



Sectoral Issues

Presentation to the Australian
Deans of Information and
Communications Technology

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UA needs to set the agenda, not just react to it



We need to do this now, and into the future:

- Now... because 2012-13 is an important year for policy positioning in the context of:
 - a Federal election
 - a tight fiscal environment
 - the introduction of demand driven funding and TEQSA
 - the prospect of a response to the Base Funding Review
- In the future... because higher education is increasingly important to Australia's future at home and abroad.

So, UA has agreed on a new Strategy that involves ...



1. Better understanding how we and the work we do are perceived by ordinary Australians as well as key decision makers (Public Perceptions Project);
2. Better engaging with the Australian community about issues that matter (CommUNITY Forums) ;
3. Clearly articulating a vision for the place and role of universities in Australia's future as well as a policy platform to get us there (Policy Statement).

We will bring all this together in the advocacy work of a highly effective peak body that partners with government and stakeholders.

I. Understanding how we are perceived...



UA has commissioned a major study into public perceptions of Australian universities,

- The purpose is to provide UA with reliable and objective information about sector visibility and value, improving advocacy effectiveness and guiding policy development.
- Conducted by a partnership between the Wallis Consulting Group and the Allen Consulting Group.
 - Data collection work is now finalised.
 - Analysis underway
 - Completion by June 2012.

Understanding how we are perceived (cont...)



Two main parts:

- *Exploring the views of the 'general public':*

Market research (qualitative and quantitative) of public attitudes, knowledge and sources of opinion-formation. Also includes a survey of business.

- *Exploring the views of key stakeholders and influencers:*

In-depth interviews with key decision-makers and influencers (politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, other advocacy bodies, unions, think tanks and commentators)

2. Engaging with the Australian community



- UA is organising a pilot series of ‘CommUNITY Forums’
 - To improve engagement and understanding among the community and establish greater sectoral support
 - Four events: ANU (Tues 5 June); Deakin University, Geelong Campus (Wed 13 June); CQUni (Thurs 5 July); and Curtin University (Tues 10 July).
 - The forums will discuss issues relating to the role of the university sector in economic, social and cultural development
 - Facilitated by Emma Alberici (*Lateline; 7.30 Report*) the forums will be supported with non-exclusive editorial support from media partner News Ltd

3. Policy Statement – the centrepiece

Purpose: signal to the wider community and ourselves what we stand for:

- articulate our vision for Australian universities and their role in Australia's future;
- identify key levers for achieving the vision – going beyond motherhood statements to meaningful, substantive positions and proposals;
- provide a strategic framework for our advocacy and speak with a single voice on key policy issues.

Policy Statement outline - work in progress



Opening section's key message: "The sector has come together and united behind a bold and visionary policy agenda that can yield major national dividends"

It will outline a Vision that sets out:

- ❖ A statement on the place of Universities in Australian life at 2020
- ❖ The transformative power of higher education for individuals and nation
- ❖ Outwardly focused: a vision for higher education is a vision for Australia
- ❖ What are we aspiring to deliver to Australia?
- ❖ How will universities contribute to Australia's global engagement?

Current policy challenges: Why further reform is needed

KEY MESSAGE: Reforms from successive governments have improved the policy framework. However, further challenges remain that need to be addressed for the sector to deliver its vision:

- Uniform funding delivers uniform education offering across Australia
 - Per student public funding is below the OECD average
 - More needed to better meet the indirect costs of research funded by competitive grants
 - Tight caps on total (government and student) resourcing prevents delivery of world-class offerings
- /cont ...

Current policy challenges: Why further reform is needed



KEY MESSAGE: Reforms from successive governments have improved the policy framework. However, further challenges remain that need to be addressed for the sector to deliver its vision:

- Too dependent on subsidies from international unreliable student revenue
- With resourcing essentially fixed/static, universities are unable to respond readily to external shocks. Limits spending per student – amounts to lower quality. Untenable when the system is expanding and including students with more need for academic preparation.

MAJOR GAINS 2007-11

POLICY SPECIFICS:

- Bradley Review establishment and report
- **Proper Indexation** and better Indirect Cost Funding (SRE)
- Infrastructure funding: HEEF/EIF, BURF, TLCF, regional EIF
- Removal of enrolment caps: demand-driven system
- Youth Allowance reform package
- TEQSA and AQFC and ERA rebalancing
- Regional loading
- NHMRC held and ARC increased

A CUP HALF EMPTY: NEGATIVES?



POLICY SPECIFICS

- International crisis losses BUT Baird, COAG, Points and Knight bode well for universities
- CRN ended BUT RIBG, RTS, JRE commitments maintained
- NCRIS not funded for 2012/13
- No new general EIF rounds scheduled
- Per student funding has not been increased

POLICY GENERICS

- Inter-sectoral suspicion

Resourcing and Investment

- Need data for better performance measurement
- Without addressing costs how can we get a better funding deal
- Infrastructure is no longer able to sustain cross subsidisation of other operations.
- Base Funding the key to sustainable future.
- Per student amount needs revision.

Demand Driven System

- As we increase the offer rate the ATAR cut-off will have to decrease.
- Will the mix of students change?
- Will the course mix change?
- Will there be closures/mergers of universities?
- Will graduates match labour market needs?
- Capacity constraints/admission procedures
- Curriculum Issues
- Support Issues

IT Decline in Commencing Students



UNIVERSITIES
AUSTRALIA

	Domestic Commencements	% of Total
2003	13553	5.2%
2004	11122	4.4%
2005	9277	3.5%
2006	8198	3.0%
2007	7839	2.8%
2008	7470	2.6%
2009	8328	2.6%
2010	8704	2.6%

Opportunities for ICT



- Chief Scientist Report
 - Need to engage interest in STEM subjects through practical teaching and application
- NBN
 - Opportunities for IT R&D to maximise potential
 - Course delivery options (not just IT, but medicine and other high cost areas)



Questions