourne (commences 12 August 2003)
Brisbane (date tba)
Sydney (date tba)
Adelaide (date tba)
Other centers (dates tba)

Course Enrolment Form

Contact B-HERT Secretariat at bhert@bhert.com or ph: 61 3 9419 8068
or download from website: www.bhert.com
The purpose of the Business/Higher Education Round Table (B-HERT) is to pursue initiatives that will advance the goals and improve the performance of both business and higher education for the benefit of Australian society.

It is a forum where leaders of Australia’s business, research, professional and academic communities can address important issues of common interest, to improve the interaction between Australian business and higher education institutions, and to guide the future directions of higher education.

In pursuing this mission BHERT aims to influence public opinion and both government and non-government policy on selected issues of importance.

B-HERT believes that a prerequisite for a more prosperous and equitable society in Australia is a more highly-educated community. In material terms it fosters economic growth and improved living standards - through improved productivity and competitiveness with other countries. In terms of equity, individual Australians should have the opportunity to realise their full social, cultural, political and economic potential.

The membership of B-HERT comprises, by invitation, the chief executives of leading Australian corporations, professional firms, research organisations, the Australian National Training Authority, and the vice-chancellors of Australian universities.

B-HERT pursues a number of activities through its Working Groups and active alliances with relevant organisations both domestically and internationally. It publishes a regular newsletter (B-HERT NEWS), reporting on its activities and current issues of concern relevant to its Mission.