



**Australia & New Zealand
Student Services Association
(ANZSSA)**

Submission to

**Review of Australian Higher Education
Discussion Paper**

Introduction

The Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) is a professional association for providers of support services to students in post secondary education in Australia and New Zealand.

Student support services such as careers advising, counselling and learning support first emerged in higher education in the post-World War II era to assist returning soldiers to upgrade their skills and education for participation in the post-war economy. The current and future challenges noted in the discussion paper which confront higher education and the workforce mean that student services will continue to play an important role in the future in assisting students to expand their intellectual, interpersonal and personal skills and maintain their physical and mental health as they move between the higher education sector and the workforce.

The aims of ANZSSA are: to foster and promote support amongst students and staff; to facilitate the general well-being of the institutional community in universities and other post-secondary institutions; to sponsor regular conferences, exchanges and professional development; to facilitate liaison and contact between its members; to promote research; to support and promote the interests of all those engaged in these activities.

In making this submission ANZSSA thus represents approximately 300 professional staff working in student support services across all tertiary education in Australia. Its members include staff in both the VET and the Higher Education sectors, which makes ANZSSA well placed to comment on this discussion paper. ANZSSA includes individuals who are counsellors, student advisers, welfare officers, health practitioners, financial advisers, equity officers, career development staff, as well as individuals who are heads of services. The membership thus reflects the view of ANZSSA that post-secondary education students share many common needs and problems regardless of the type of institution at which they are studying or their differing circumstances.

ANZSSA is an inclusive and collaborative organization which serves as an umbrella organisation for all staff in the various student services working to support students to achieve their goals, to promote students' academic and personal development and to enhance their experience during the course of their tertiary education. It has also forged formal links with other professional associations within the higher education sector in Australia (such as NACGAS for Careers Advisers and ISANA for International students) as well as a number of similar bodies representing student services professionals internationally such as APSSA in Asia, AMOSSHE in the UK, CSSI in Ireland, Fedora in Europe, and NASPA in the USA, with whom we have had a very successful exchange program for more than 10 years.

ANZSSA has a student centred, and developmental rather than remedial or deficit based approach to student success. ANZSSA members are directly involved in the capacity building aspects of their respective universities as they focus on assisting students to develop not only their academic skills but also their skills for life and work. The work of ANZSSA members contributes to the value-adding efforts of institutions towards enhancing the student experience, and to enabling successful completion of academic goals by building resilience, personal management skills and

generally contributes to assisting students stay on track and achieving academic and work goals.

The work of ANZSSA members in student development/support/wellbeing services is often hidden, is sometimes confidential in nature, and generally takes place behind the scenes. While the contribution such support professionals make to student success and academic outcomes can sometimes be difficult to demonstrate in terms of causal links, most ANZSSA members are involved in evidence based approaches within their respective universities and TAFE colleges and undertake client satisfaction surveys, pre and post questionnaires, and program or workshop evaluations which go some way to providing evidence regarding the contribution of Student Services professionals. Student support services in a number of institutions routinely track the academic progress of the students utilising their services by including survey questions such as: “Has contact with this student service assisted you in achieving your academic goals?; “Were you thinking of dropping out?; “Did this service help in your decision to stay enrolled or to explore more appropriate career options?”

ANZSSA members are also often in the privileged position of hearing firsthand from students how they are making life decision and what factors are impacting on them. They often have direct input from students about how they see their lives in a broader context and are often in a unique position to note emerging issues and trends, and to understand the issues confronted by students. The increase in presentations of students with complex mental health problems with associated Duty of Care issues has been documented internationally and has impacted on most student services. With depression and other mental illness predicted to be a major burden on health budgets in the future, universities will need to provide strong support for student well-being in order to produce resilient and flexible graduates who are able to cope with the pressures and demands of the labour market

This submission includes responses to the questions in the discussion paper that are most relevant to the mission and goals of ANZSSA. We have not attempted to provide a comprehensive answer to all questions but rather have focused on those questions where we feel are best qualified to comment.

Responses to the questions reflect the diversity of our organisation and include specific contributions from a range of our members working in the various sectors, including metropolitan universities, regional universities, and TAFE Institutes across several states. Contributions have come from members at various levels, from heads of services to staff involved in direct service delivery.

Questions for Discussion

Chapter 1 Higher education in modern Australia

1. How adequate is the statement of functions and characteristics of higher education in modern Australia?

ANZSSA supports the spirit of the statement of functions and characteristics as adequate but would add a third point under “Developing high level knowledge and skills”, namely – *to engender responsibility and leadership capability as part of this education.*

We note further that the social capital aspects of the statement of functions and characteristics do not appear strongly in the remainder of the document. In particular, the tertiary sector needs to develop a model for service provision to meet the goal of 'self-fulfilment, personal development, [and] pursuit of knowledge'. The stated focus reflects a view of Higher Education that directly links skills training and work-readiness to standardized qualifications. The capacity of Universities to service students who want to study, and will pay to study, in fields that are not directly related to qualifications needs to be acknowledged as a legitimate component of the Higher Education sector.

Section 3.1 Meeting labour market and industry needs

2. Are there impediments to the higher education sector being able to innovate in the development of courses and programs? What are these impediments and how could they be removed?

The most significant impediment is cultural. The tertiary sector needs to adjust its expectations and change focus from understanding Higher Education as something that is available to a restricted ('elite') demographic to something that is conceived of as broad-based and having open access, in which students other than the top academic achievers can/will participate. The idea of someone's capacity to undertake tertiary study, rather than their track record at high school or pre- tertiary study, should be a measure of accessibility to Higher Education.

3. What are the appropriate mechanisms at the national and local level for ensuring higher education meets national and local needs for high level skills? What is the role of state and territory governments in this area?

If staff competency (teaching ability/innovation/networking capacity) is one of the most significant (if not the most significant) predictor of outcomes for the university system in Australia – in terms of student outcomes, research, and benefits to communities and employers - and staff are the biggest investment in this system – then an important mechanism is that staff should be remunerated competitively, compared to industry.

The state government may be the appropriate entity for providing the forum for industry and education to come together and hear each other. However, it is too narrow simply to look at higher education as a provider for a specific limited vocational skill – higher education is largely about teaching students to think. While some occupations require a specific body of knowledge, most do not. By their very nature, graduate attributes should reflect a level of complexity that is perhaps higher than the employability skills often espoused by local and state entities.

4. How adequate are the mechanisms for aligning supply and demand of graduates? How do pricing and labour market signals impact on student choices?

There is a mismatch between supply and demand of specific graduate skills. It is not clear what impact the 'pricing' signals have on student choices but labour

market signals (and popular media coverage) certainly influence student choice. The danger is looking at the problem too simplistically. All the recent career development research (especially Savickas, Watts, Bright, Pryor, McMahan etc) indicates that 'career maturity' is about 'adaptability' – we want to educate people so that they have an appropriate set of skills, but are also able to adapt and adjust to meet changing circumstances. This is what employers say they want. If a government department mandates a very particular skill set we risk training people too precisely for a need that has disappeared or changed before the graduates launch into the job market.

5. Are there particular examples of good practice where you can demonstrate either rapid response to skill shortages or successful initiatives to improve generic skills?

No comment.

6. How effectively are Australian higher education institutions responding to demographic change, especially in providing lifelong learning to meet the challenge of the ageing population and the need for upgrading of skills and re-training?

The inference in the paper that the university sector provides very little by way of impartial careers advisory services for non-school leavers and those currently in the work force who may aspire to up-skill or change career to meet emerging industry needs, except for private fee for service consultants is noted. ANZSSA is aware that the university sector may vary in its ability to provide free careers advisory services to non-school leaver prospective students, depending on institution size and resourcing levels. ANZSSA notes that TAFE colleges have traditionally provided services for a much wider range of prospective students including free individual careers counselling. This could be something funded at federal level (consistency, resource efficiency) but enacted locally (i.e. more than a website).

Although research suggests that costs are not a factor in access and choice of course for school leavers, for those retraining/re-entering the higher education sector (and forfeiting existing wages, and with existing financial commitments) costs will likely be a significant factor, even with scholarships.

Government and industry need to recognize how education prepares students to enter careers and occupations without insisting on simplistic equations between course of study and job title. The meeting of local and national skill needs is a point in time response. Higher Education providers can contribute to the capacity building of students by providing opportunities to develop and enhance graduate attributes that are transferable across a number of domains.

Most Universities and TAFE colleges run programs which contribute to enhanced generic skills. Work in learning initiatives, joint industry and higher education initiatives, such as the 'Lucy' mentoring program run in several universities, demonstrate the relevance of extracurricular activities in linking learnt experience with lived experience.

The success of the suggestions in the Review document that Universities need to attract more non-school leaver students must be predicated on the level of specific

support available to these students through their universities. The work of ANZSSA members is very much aligned to supporting the needs of these students. Higher Education providers need to appropriately resource the delivery of support services. The needs of mature-aged workers, for example, are significantly different to those of school-aged entrants. Flexible delivery and tailor-made courses will need to be underpinned by responsive support services which are relevant to the specific needs of this cohort. Enabling courses to establish eligibility for non-school leavers and first time students will need to be adequately funded to open access to the broadest range of applicants. There is a need for more comprehensive enabling programs to provide alternative access for non-school leaver students. Students who are first in family to attend university require specific and targeted support to ensure successful transitions.

There is a need for more programs to be targeted towards encouraging mature age students into university degree programs, both undergraduate and post graduate. Enabling programs for undergraduate enrolment, such as those currently on offer through most universities, (eg UoN Open Foundation Program, UNE Pathways enabling program, UNSW UPP Program) are needed more widely in order to encourage older learners, particularly those from low SES backgrounds, into higher education. This would lead to a better qualified population across the generations and greater and more productive workforce participation amongst the 35+ generation. This is particularly true for women who are attracted to enabling programs more than men (around two-thirds are women) as they have more often not had access to prior opportunities to gain qualifications.

There is considerable evidence that higher education results in higher labour force participation, higher wages and lower unemployment rates. Research with older learners shows that women who undertake formal study are more likely to enter the work force and to have access to more rewarding, higher paid employment (Karmel & Woods, 2006). This results in remediation of difficult life circumstances and reduced dependence on others, including government welfare.

We also know that people from the low SES group (approx 25% of the population) are significantly underrepresented in higher education and that the proportion from this group entering higher education has remained virtually unchanged at around 15% despite 15 years of equity measures (Centre for Study of Higher Education, 2008). There is evidence that higher education in one generation leads to higher education in the next generation. Children of university-educated parents are more likely to undertake university qualifications than those of non university-educated parents; hence a continuing cycle of education can begin through encouraging mature-age students into university through more access measures such as enabling programs that have open entry and no fees or scholarship options.

The 2008 CSHE report also demonstrates that, once enrolled, low SES students do as well as medium and high SES students, so it is access that is the key. This has been demonstrated by other more specific research (Cantwell, Archer, & Bourke, 2001). Specifically targeting mature age students is an effective way of reaching out to the low SES group and helping to bring about a generational change in attitudes towards higher education. One of the recommendations of the 2008 CSHE report is to provide more mature-age pathways in order to improve access by the low SES group.

It is interesting to note that over the last decade British universities have been paying increasing attention to the recruitment and retention of mature students (Blaxter, Dodd, & Tight, 1996), as a way of increasing overall levels of participation in higher education. This is in line with the general trend in other industrialized countries, including Australia. Overwhelmingly in the UK it is the “new” universities which have shown themselves to be most responsive to the recruitment and needs of mature age students. In Australia, some universities are better at this than others, and the University of Newcastle is a particularly good example of a university that provides a targeted access program for mature students through the Open Foundation program. However, future funding for this remains uncertain, and programs such as this need to receive priority in terms of attracting and engaging mature age students and making it possible for those mature students, particularly from the low SES group, to succeed in higher education, for all the reasons discussed above.

7. What is the relevance and applicability of the findings and approaches proposed in the United Kingdom paper, Higher Education at Work, for increasing skills levels in the workforce to Australia?

There was some support for this direction. Major employers could also play a greater role in equity outreach programs offered in partnership with higher education providers. Ways to enable lifelong learning partnerships for employees at both undergraduate, and postgraduate coursework and research degree levels are worth serious exploration.

Comments in the answer to the above question in relation to mature age students are relevant here also. In addition, there is a need for more interaction with higher education providers, employers, business and industry.

One way to facilitate this process more effectively than currently would be to provide specific government funding to increase the capacity of University Careers Services to be at the forefront of universities’ engagement with the business and employment sector. In the UK and the US, Careers Services within universities are much more extensively resourced, with the brief that they will engage in more depth and detail with the employment sector, creating a solid and functional bridge between universities and business. In comparison, most Australian university careers services are quite minimally resourced, which severely limits their capacity to engage with the employment sector. The National Association for Graduate Careers Services (NAGCAS) needs to be consulted over ways in which university careers services could play a more prominent role in assisting higher education providers to work more closely with business needs.

There is opportunity to promote the UK type principles by providing specific government funding to increase the capacity of University Careers Services to be at the forefront of universities’ engagement with the business and employment sector.

NAGCAS, AAGE and GCA are instrumental in bringing students into contact with employers and vice versa.

Section 3.2 Opportunities to participate in higher education

8. *Should there be a national approach to improving Indigenous and low SES participation and success in higher education?*

There should be a national, non-competitive approach, based on evidence of capacity to deliver real outcomes, but with local expression/implementation to meet diversity of regional needs.

Given that there has been no overall improvement in higher education participation rates amongst low SES students and that the slight increase that occurred for Indigenous students appears to have stalled or even be dropping, it seems clear that a national approach is required.

Access to tertiary institutions, for Indigenous and low SES populations, does not necessarily equate with successful completion. Most Universities in Australia provide access programs for these students, but once on campus expect them to be able to participate on the same basis as everyone else. In order to retain and successfully graduate these students, a University needs to provide fully supported pastoral and academic skills programs, at least for the first year of study. In some cases, this will mean that University officers get involved in aspects of student's life at University that historically have been regarded as extra-curricular. For example, tracking student progress closely, intervening (actively) when problems arise, having staff available/dedicated to supporting these students, understanding the cultural gap being bridged by these students and actively supporting them to bridge it. In some cases, it would mean forming and maintaining direct relationships between the University and the community, particularly indigenous communities, so that teaching and learning blended seamlessly with the student cultural background. Secondly, Universities would need to make some cultural adjustments internally so as to accommodate, or at least be sensitive too, Indigenous cultural protocols and cultural responsibilities. It is impossible to overemphasize the need for tertiary institutions to have the capacity to fully support these students in their first year of study, and perhaps beyond that. These initiatives will be costly but essential if success is to be achieved.

9. *If you support a national approach to improving Indigenous and low SES participation and success how do you see it being structured, resourced, monitored and evaluated?*

A more equitable definition and measurement of "success" is needed. A significant step to improve the success of A&TSI people is to change the definition of "success". Currently only completions in degree programs are regarded as successes. Stepwise exit points (and re-entry points) in degrees such as diplomas and associate degrees, need to be formally recognized as success at university. Students also enroll in diplomas and certificates rather than degrees and their completions should be counted as successes. Measuring success should include quantitative information; allowing universities to report successful outcomes as reported by the students would give valuable insights into the needs of students and the value they see in university experiences. A student who withdraws earlier than expected but exits with a diploma or certificate should be counted as a success. Examples of definitions of "success" might include a subject completed, or an increase in WAM or GPA from one semester to the next. TAFE Counselling & Careers staff often recommend the

step wise approach to obtaining a degree by starting at Certificate level or diploma level and build on successes, but this option does not exist in higher education.

A consistent national approach to the provision of student access to their institution of choice is also needed to address movement of A&TSI Students across the country. For example, the TEP program at Central Queensland University (CQU) is a national program with compulsory residential components, but students outside Queensland cannot travel to Rockhampton with Centrelink support. Block release programs as well as 'Testing and Assessment' seem to be differently treated. For example the CQU student profile is such that the vast majority of students are mature aged and community based. Programs are being offered in flexible mode by distance and residential are an important part of the learning journey. Regional universities are at a disadvantage and a national approach is needed to enable equitable service provision for students who are nationally positioned and studying outside the region or State in which they are enrolled.

National funding of a community focused education initiative could target A&TSI people to access and participate in the local university for non-award short courses. Short courses involve learning focused on community interest utilizing the expertise of the university and community members to enrich the learning experiences of the participants in topics that are community based. A course could be anything from half a day to a week in length. While a significant national and state emphasis is on high school students more could be done to engage all members of the A&TSI communities around each local university campus with the core business of universities; namely learning, teaching and research. If the younger A&TSI people who are pre and post secondary see their parents, uncles and aunts involved in short courses at university they will more likely be inspired to be involved themselves in university study. The approach is to inspire high school students to university study through their parents and other adult family members being engaged in university short courses not the other way around. To ensure focused engagement these short courses would be organized through the university A&TSI Centre targeting the A&TSI communities. AS part of a national initiative, to do this effectively as an integral recruitment and community engagement activity of the Centre, discrete funding over and above the ISF funds will be required.

National support for diversity and for inclusive curricula would assist the equity agenda as well as the student experience for those from culturally or educationally underrepresented groups (Indigenous Australian students, students from low SES backgrounds, international students). There may be a role of the new National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education in this.

Government funding at a Federal level needs to be allocated to improving access and participation amongst both groups. It needs to be a requirement that all universities offer access measures such as enabling programs, with open entry and no fees, for members of these groups.

Combined scholarships/admissions processes being implemented at state (and ultimately national) level should also assist this.

As discussed above, targeting mature age students in both groups can be a more effective way of reaching out to these groups and bringing about attitude change towards the idea of university education, rather than just targeting the school leaver population.

The current postcode measure for low SES students needs urgent review, as there is evidence that this does not provide an accurate picture and that there may in fact be a larger group of low SES than this measure indicates. The 2008 CSHE report indicates that parental education level would be a more accurate measure.

10. What institutional initiatives have proved successful in increasing low SES or Indigenous participation and success? (Please provide information about outcomes as well as activities.)

Correctional Centres as 'Educational Centres' for A&TSI inmates: Programs such as the national award winning Tertiary Entry Program at CQU and the TRACKS program at UNE provide inmates with opportunities to participate and succeed in higher education. Students are enrolled from three states and expanding. A national approach from the Federal Government would enable States to adequately resource Correctional Centres to have as a priority the education of A&TSI inmates in low to high security areas by accessing proven university initiatives such as CQU's TEP program which is flexible and designed to meet the particular contexts of students incarcerated throughout Australia.

The University of Newcastle (UoN) Open Foundation program has proved successful in increasing participation amongst low SES mature age students, as evidenced by several studies (Bourke, Cantwell, & Archer, 1998; Cantwell et al., 2001; Cantwell & Mulhearn, 1997; Cullity, 2006). As discussed above, such programs contribute to generational change in attitudes towards higher education amongst low SES groups.

Peer mentoring program such as UNSW's Peer Mentoring Programs for various groups including Rural and Regional students and for University Preparation Program and UoN's SOS (Supporting Other Students) assist low SES students to feel less alienated and more engaged with the university environment, hence helping to retain such students who might otherwise leave (Hanley & Treston, 1998; McGivney, 1999; Stone, 2000).

11. What evidence is available from institutions about the impact on individuals or groups of either failure to gain income support or the inadequacy of income support?

Relevant recent research includes:

- *National Student Finances Survey* (2006) found that financial pressures were very real for >50% of respondents - and were compounded for equity groups/Indigenous students. We also know financial pressure can lead to excessive time in paid work which may not lead to attrition but to negative impact on achievement.

- *Paying their Way Survey* (reported in 2001)
- *Griffith Discontinuance Study* done in 2004 - we know that financial burden was a factor for some respondents in influencing their decision to leave university.
- ACER 2005 *Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth - Report 39 - Course Change and Attrition from HE* - financial pressures were a reason for course change or discontinuance
- The Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee - *Student Income Support Report* (June 2005) found student pressures finances relevant to negative impacts on student HE study
- The Senate Report *A Hand Up not a Hand Out* (March 2004) - which looked at poverty more generally in Australia made some recommendations regarding improving financial support for students in HE study
- McInnis, C., & Hartley, R. (2002). *Managing study and work: the impact of full-time study and paid work on the undergraduate experience in Australian universities*. Canberra: DEST
- Report from US showing financial pressures do link with attrition:
- www.studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/assess_presentation_ACPA_NASPA_07_Section3.pdf

Anecdotal feedback from students suggests that income support is a more immediate concern than issues related to HECS. The immediate costs of living are a critical factor for many students and the 25+ year old age limit to achieve independent status is a disincentive for many younger students to commence higher education. The low SES, rural/remote and indigenous students are especially affected. Almost all students who choose to study at regional universities need to relocate. Regional labour markets do not have the diversity of casual and part-time employment that these students seek and so financial hardship becomes a real element in their tertiary studies.

We also know that increasing work integrated learning in the curriculum, whilst bringing benefits in terms of work readiness, can impact disproportionately on students who: need paid work hours for financial subsistence; have medical/other reasons why participation in WIL activities are more costly than for other students; are undertaking courses with high contact time; are located in rural and regional centres where access to WIL opportunities are limited..

Many universities offer student loans to students in financial difficulty and requiring financial assistance for essential study-related purposes. This approach could be further supported by an increase in equity scholarships and/or other financial assistance. For example, UoN, which offers interest free student loans, reports that each year, its service experiences very high demand from students who are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Between January and June 2008, almost \$140,000 had been lent to students. Most loans are in the vicinity of \$500 to \$1000, giving an indication of the number of students experiencing significant financial hardship and requiring loans. In addition, each year another \$90,000 is expended on hardship grants of around the same amounts. There are quite stringent conditions for these loans and grants, with students needing to demonstrate evidence of low income and other financial hardship, yet demand for such financial assistance exceeds

supply. There is some evidence of students not being able to access student loans if they are in first year or not making adequate academic progress.

Section 3.3 The student experience of higher education

12. How can the quality of the student experience within Australia's higher education institutions be monitored nationally? Is there evidence that declining student: staff ratios have impacted on the quality of the student experience?

VSU has impacted on access to, and diminished the quality of, the student experience for on-campus students – e.g. loss of social activities, sporting/cultural associations, and student voice.

Students maintain social networks through new technologies with friends outside of their institution, and many/most have paid employment off campus, so engagement on campus may be best achieved through study related activities and paid employment on campus.

Increasing casualisation of the teaching workforce in universities impacts on the student experience so measures are need to ensure strong training and support for tutors and sessional academic staff, provision in workload payment arrangements for availability for student consultation and for effective assessment practices.

A national survey of student engagement, such as the one recently published by ACER (Coates, 2008) would be an effective way of monitoring the quality of the student experience and assessing which factors impact most on the student experience.

The Coates Report is an opportunity to obtain standardized sector wide data on the elements of attraction, engagement and retention of students in higher education.

The student experience is being impacted by institutions choosing e-learning platforms. The move to e-learning does not equate to flexible learning for students from rural and remote locations or low SES backgrounds.

Most universities also conduct satisfaction surveys that could provide some measures within institutions, for example of variations over time, or response to specific initiatives. Evidence of promoting healthy lifestyle could be another possible measure (e.g. CQU state funded program) as could provision of English language support for both local LOTE students as well as international students and programs to support active integration of international and local students.

13. How can the quality of learning outcomes in Australian higher education be measured more effectively?

No comment.

14. How do institutions measure the quality of their learning outcomes and how do they know they are nationally and internationally competitive?

No comment

Section 3.4 Connecting with other education and training sectors

15. To what extent should vocational education and training and higher education continue to have distinctive missions and how should these missions be defined?

It is important for vocational education and Higher Education to maintain their distinctive roles. Each sector has a role to play in creating a vibrant economy with appropriately trained people. One sector is not more valuable than the other. No society can survive on Arts graduates alone nor can it be truly great without well educated abstract thinkers. For too long education has been regarded as a linear process when in fact it is more of a circular process with each sector meeting learner needs at various career stages. Anecdotally, ANZSSA members report a two-way bridge between the WET and higher Ed sectors, with TAFE students entering university and university graduates seeking out specific work based skills at TAFE. TAFE Colleges would have more data on this.

16. Does the movement between the sectors of students with credit need to be improved? If so, in what ways?

Competition between providers requires a stronger QA framework to ensure that all providers are delivering appropriate standards of education and that pathways for students are collectively acknowledged.

The current practice of many institution to institution private agreements is cumbersome and some form of highly thought out national process would assist movement between sectors. This would need to have a high bar of Q&A control so that a cert4 from one provider is REALLY of the same quality as from another collectively acknowledged.

Improved recognition of prior learning is important, in particular timely advice to assist students in making appropriate and timely decisions.

However, even more important is the need for greater support in recognising the transition needs of students entering the second year of higher education on the basis of academic credit for completed TAFE qualifications. Being granted academic credit or RPL without the benefit of appropriate orientation and transition programs can put such students at a disadvantage. While they may be capable academically, there are many adjustments to be made in terms of learning environments and learning style. Programs such as the targeted “Transition from TAFE to Uni” which previously ran at UWS are a means of facilitating this adjustment.

17. To what extent should relative provision between the sectors be planned or demand driven. What are the effects of current differences on funding, governance and regulation in limiting planning or influencing choice between the sectors?

No Comment

18. Can institutions provide examples of good practices which have led to movement between the sectors with high levels of credit and good learning outcomes?

The ACT has a good track record here. Possibly the multitude of pathways between CIT and the University of Canberra would make a good case study.

Section 3.5 Higher education's role in the national innovation system

19. By what mechanisms should research activities in Australian universities be supported?

No comment.

20. On what principles and for what purposes should research activity be concentrated in particular universities or types of universities?

No comment.

21. Do you believe there is a place in Australia's higher education system for universities that are predominantly 'teaching only' universities? If so, why?

No comment.

Section 3.6 Australia's higher education sector in the international arena

22. Are there any unintended consequences of the current approach to internationalisation of higher education in Australia?

Universities need to develop cross-cultural competency in students and staff to ensure domestic students gain benefits from working with international students and international students are genuinely included in the curriculum, social and campus activities. Greater emphasis on language studies at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels would contribute to a more globally literate society.

23. What is an appropriate role for government in assisting the Australian higher education system to internationalise? On what principles should this role rest and what purposes should it serve?

Supporting international exchanges for academic and professional staff and for students.

24. Can you provide any examples of good practice in encouraging local students to undertake study in other countries?

No comment.

Section 3.7 Higher education's contribution to Australia's economic, social and cultural capital

25. How would you define knowledge transfer and community engagement in an Australian context?

No comment.

26. Do you believe that knowledge transfer and community engagement are legitimate and appropriate roles for contemporary higher education institutions? If so, how do you see this additional role for the higher education sector blending with its traditional roles and are there limits to these additional roles?

No comment.

27. If you think that knowledge transfer and community engagement are appropriate roles for higher education institutions, how do you believe these functions should be funded?

No comment.

Section 3.8 Resourcing the system

28. What incentives or unintended consequences are there in the current arrangements for higher education funding?

No comment.

29. To what extent are the current funding models adequate to secure the future of Australia's higher education sector? If there are better models, what are they?

No comment.

30. Are the current institutional arrangements for determining relative funding between higher education institutions appropriate? If not, what changes should be considered?

No comment.

Section 3.9 Governance and regulation

31. Is it time to reshape tertiary education in Australia and streamline financing and regulatory arrangements? If so, what structural changes would you make and why?

No comment.

32. Is the level of regulation in the sector appropriate? If not, why not, and what should be done to reduce the level of regulation?

No comment.

33. Does Australia's Quality Assurance Framework need revision? If so, why? What changes would you make?

No comment.

34. Are changes required to the Australian Qualifications Framework?

No comment.

35. Is there more that could be done to improve university governance? How should this be done?

There is no specific reference to university "leadership" (senior management, Faculty/Research Centre/Professional Unit) – as opposed to governance - or to leadership development in this Discussion Paper.

Conclusion:

The aim of ANZSSA is to foster supportive learning environments and enhance the well being of students through an enriching educational experience. Admission to higher education is not the only hurdle for students. Most drop-out from study is not due to lack of ability but due to a range of life circumstances, including mental and physical health problems, and financial obstacles. ANZSSA therefore welcomes the themes reflected in the discussion paper of social inclusion and building social capital, participation and access and work integrated learning. Effective and well resourced student support services are integral to enhancing the engagement of students in lifelong learning.

References

- Blaxter, L., Dodd, K., & Tight, M. (1996). Mature student markets: An institutional case study. *Higher Education*, 31(2), 187-203.
- Bourke, S., Cantwell, R., & Archer, J. (1998). Evaluation of an Equity Program for University Entrance, *HERDSA Annual Conference*. Auckland.
- Cantwell, R., Archer, J., & Bourke, S. (2001). A Comparison of the Academic Experiences and Achievement of University Students Entering by Traditional and Non-Traditional Means. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 26(3), 221-234.
- Cantwell, R., & Mulhearn, W. (1997). The Adjustment Behaviours of Mature-Aged Women Returning to Formal Study, *AARE Conference*. Brisbane.
- Centre for Study of Higher Education. (2008). *Participation and Equity*: University of Melbourne.
- Coates, H. (2008). *Attracting, Engaging and Retaining: New Conversations about Learning*. Melbourne: ACER.
- Cullity, M. (2006). Challenges in understanding and assisting mature-age students who participate in alternative entry programs. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 46(2), 175-201.
- Hanley, P., & Treston, H. (1998). Mentor Involvement in the First Year of University, *Third Pacific Rim Conference*. Auckland, New Zealand.
- Karmel, T., & Woods, D. (2006). Older Learners and Engagement with the Labour Market. In J. Chapman, P. Cartwright & J. E. McGilp (Eds.), *Lifelong Learning for All: The Challenge to Adults and Communities*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- McGivney, V. (1999). *Informal Learning in the Community*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Stone, C. (2000). The SOS Program (Students for Other Students): A Student Mentor Program. *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association*, No.16 (October), 55-74.

For further information about ANZSSA please refer to our website:

<http://www.adcet.edu.au/anzssa/>