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## Academic Board

### Report of the Vice-Chancellor

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#### 1. Australian Qualifications Framework

The new Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was launched on 23 June 2011 following passage of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Bill 2011 the previous day.

The new Agency will be responsible for carrying out regulatory functions including registration and re-registration, accreditation and re-accreditation and conducting compliance and quality assessments.

TEQSA began operating in a quality assurance capacity on 30 July 2011 and will assume its regulatory functions on 30 January 2012.

The Agency now has its own dedicated website: [www.teqsa.gov.au](http://www.teqsa.gov.au).

#### 2. Major Projects and Infrastructure

##### 2.1 Education Investment Fund (EIF) Regional Priorities Round

On 13 July 2011, the Federal Government released draft Guidelines for the Education Investment Fund (EIF) Regional Priorities Round, the purpose of which is:

- to improve tertiary education participation and attainment;
- to improve access to world class tertiary education infrastructure;
- to contribute to regional economic growth and development;
- to build sustainable regional institutions and communities;
- to support regional skills needs;
- to support research that is integrated with regional teaching and learning or VET needs;
- to develop linkages within regions and connect regions nationally and globally.

Infrastructure funded through the round is to support students located in regional, rural or remote areas of Australia, and regional cities.

\$480m is available for competitive funding from Universities and TAFEs.

La Trobe University is exploring a number of options, all of which would result in further development of the Bendigo Campus.

The project submitted for consideration by the Fund will increase higher education participation and attainment rates and increase access to world class higher education infrastructure in regional areas. It will need support from local and regional bodies such as Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees and Local Government and align with the priorities or goals of the RDA regional plan.

## 2.2 Shepparton Campus Building

The University's new campus building at Shepparton has won the regional prize in the Victorian Architecture Awards, announced on 24 June 2011.

Judges from the Australian Institute of Architects described the \$10 million building as a 'powerful contribution to the town's civic realm'.

The University shared the award with the Rebuilding Advisory Centre in bushfire-torn Marysville and a community aged citizens' centre in Traralgon.

## 3. Regional Partnerships Facilitation Fund

On 21 July 2011, the Victorian Minister for Higher Education, the Hon Peter Hall MLC, visited the Bendigo Campus of La Trobe University to launch formally the Regional Partnerships Facilitation (RPF) Fund, a competitive fund designed to facilitate partnerships between TAFE and higher education institutions.

The \$20 million Fund is part of the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund which has been committed by the Victorian State Government over the next 8 years.

Through the RPF Fund the Government will support the delivery of projects which contribute to increasing the rate of higher education participation and attainment in regional Victoria, thereby helping to bridge the current gap with participation and attainment rates in metropolitan Melbourne.

The establishment of this Fund was a key recommendation of the Expert Panel, chaired by Professor Kwong Lee Dow, which was established by the previous State Government to advise on the development of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan. The report of the Expert Panel noted that:

- 11 per cent of regional Victorians between 15 to 54 years of age have attained a higher education qualification. In Melbourne, the rate for this cohort is 20 per cent.
- 30.5 per cent of regional students completing year 12 enrol in university the following year. The rate for metropolitan students is 50.7 per cent.
- In metropolitan Melbourne between 7 to 9 per cent of students receiving a university offer defer that place annually.
- In regional Victoria, this rate rose from 9.9 per cent in 2004 to 15.2 per cent in 2010. The rate reached 21.6 per cent in 2009, reflecting the high relocation costs regional students face as well as uncertainty over the Commonwealth's changes to Youth Allowance.

The acceptance of this recommendation by the Coalition State Government is a very welcome testimony to its commitment to rural and regional Victorians.

#### 4. Community Engagement

##### 4.1 Fairley Lecture

Together with the Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation, La Trobe University hosted the Fairley Lecture in Shepparton on Tuesday, 19 July 2011 which was presented by the ABC's Managing Director, Mr Mark Scott AO.

Last year, the Fairley Foundation initiated the Fairley Lecture to demonstrate cultural leadership in the community through a partnership between the Fairley Foundation and La Trobe University.

Mr Scott's highly appropriate topic was *Beyond the digital divide: ABC in regional Australia* in which he emphasized the importance of those in regional areas being provided with the same level of technology and coverage as in major cities.

##### 4.2 Bendigo Business Council

On Thursday, 21 July 2011, I led a presentation to members of the Bendigo community at a breakfast briefing organized in conjunction with the Bendigo Business Council. Some one hundred people attended this event at which I was joined by Professor John Rosenberg (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Leigh Drake (Executive Dean, Faculty of Law and Management) and Professor Brian McGaw (Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering) in a discussion of the needs of business and bridging the connection with the University.

My presentation focused on how La Trobe University is preparing for the changes that will affect higher education delivery in Australia in coming years. I also discussed the growing middle class demographic in Asia, specifically China and India, where there is rapidly expanding industrial development. I highlighted the need for universities and business to work with those countries to develop educational programs which produce graduates for their markets.

Professor Drake spoke about a number of developments in the Faculty of Law and Management, while Professor McGaw outlined some of the successful partnerships between the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering and business including IT cadetships and a new mechanical engineering course to be launched in the near future. These courses blend on-the-job training with traditional education courses and are being developed with Bendigo businesses.

##### 4.3 Melbourne's North

La Trobe University's Melbourne Campus is centrally located in a northern Melbourne community of approximately one million people living in seven local government areas: Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Moreland City Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, the City of Whittlesea and Yarra City Council. Projected growth in this region over the next 15 years is estimated to exceed 300,000 people.

La Trobe University is a key corporate stakeholder and has a leadership responsibility to contributing to the development of an integrated regional vision for the north. I have initiated the development, in the first instance, of a northern Melbourne Mayors and CEO

Forum to lead this initiative. It is likely to include CEOs of larger employers and key organisations.

Following earlier meetings between local governments and the University, I presented formally a proposal to the Mayors and Chief Executive Officers on 28 July 2011 to establish an independent partnership with a number of key objectives, including:

- identify, create and partner with existing delivery organisations (not reinvent the wheel);
- lead strategy development across sectors and the region on behalf of stakeholders;
- create a regional voice, and connection with, a ‘futures-based’ vision for the region;
- connect the region to the world.

A summit is planned for next year to advance further this important initiative.

## 5. Accolades

### 5.1 Queen’s Birthday Honours

I am pleased to report formally that awards in the Order of Australia in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List were made to a number of alumni, staff and close connections of the University, including:

- Emeritus Professor John McKenzie AM (Deputy Chancellor and La Trobe University *alumnus*) his service to higher education and to the community.
- Associate Professor Trevor Budge AM (Department of Planning and Development) for his services to town planning and to education.
- Mr Ross Lake OAM (Chair, La Trobe University Mildura Foundation) for his services to arts administration, social welfare and the community.

### 5.2 Florence Nightingale Medal: Mr Andrew Cameron

La Trobe University *alumnus* and Red Cross aid worker, Andrew Cameron, will receive one of the world’s highest nursing honours, the Florence Nightingale Medal, later this year.

After completing a Bachelor of Nursing from La Trobe in 1991, Andrew became involved with the New Zealand Red Cross in 1996 and has worked extensively in demanding surroundings.

Awarded by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) the Florence Nightingale Medal is the highest international distinction within the nursing profession. It is awarded to people who distinguish themselves in times of peace or war by showing exceptional courage and devotion to the wounded, sick or disabled or to civilian victims of conflict or disaster.

Andrew was also honoured as the Australian Nurse of the Year in 2004, which recognised the exceptional contributions he made to improving care and outcomes for patients and his work above and beyond the normal role as a nurse anywhere in Australia.

### 5.3 Southern University Games

For the second successive year, La Trobe University was the overall winner in the recent Southern University Games, an annual sporting event encompassing universities in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

A team of 250 students from the Melbourne, Bendigo and Shepparton campuses competed in ten sports.

La Trobe won four gold medals - in cross country running, men's tennis, mixed netball and women's netball - six silver, and five bronze medals. La Trobe's strongest wins were in the highly competitive sport of netball.

Congratulations to all involved.

**Professor Paul Johnson**  
Vice-Chancellor

29 July 2011