

Questions on Notice – In response to questions during evidence given by the Regional Universities Network on 4 September 2017 to the House of Representatives Standing Committee Inquiry into the School to Work Transition

Q Is there a snapshot of what they (students) are doing before and after visiting (a) university?

Some examples of the impact of outreach programs conducted by some of the universities in the Regional Universities Network (RUN) on lifting student aspirations for further study are as follows:

- In 2016 Southern Cross University's (SCU's) Equity and Diversity Office Outreach Programs continued to work with students from partner primary and high schools to provide experiences that are educational, exciting and increase understanding and motivation towards higher education. The *Stellar and UNI-BOUND* Programs worked with 7,009 students from 27 primary schools, 3 central schools and 21 high schools in the Gold Coast/Tweed Region, Northern Rivers, Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour Regions. In 2016, students participated in 97 events which included a combination of on-campus events and in-school workshops. In 2016, 105 students commenced *Head-Start*, 87 successfully completed the course (83%). Of the 2016 Year 12 students and 2015 Year 11 students who successfully completed the program, 62 students were made an offer to study at SCU in 2017.
- *ACCESS4U* Year 11-12 (SCU). Forty-one students participated in 2015, and 60 per cent successfully completed the program with 19 post-access offers made (SCU).
- *Access and Pathways Strategy (University of the Sunshine Coast -USC)*. A whole of university strategic approach focused on the pre-enrolment period for undergraduate students including widening participation, and other various pathways to admission. Key to the strategy is systematic management of current entry points through which students might enter higher education. A number of these access points are linked to pathways programs, such as Headstart. This pathway program enables Year 11 and 12 students to study up to two first year undergraduate courses at USC whilst completing high school. Student Experience feedback indicates that the program helps demystify university and increase awareness of career pathways. On average, there is a 42% conversion rate of these students into undergraduate programs at USC and overall 60% of students responded at the end of semester they intend to go onto higher education.

- The *Growing Regional and Agricultural Students in Science* (GRASS) program (University of New England - UNE) engages teachers and students in target schools from rural, remote and low socioeconomic regions, engendering strong links and widespread participation in the educational access activities. The UNE GRASS program inspires students towards careers in science, and helps develop a greater understanding of the science-based careers supporting agriculture that are available via a tertiary pathway. Analysis has been completed to confirm the students who have completed this UNE GRASS IPS and who then decide to continue studies at UNE are performing at a higher grade point average (GPA) and are making faster progress to completion of their degrees when compared with their peers at the university.

Q. Are international student numbers higher in urban universities than they are in your network? What is the difference? Can you tell us more about international student proportions? Obviously many of your network members have moved into urban areas. I wonder if that is part of the reason for the international student numbers. Also, why is it hard to get international students to your regional universities and are there perceptual issues about potential for employment or just a fear of being outside of a large city? What are the steps in getting more international students to your universities?

RUN universities have, in general, relatively smaller numbers and proportions of international students than metropolitan universities. Table 1 below shows enrolment by citizenship by university in 2015, and, Table 2, enrolments by citizenship, institution and campus, 2015, for RUN universities. Excluding overseas campuses, the highest numbers and proportions of international students at RUN universities are at capital city campuses. The proportion of international students at RUN universities' regional campuses ranges from 19.8 per cent to less than 1 per cent.

While international students who attend university at regional campuses are, in general, as satisfied with their experience as those who attend metropolitan campuses of RUN and other universities, studying in larger cities provides a more familiar experience for many international students, and many prefer to do this.

However, there are real benefits for international students studying at smaller, regional campuses. These include a more personalised learning experience, better integration with domestic students, and, in general, a lower cost of living. Better marketing of the positive features of studying at regional campuses could assist in lifting international student numbers in these locations.

Table 1 Enrolments by citizenship by institution, 2015

		Enrolment Count			% domestic	% international
		Domestic	Overseas	Total		
RUN	Southern Cross University	12,438	2,180	14,618	85.1%	14.9%
	The University of New England	20,998	994	21,992	95.5%	4.5%
	Federation University Australia	7,938	7,171	15,109	52.5%	47.5%
	CQUniversity	15,527	4,754	20,281	76.6%	23.4%
	University of Southern Queensland	23,341	4,423	27,764	84.1%	15.9%
	University of the Sunshine Coast	10,971	1,549	12,520	87.6%	12.4%
	RUN Total	91,213	21,071	112,284	81.2%	18.8%
New South Wales	Charles Sturt University	32,466	7,627	40,093	81.0%	19.0%
	Macquarie University	31,556	8,617	40,173	78.6%	21.4%
	Southern Cross University	12,438	2,180	14,618	85.1%	14.9%
	The University of New England	20,998	994	21,992	95.5%	4.5%
	The University of Newcastle	30,146	5,283	35,429	85.1%	14.9%
	The University of Sydney	42,621	15,958	58,579	72.8%	27.2%
	University of New South Wales	39,616	14,379	53,995	73.4%	26.6%
	University of Technology, Sydney	29,208	11,519	40,727	71.7%	28.3%
	University of Wollongong	18,564	13,088	31,652	58.7%	41.3%
	Western Sydney University	40,223	4,608	44,831	89.7%	10.3%
	Total	297,836	84,253	382,089	77.9%	22.1%
Victoria	Deakin University	43,232	8,567	51,799	83.5%	16.5%
	Federation University Australia	7,938	7,171	15,109	52.5%	47.5%
	La Trobe University	27,763	7,955	35,718	77.7%	22.3%

	Monash University	43,888	26,216	70,104	62.6%	37.4%
	RMIT University	33,144	26,911	60,055	55.2%	44.8%
	Swinburne University of Technology	28,412	8,750	37,162	76.5%	23.5%
	The University of Melbourne	40,464	18,375	58,839	68.8%	31.2%
	Victoria University	17,513	9,629	27,142	64.5%	35.5%
	Total	242,354	113,574	355,928	68.1%	31.9%
Queensland	Bond University	3,309	2,697	6,006	55.1%	44.9%
	CQUniversity	15,527	4,754	20,281	76.6%	23.4%
	Griffith University	37,209	8,810	46,019	80.9%	19.1%
	James Cook University	15,193	6,463	21,656	70.2%	29.8%
	Queensland University of Technology	40,243	8,226	48,469	83.0%	17.0%
	The University of Queensland	38,163	12,672	50,835	75.1%	24.9%
	University of Southern Queensland	23,341	4,423	27,764	84.1%	15.9%
	University of the Sunshine Coast	10,971	1,549	12,520	87.6%	12.4%
	Total	183,956	49,594	233,550	78.8%	21.2%
Western Australia	Curtin University of Technology	35,136	15,489	50,625	69.4%	30.6%
	Edith Cowan University	22,647	4,293	26,940	84.1%	15.9%
	Murdoch University	13,439	9,849	23,288	57.7%	42.3%
	The University of Notre Dame Australia	11,513	245	11,758	97.9%	2.1%
	The University of Western Australia	20,396	4,756	25,152	81.1%	18.9%
	Total	103,131	34,632	137,763	74.9%	25.1%
South Australia	Flinders University	19,875	4,460	24,335	81.7%	18.3%
	The University of Adelaide	19,812	7,057	26,869	73.7%	26.3%
	University of South Australia	25,757	5,743	31,500	81.8%	18.2%
	Total	65,444	17,260	82,704	79.1%	20.9%
Tasmania	University of Tasmania	26,798	5,395	32,193	83.2%	16.8%
	Total	26,798	5,395	32,193	83.2%	16.8%
Northern Territory	Charles Darwin University	9,477	2,447	11,924	79.5%	20.5%

	Total	9,477	2,447	11,924	79.5%	20.5%
Australian Capital Territory	The Australian National University	16,168	6,292	22,460	72.0%	28.0%
	University of Canberra	12,991	4,119	17,110	75.9%	24.1%
	Total	29,159	10,411	39,570	73.7%	26.3%
Multi-State	Australian Catholic University	28,393	3,322	31,715	89.5%	10.5%
	Total	28,393	3,322	31,715	89.5%	10.5%
Total		986,548	320,888	1,307,436	75.5%	24.5%

1. Source: Department of Education and Training - Higher Education Statistics Data Cube (uCube) which is based on the student and staff data collections.

2. The data cube does allow customised tables to be produced with cells containing very small counts. To avoid any risk of disseminating identifiable data, a disclosure control technique called input perturbation has been applied to the data, with the exception of grand totals, whereby small random adjustments are made to cell counts. These adjustments (otherwise known as noise) allow for a greater amount of detailed data to be released and, as such, do not significantly impair the utility of the tabular data for use in broad level analysis. However, the relative impact of perturbation is larger for small cell counts, which therefore should be used with caution. Where unperturbed figures are required, users should consult the Higher Education Statistics published on the department's website.

3. For Field of Education: The data takes into account the coding of Combined Courses to two fields of education. As a consequence, counting both fields of education for Combined Courses means that the totals may be less than the sum of all broad fields of education.

Table 2 Enrolments by citizenship, institution and campus, 2015

(Sorted by state, institution and campus based on the number of domestic enrolments)

University	Campus (incl Campus code)	Domestic Students	Overseas Students	Total enrolments	Overseas Students as Share of Total
Southern Cross University	Ucube total	12,438	2,180	14,618	14.9%
	2480 Lismore	8,075	222	8,297	2.7%
	4225 Coolangatta	2,650	656	3,306	19.8%
	2450 Coffs Harbour	1,335	39	1,374	2.8%
	2000 Sydney City	230	491	721	68.1%
	3000 Melbourne	<5	113		
	1302 Overseas Campus	0	174	174	100.0%
	5205 Overseas Campus	0	208	208	100.0%
	6101 Overseas Campus	0	183	183	100.0%
	6 Overseas and 2 Domestic Campuses with fewer than 100 students each				
The University of New England	Ucube total	20,998	994	21,992	4.5%
	2351 Armidale	21,010	998	22,008	4.5%
Federation University Australia	Ucube total	7,938	7,171	15,109	47.5%
	3350 Mt Helen	5,911	583	6,494	9.0%
	3842 Churchill	1,038	34	1,072	3.2%
	2747 Werrington	186	0	186	0.0%
	3000 Melbourne	138	2,694	2,832	95.1%
	2000 Sydney City	24	2,026	2,050	98.8%
	3844 No information	58	0	58	0.0%
	3220 Geelong South	0	155	155	100.0%
	5000 Adelaide	0	382	382	100.0%

	5203 Overseas Campus	0	469	469	100.0%
	5205 Overseas Campus	0	182	182	100.0%
	6101 Overseas Campus	0	355	355	100.0%
	6102 Overseas Campus	0	262	262	100.0%
	13 Domestic Campuses and 1 Overseas Campus with fewer than 100 students each				

CQUniversity	Ucube total	15,527	4,754	20,281	23.4%
	4702 Rockhampton	13,250	185	13,435	1.4%
	4670 Bundaberg	634	10	644	1.6%
	4741 Mackay	550	5	555	0.9%
	4000 Brisbane	490	835	1,325	63.0%
	2000 Sydney City	203	1,972	2,175	90.7%
	4566 Noosaville	203	<5		
	4680 Gladstone	109	6	115	5.2%
	3000 Melbourne	94	1,742	1,836	94.9%

University of Southern Queensland	Ucube total	23,341	4,423	27,764	15.9%
	4350 Toowoomba	20,793	4,282	25,075	17.1%
	4300 Springfield	1,842	115	1,957	5.9%
	4655 Wide Bay	695	8	703	1.1%

University of the Sunshine Coast	Ucube total	10,971	1,549	12,520	12.4%
	4556 Sippy Downs	10,701	1,407	12,108	11.6%
	4570 Amamoor	201	0	201	0.0%
	4101 South Bank	50	166	216	76.9%

Q. We are aware that over the last five years there has been a 15 per cent increase in revenue adjusted for CPI compared to an 8.9 per cent increase in costs, so the argument that has been advanced is increased potential profitability (due to the demand driven student system). Is that not the case for your network and would you be able to provide us with some figures that might show that those operating in the regions are not experiencing the same profitability, possibly due to the proportion of international students?

Are you able to provide some data to us around whether your picture is slightly different to the overall university sector? The Deloitte report from 2010 shows university costs have increased 9.5 per cent and that the calculated revenue per student increased 15 per cent in that time.

Revenue for RUN universities in 2015 totalled \$1.7bn or 6% of the sector-wide total. RUN universities account for 7% of total equivalent full-time students or 9% of total enrolments.

RUN universities are more reliant on Commonwealth funding than the higher education sector more broadly. 63.3% of their revenue is sourced from the Commonwealth compared with 57.3% on a sector-wide basis.

Regional universities are also more reliant on government funding for their teaching and learning activities (around 40 per cent for RUN members), than older, metropolitan universities (e.g. less than 20 per cent for the Group of Eight).

The impact of the proposed Commonwealth Grants Scheme efficiency dividend and the introduction of performance funding will therefore have a greater, proportional impact on regional universities than larger metropolitan institutions.

Managing the finances of RUN universities presents a challenge given the less diverse range of funding sources available to our institutions and the expectations of our communities to deliver high quality education, research and innovation and to contribute to broader regional development and economic outcomes.

While several of our universities attract significant revenue from international students, on average RUN universities do not attract as many international students or as much international fee income as their metropolitan counterparts.

In 2015, with one exception, the net operating results (revenue less expenses) for RUN universities were positive. One university achieved a positive net operating result of almost \$82m, but this outcome was skewed by the inclusion of a substantial one off contribution associated with the transfer of a campus.