
Academic Board

Report of the Vice-Chancellor

1. National Press Club Address by Federal Minister for Education

I am attaching for the information of members extracts pertaining to higher education from an Address to the National Press Club delivered on 26 May 2010 by the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – *Attachment A*.

2. 2010-11 Higher Education Budget Analysis

The 2010-11 Federal Budget did not introduce any significant new initiatives in higher education or research. The outcomes of the Education Investment Fund (EIF) round three have been further delayed until a date to be announced and there were no announcements of future allocations from the EIF.

Strong university enrolments have meant a faster than anticipated growth in the Commonwealth Grants Scheme, which is now budgeted to be \$5.03 billion in 2010-11 as opposed to last year's forward estimate of \$4.69 billion. Another positive development is that approximately \$50 million in structural adjustment funding has been brought forward to 2010-11.

The following table summarises higher education funding allocations for 2010-11.

Table 1: University Funding Summary Table (excluding EIF)

	2009-10 (\$000)	2010-11 (\$000)
Commonwealth Grant Scheme	4,563,826	5,092,042
Research Infrastructure Block Grant	214,582	218,546
Sustainable Research Excellence	30,000	120,960
Institutional Grants Scheme/JRE	317,847	323,719
Research Training Scheme	603,943	615,100
Australian Research Council	664,200	717,200
NHMRC (@ 70%)	616,350	747,110
Equity funding	40,215	90,986
Indigenous Support Program	35,141	35,789
Structural Adjustment Funding	49,006	140,685
Quality	30,773	29,493
National Institutes	178,079	181,370
Capital Development Pool	68,208	78,280
Core funding to universities	7,412,170	8,328,280

3. Victorian Tertiary Education Plan

As the university in Victoria with the largest number of regional campuses and regional student enrolments, and in view of our publicly stated commitment to increasing higher education access to local students, La Trobe University has a keen interest in the development of the Victorian Tertiary Education Plan given that it addresses issues associated with increased participation by currently under-represented cohorts.

I have thus joined a sub-committee of Victorian Vice-Chancellors which has been established by the Hon Bronwyn Pike MP, Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation, to test ideas as part of the process of developing the Tertiary Education Plan over the coming months.

4. Strategic Objectives: Meetings with Members of Parliament

I am meeting with State and Federal Members of Parliament to lobby actively La Trobe University's strategic objectives and the need for these to be supported.

Members of Parliament are being asked to understand that this is a unique moment in La Trobe's history. There is very strong alignment between Federal and State Government policy, University commitment to increase low SES participation, University curriculum reform, regional campus investments and growth, and, increasing the relevance of research to community sustainable growth.

I am highlighting the following key strategies and messages flowing from the University's strategic direction:

- **Increased access & retention:**
 - *Undergraduate domestic enrolments up by 30 percent between 2009 and 2015.* This will focus on increased low SES participation.
 - *Taught postgraduate enrolments up by 50 percent.* This will focus on building the advanced skills needed by the Victorian and National economy.
 - *Curriculum Bridges and Schools Partnerships* ensuring that that school study is supported and linked to the La Trobe curriculum and that aspiration for higher education is increased.
 - *Regional access:* Develop a Bendigo Campus that offers contemporary teaching and learning facilities and enables substantial growth in the student population.

- **Relevant research to build local communities:**
 - *Australian Policy and Knowledge Exchange* as a basis to inform Australia's engagement with cross disciplinary research problems and to rigorously reflect on and propose evidence-based policy options and debate.
 - *The Northern Metropolitan Melbourne Strategy* to support sustainable growth of Melbourne's northern metropolitan region and make the University relevant to this growth.
 - *Elite Sports Initiative* to develop a Victorian hub for the development of elite team sports.

The University has achieved significant outcomes through support of Federal and State Governments, including:

- \$230 million AgriBio Centre (La Trobe and Department of Primary Industries);
- \$30 million Cooperative Research Centre for Biomarker Translation;
- \$72.4 million La Trobe Rural Health School in Bendigo (EIF);
- \$94.9 million La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science (EIF);
- \$14.3 million Better University Renewal Funding (BURF) projects include Major Renovations to the Borchardt Library and redevelopment of the student services hub at the Melbourne campus;
- \$9 million development of the Shepparton Campus which is due to be opened in October 2010.

La Trobe University is a multi-campus university committed to growth on all campuses. The major source of student expansion will be households in outer-metropolitan and regional locations. These are currently areas of below average university participation and areas of high population growth. The northern suburbs of Melbourne are projected to grow by up to 50% over the next 15 years, and Bendigo is the fastest growing regional centre in Victoria. Our two largest campuses are ideally positioned to service increased demand arising from population growth.

Much of the projected expansion in student numbers will come from cohorts that are under represented in higher education. These students will require different forms of support if they are to succeed in higher education. Higher education participation rates are low in areas served by our campuses. DEEWR 2008 statistics show that:

- 17.4% of all domestic students at La Trobe are from low SES areas compared to the Victorian state average of low SES students attending university of 12.4%;
- 33% of La Trobe's domestic students are from rural or remote areas whilst the Victorian university average is 17.6%;
- 5% of La Trobe students are living with a disability: the Victorian university average is 3.6%.

The commitment to growth needs to be supported by effective infrastructure management and planning. La Trobe University infrastructure is a key enabling factor in the quest to provide access to all the transformative power of education. It is also the key to continued growth in the regional campuses.

5. National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

The University has submitted an application for NRAS funding for student residential accommodation for 1,000 dwellings to address current and future unmet demand for student accommodation from domestic and international students with dwellings constructed on the Melbourne, Bendigo and Wodonga campuses, areas with low vacancy rates and high demand for low-cost rental accommodation.

The NRAS offers an excellent opportunity for the University to provide affordable accommodation and thus to increase opportunities for higher education access by low SES students, particularly in regional and rural Victoria.

6. Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning 2010

The winners of the 2010 La Trobe University Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning have recently been announced, as follows:

- Professor Richard Broome, School of Historical and European Studies: *For an understanding and sustained contribution to developing students' capacities for critical inquiry, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability through the research and teaching nexus;*
- Associate Professor Ishaq Bhatti, School of Economics and Finance: *For the development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field of Islamic Banking and Finance and Business Statistics and Quantitative Methods Subjects;*
- First Year Biology Learning and Teaching Group (Group Leader: Ms Tania Blanksby) School of Molecular Sciences: *For leadership of curriculum reform in biology through a broad-base, grass roots community of practice.*
- Chemistry Cornerstone Team (Team Leader: Dr David Wilson) School of Molecular Sciences: *For sustained commitment to student learning through teaching excellence and development of learning resources for Chemistry.*

These citations recognise outstanding contributions to student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period. I am sure that members of Academic Board would wish to join me in congratulating their colleagues on their achievements.

7. La Trobe University Excellence in Research Awards

Applications are now open for the 2010 La Trobe University Excellence in Research Awards (LTUERA) which provide high quality Early to Mid-Career Researchers with recognition for their achievement and with support to enhance their further career development. I would encourage potential applicants to review the criteria and other information, including the application process, on the Research Services website (<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/research-services/>).

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise formally the recipients of the inaugural LTUERA awards for 2009:

- *DVC (R)/VC Excellence in Research Awards for Mid Career Researchers:*
 - Dr Susan Lawrence (Archaeology, Studies of the Past);
 - Dr Hylton Menz (Musculoskeletal Research, Health and Society);
 - Professor Tim Minchin (History, Studies of the Past);
 - Dr Andrew Peele (Physics, Molecular Science);
 - Dr John Silke (Apoptosis and Cancer, Molecular Science).
- *Dean's Excellence in Research Awards for Early Career Researchers:*
 - Dr Jack Reynolds (FHUSS: Human Behaviour and Thought);
 - Dr Russell Hoye (FLM: Human Society and Organisation);
 - Dr Fiona Fiddler (FSTE: Human Behaviour and Thought);
 - Dr Nora Shields (FHS: Health and Society).

- *Commendations for Mid-Career Researchers:*
 - Dr Rajiv Khosla (Emotionally Intelligent Systems, Human Behaviour and Thought);
 - Dr Alexander Maier (Malaria, Molecular Science);
 - Dr Tony Paolini (Neuropsychology, Human Behaviour and Thought);
 - Dr Jacinta Douglas (Communication Disorders, Health and Society).

8. Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Update

The University is on track to make its submission on the required date of 16 June 2010. Many thanks to all staff for their patience, tolerance and hard work in this time-consuming, critical process for the University. The ARC is not expected to release results until at least the end of this year. In the meantime, there will be extensive refinement of our research strengths, with the ARC results hopefully in line with our expectations.

9. Henry Tax Review: Potential Impact on Student Income Support

The Federal Government's future tax plan was released on 2 May 2010 containing 138 recommendations of which five have been adopted by the Government and twenty-nine were rejected. The remaining recommendations have been left for discussion as part of a continued debate over taxation issues in coming years.

The Henry report contains twenty-four recommendations which potentially impact upon higher education, including proposed changes to student income support. These broadly mirror those of the Bradley Review in recommending three categories of income support payments:

- (a) a "pension category" for people who are not expected to support themselves through paid work;
- (b) a "participation category" for people of working age who are expected to support themselves through paid work now or in the near future: unemployed youth aged less than 21 would be paid no more than full-time students to avoid creating incentives to leave full-time study for unemployment;
- (c) a "student assistance category": full-time students aged 21 and above would continue to be paid at a lower rate than the unemployed and at the same rate as younger students. Some would have the capacity to work part-time to supplement their income support while others could be given the ability to borrow against future income to supplement their student assistance.

Whilst this recommendation recognises on the one hand the value of further education for those under 21 by providing parity for unemployed and student benefits, full-time students aged 21 and above would receive less income support than the unemployed. A formal sector-wide response to this recommendation, which is in the "open for discussion" category, is under consideration by Universities Australia.

10. Memoranda of Understanding with Tongji University and Tsinghua University, People's Republic of China

On 20 May 2010, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Tim Brown, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tongji University in Shanghai, witnessed by the State Minister for Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, the Hon Jacinta Allan MP. This agreement with La Trobe University and the Auto CRC relates to a \$2 million program of research in railway crossing safety, led by Professor Jack Singh, Director of the Centre for Technology Infusion. On the following day, he attended the signing of a similar agreement with Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Whilst in Shanghai, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) also represented the University at the opening of Auto Week by the Hon Simon Crean MP, Federal Minister for Trade, at the World Expo.

11. 10th China-Australia Universities Forum

On 31 May 2010, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students), Professor John Rosenberg, and I attended the 10th China-Australia Universities Forum at the Shanghai World Expo along with the Vice-Chancellors of nine other Australian universities.

The objective of the Forum was to promote collaboration and relationships between the higher education systems in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Australia and to highlight the mutual commitment of Australian universities and their higher education partners in the PRC. Themes covered within the Forum included sector reform and quality and assurance, research collaboration and the student experience.

Participation by Australian universities in the World Expo was particularly important in countering recent media coverage in China about student safety issues and the Chinese Government's warning to students about Australian private providers.

Professor Paul Johnson
Vice-Chancellor

through

Professor Tim Brown
Acting Vice-Chancellor

8 June 2010

ATTACHMENT A

Hon Julia Gillard MP
Deputy Prime Minister/Minister for Education
National Press Club Address (extracts)
26 May, 2010

THE VALUE OF REFORM: A STRONGER AND FAIRER AUSTRALIA**National goals**

In the 1980s and 1990s Labor Governments undertook difficult reform to make sure the Australian economy could adapt and prosper in an era of open markets.

Now we are driving a new era of reform to make sure that all Australians can do the same.

84 per cent of people in full-time work in Australia have completed year 11 or 12, while 34 per cent of people who are unemployed or not in the labour force have not completed year 12. Lack of education is hurting the life chances of individuals today.

In the future, lack of skills and qualifications will harm individuals even more with around 60 per cent of new jobs projected to need higher level skills.

Education and skills are pivotal to getting a job, earning more and being more productive.

Each extra year of education increases earnings by around 10 per cent, or by about \$100 per week for full time workers.

And higher skills lead to greater productivity.

So we have defined goals that are about investing in Australians – in their skills, their knowledge and their families – so that they are better able to participate in our community and our economy.

Our reform goals are:

- a national system of paid parental leave
- an increase in the Child Care Rebate to 50 per cent.
- outcomes from early childhood programs equivalent to best practice in other countries
- a Year 12 attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015
- 40 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds with a Bachelor degree or by 2025 and,
- halving the proportion of 20-64 year olds without Certificate III qualifications

These goals are all of a piece.

They are about investing in the capacity of Australians to succeed for themselves.

They are about making investment in human capital a core priority of economic reform, so that we succeed in today's global economy and tomorrow's.

Universities

When schools and early years succeed, so do universities and skilled training.

And we have delivered reform here too, backing the aspiration of Australians for more opportunities and better paid employment.

University-educated workers earn 40 per cent more than those who completed Year 12 and 70 per cent more than those who have not completed. (Access Economics, 2005)

Over a working lifetime, a university graduate can expect an income gain of more than \$1.5 million compared to someone whose highest qualification is Year 12.

That is why we have delivered, in two and half years, transformational reform to Australian higher education.

We are uncapping places so that participation will be driven by demand. As a result of our reforms, this year university enrolments were a massive 9.9 per cent above the expected number of places. That's over 44,000 more places.

We have also brought in a new equity payment to encourage universities to enrol talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Universities have already responded by increasing their effort to bring in more disadvantaged students. This year offers to low SES applicants increased faster (8.8 per cent) than offers to medium SES (7.8 per cent) or high SES (5.8 per cent) applicants.

Our reforms, coupled with reforms to better target student income support to those who need it most, will open up higher education to a new generation of students.

We are also delivering new national regulators for vocational and higher education, to drive high quality across the nation.

Econtech's modelling shows that if we achieve our goal of 40 per cent of our young people gaining a Bachelor's degree or higher by 2025, the annual boost per person would be around \$775 per person on average over the next thirty years. The estimated gain in jobs is up to 75,000 each year, on average, over the same period.

Econtech estimates that reaching the higher education and training targets could generate up to 2.9 per cent more GDP on average to 2040. An additional average annual gain to the economy of around \$50 BILLION, beginning modestly in the earlier years and growing in the later years.