



Hon Gary Gray AO MP

Federal Member for Brand

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia

Secretariat
Review of Australian Higher Education
Location 023
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601
Or emailed to: HEReview@deewr.gov.au

Review of Australian Higher Education

SUBMISSION

Murdoch University's Rockingham Regional Campus was established in 1997 to cater for a growing population in an area that traditionally has not embraced tertiary education.

In the 10 years since its establishment the campus has seen steady growth with a number of degrees available until 2005/6. These included Engineering, Tourism, Business, General Arts, and Primary Education. Since then the only wholly available degree offered, has been Primary Teaching.

Funding has been a continual problem for courses to maintain a profile on the Rockingham Campus. It is more expensive for courses to be offered at regional campuses and in times where the economic imperative is crucial many of the divisions can not sustain offering their degrees at Rockingham with small numbers.

A different funding model for regional campuses requires investigation. A more sustainable funding option might be to treat regional campuses as common user facilities available to all universities. For example the Rockingham Regional Campus may provide facilities for Curtin University, University of Western Australia, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University.

Local access to university education is critical and a wider choice of pathways needs to be available. This funding needs to be attractive so that there is an incentive to offer more courses.

There may also be an opportunity to strengthen vocational education pathways in the local area through a collaborative approach between Rockingham Regional Campus, Challenger TAFE and local schools particularly in light of the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program.

The demographic of the Rockingham area has changed in the last 10 years and more and more students are choosing tertiary education. The Rockingham campus is impacted not by a lack of local interest but by the lack of choice at the campus.

Year	Rockingham Campus Enrolments
2003	948
2004	925
2005	901
2006	856
2007	726
2008	564

Between 2003 and 2007 the population of Rockingham has increased from 77,772 to 91,702 an increase of 18%. The university needs to be innovative to improve their positioning in the local market. There needs to be greater connections with the local TAFE and the opportunity to encourage local youth to participate in tertiary education.

There is also the opportunity to offer niche courses. These should be designed around national and state needs as well as local interests. With the current push to overcome obesity in children, the campus could offer Primary Physical Education as a new specialist course, which would interest local school leavers and students from the greater Perth area. The university could also investigate additional study levels to courses already offered locally. These include areas of study such as Maritime Studies and Specialist Sports Programs offered at local high schools.

The campus lends itself to offering short intensive courses that could add an economic benefit to the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. I look forward to reviewing the final report.

Yours sincerely



HON GARY GRAY AO MP

Federal Member for Brand

30 July 2008

Ref: 20080087