

La Trobe University  
Report against AUQA Affirmations and Recommendations: Revised 10 November 2006

***Affirmations***

Areas where AUQA affirms the need identified by La Trobe University for improvements to its practices are as follows:

Number	Affirmation	Progress as at 1 September 2006	Responsibility
1.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to concentrate on developing an inclusive organisational culture across all its campuses, and especially between the Bundoora and Bendigo campuses, in order to successfully pursue its strategic goals.	Academic Programs have now been aligned across the University's campuses. Nearly all administrative functions have now also been aligned. An inclusive organizational culture has also been facilitated through the extensive participatory consultations across all campuses in the development of the University's new Strategic Plan 2006–2010.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development.</i></b>
2.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's efforts to develop an integrated system of planning and reviews that permeates all significant budget centres of the institution, and to provide improved support for managers with planning responsibilities.	A new Senior Management Group has been established to discuss major policy and planning issues. A Senior Planning Group has been established to oversee the strategic planning framework for the University. This group had oversight of the development of the University's new Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010 and the Operational Plan 2007. Faculty and Campus plans will be developed out of the University Strategic Plan with the process being driven by the Senior Planning Group.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development. Vice-Principal Resources and Administration.</i></b>
3.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to develop a more systematic approach to identifying and assessing strategic and operational risks and incorporating the findings into the planned management of the University.	A Risk Management Unit has been established with the responsibility for implementing an enterprise-wide approach to risk management consistent with the current Australian standard. Commitment to this approach is visible through the activities of an expanded and more active Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, including the membership of the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development. Vice-Principal Resources and Administration.</i></b>

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4.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to improve the management information available to managers at various levels to assist with the execution of their planning, decision-making and performance monitoring responsibilities.	The use of the reporting tool Business Objects allows the Management Information Unit to provide quality, easily accessible information. Resources to support the MIU have been increase and a restructure has ensured an organisational structure focused on responding to institutional information needs.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development. Manager MIU</i></b>
5.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to ensure that uptake of its Graduate Attributes scheme is systematic throughout the University.	Graduate Attributes has been identified as a priority for Learning and Teaching. All Schools are required to report on progress annually.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
6.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to ensure that the Quality Assurance of Subjects system is implemented consistently throughout the University, including for its online and offshore courses.	The QAU instrument has been standardised for use throughout the university and a cycle of administration implemented to ensure all units are evaluation, Faculties must report annually to the Academic Quality Assurance committee.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
7.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to provide systematic support for professional development in learning and teaching for sessional and full-time academic staff.	La Trobe has introduced online resources for Learning and Teaching development to supplement face to face professional development opportunities and provide flexibility. Professional development resources have been developed that address essential needs of sessional academic staff.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>

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8.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's plans to promote greater use of its Student Evaluation of Teaching survey, but particularly so that more staff will seek and act upon student feedback on their teaching through a system that may provide for benchmarking and professional support.	Promotions and PEDS policies and practices encourage the regular use of SETS. The University is implementing an online survey system to provide enhanced flexibility and increased access. On-going training and advice is available to staff. Current review of promotions and PEDS will require the submission of SETS scores which will require all staff to evaluate their teaching. There has already been a steady increase in the use of SETS from 360 in 2004 to over 500 in 2006.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
9.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to develop a clear position on what it means to be a regional university and incorporate this position into its strategic and operational planning processes.	La Trobe is not a regional university – it is a university with a significant regional presence. The University's new Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010 places its regional mission in the context of its broader vision to advance communities. The University has established a Regional Managers Group as a senior advisory group on regional policy and planning matters. To further clarify the University's regional role, the University Council has asked for a major review of regional operations to be conducted. This is due to be completed in December 2006.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development.</i></b>
10.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's decision to centralise coordination of offshore international student enrolment for now, in order to ensure that standards are implemented consistently.	The University's offshore international student enrolment is handled under standardized procedures and policies through a designated staff member in the IPO.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor International.</i></b>

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11.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to increase its attention to Indigenous students as an issue of relevance to the whole University community.	<p>Increasing the profile of Indigenous students and issues inherent within Indigenous Education has been significant. Activities have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishing the Office of the Director, Indigenous Education</li> <li>▪ Expanding Indigenous student services on regional campuses</li> <li>▪ Developing specific Indigenous Australian Access procedures including focused and dedicated recruitment activities</li> <li>▪ A committee restructure which provides specific and timely advice to the University about Indigenous Student Support, Indigenous Australian Studies - Teaching and Research and Indigenous Employment</li> <li>▪ Aligning Indigenous student services with the Office of the Director for more effective service delivery</li> <li>▪ Expanding upon relationships between Indigenous student service staff and members of faculty including delivery of Indigenous specific lectures and presentations, committee participation and research advice</li> <li>▪ Establishment of a suite of bursaries available to Indigenous Australian students which include travel/conference support, materials and resources allowances, encouragement for student generated</li> </ul>	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Equity and Student Services.</i></b>

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		<p style="text-align: center;">activities promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and regional and metropolitan bursaries assisting in living costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increasing the number of cultural promotion and community events held at all campuses of the University</li> <li>▪ Re-development of the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme for more effective promotion to students and delivery of tutorial services</li> <li>▪ Development of Indigenous Australian Students database as a mechanism for increased academic and pastoral support</li> <li>▪ Development of Enabling or Pre-Tertiary opportunities for Indigenous Australians with potential delivery at all campuses.</li> </ul>	

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***Recommendations***

Areas where AUQA recommends improvements to the practices of La Trobe University are as follows:

Number	Recommendation:	Progress as at 1 September 2006	Responsibility
1.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establish formal mechanisms for regularly reviewing the performance of the Vice-Chancellor and the Council.	The La Trobe Council has established a process for Council self review and formalised mechanisms for the performance review of the Vice-Chancellor.	<b><i>Chancellor. Corporate Governance Committee of Council.</i></b>
2.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop a comprehensive framework for the development, approval, dissemination, monitoring and review of policies that takes into account appropriate delegations to faculties and campuses.	The Administration Quality Assurance Committee will act as a clearing house for all administrative policies ensuring consistency and alignment across campuses and faculties. The framework is currently being developed but AQAC has responsibility for approval and monitoring of policies and the management of the review of policies.	<b><i>Vice-Principal Resources and Administration. Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
3.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review the level of delegation to the coordinators of different 'subject instances', with a view to establishing systems that will ensure greater consistency across subject instances.	All units have a designated unit co-ordinator, responsible for the coordination of a unit offered at more than one location. The alignment of academic programs between Bundoora and Bendigo has contributed to this.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic. Academic Committee.</i></b>

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4.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review its credit point policy with a view to establishing a standard annual full-time credit point load applicable to all programs, including combined degree programs.	Single degrees have been standardised to 120 credit points per year.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic. Pro Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development.</i></b>
5.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University adopt an alternative acronym to DBA for the Diploma in Business Administration in order to avoid confusion with the Doctor of Business Administration.	The Foundation Studies and Diploma program has adopted 'Dip. Bus. Admin' as the common formal abbreviation.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
6.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University enhance its assessment policy in light of best practice within the Australian higher education sector.	A revision of the University assessment policy has commenced. This will develop a University wide (ie. all campuses and locations) assessment policy. It is anticipated that the policy will be finalised at the end of 2007.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>

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7.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University ensure that all major research activities, centres and initiatives are brought within a single, comprehensive research strategy.	<p>The University identified, in 2005, areas of research strength and emerging strength. Significant funding has been allocated to support research investment to further enhance these areas of strength and emerging strength.</p> <p>The University's Strategic Plan 2006-2010 clearly enunciates and provides a framework for a comprehensive research strategy, with a particular direction towards specialisation: we will focus our research effort on those areas of strength and potential strength and on those areas where we have a natural advantage. Clear strategies have been identified in the Plan, together with key performance indicators. We are currently engaged in a process of further refining the areas of strength, based on data gathered in late 2005 and 2006.</p>	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.</i></b>
8.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop a comprehensive framework for explicitly linking research with teaching and curricula, and establish means for monitoring the effectiveness of this framework.	Research informed teaching is the foundation of La Trobe's Learning and Teaching strategy. Professional development for staff will be developed and implemented in 2007. The review of PEDS explicitly addresses this issue.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research. Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>

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9.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establish monitoring systems to ensure that its policies and processes for postgraduate supervisors and supervision are implemented consistently.	<p>The Higher Degrees Committee and the Research and Graduate Studies Committee have further enhanced monitoring of progress, improved professional development for staff, and improved reporting procedures. Actions include:</p> <p>All students are required to have a supervisor and co-supervisor. Applications are not processed until these arrangements are in place.</p> <p>Regular updating and review of the supervisor register, with details sought from Heads of School and Postgraduate Coordinators annually. The Chair of the Higher Degrees Committee approves (and sometimes modifies) recommendations from Schools.</p> <p>Some refinements have been made to the annual report and follow-up of unsatisfactory reports.</p> <p>Dissemination of benchmarking data via the Higher Degrees Committee, as well as occasional seminars, to emphasize the formal policies in place and discuss optimum ways for their implementation.</p>	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.</i></b>

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10.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review the adequacy of its resourcing of higher degree research students.	<p>It is understood that this recommendation was in response to feedback from students on a regional campus.</p> <p>An increased number of seminars and workshops have been arranged on the two larger regional campuses.</p> <p>The University has mounted several reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs and resources on regional campuses. These reviews have gone well beyond the needs of higher degree research students.</p> <p>A further review is in progress of the regional campuses, and the findings are expected to be reported in October.</p>	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.</i></b>
11.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University connect its Research and Development Parks more closely to the research capabilities of the University in order to maximise commercialisation opportunities and the potential of this resource to contribute to the overall research effort of the University.	<p>The University is committed to developing mutually beneficial links with industry, government and local communities. The University's recently approved Strategic Plan 2006-2010 again has as one of its core strategies the strengthening of collaborative research links with industry and the community.</p> <p>Administrative arrangements for industry links and commercialisation activities, focusing on the Bundoora Research and Development Park, have been undertaken with the aim of integrating these activities more closely between the Park and the Faculties. These changes include the establishment of the Division of Innovation and Knowledge Transfer, and the appointment of Professor J. Singh as Research Professor at the R&amp;D Park, Bundoora. The changes are expected to showcase University research and industry partnerships, to enable the attainment of University-industry links, and to grow a culture of research commercialisation.</p>	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research.</i></b>

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12.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establishes a mechanism for ensuring that moderation is appropriately and consistently implemented for all applicable offshore courses, and that results for comparable onshore and offshore courses are considered as one means for determining equivalence.	All off shore programs are maintained by the relevant academic area and formal moderation processes are in place.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>
13.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University fully integrate Library and Information Technology Services considerations into the overall management of offshore activities in order to ensure that offshore students receive an equivalent level of service in support of their education.	La Trobe University has fully integrated library electronic access and related library resource issues for offshore programs to ensure that offshore students receive an equivalent level of service. The only IT ‘concern’ for offshore programs appears to be sporadic issues to do with inadequate bandwidth pertaining to one program in Vietnam but we have had no issues with this service for the last 18 months. All University offshore students are enrolled as La Trobe University students and given a student card and electronic access to the University library and ITS.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor International.</i></b>

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14.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University reconsider the application of its English language entrance standards in light of the overall demands of the teaching, reading materials and assessment methods.	La Trobe University has reviewed its standard English language entrance requirements at undergraduate and postgraduate level and has decided to stay with 6.0 IELTS and 6.5 IELTS respectively. These two standards are common to many Australian universities. A small number of courses in the Faculty of Health Sciences have switched to IELTS 7.0 in order to meet the specific demands of the particular courses (e.g. Speech Pathology). The English language entry requirement for the pre University Foundation Studies Program has been standardised in line with the recent national review of Foundation Studies programs and the setting of a common national IELTS entry score. The English language entry standard for the Diploma has been standardised at IELTS 5.5 onshore and offshore.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor International.</i></b>
15.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop and implement a university-wide strategic approach to the design, implementation, growth and evaluation of online learning management systems and video-conferencing.	The University has approved the establishment of governance mechanisms for e-learning, and technology enabled Learning and Teaching. These issues are currently addressed in the Strategic Plan for ICT at La Trobe.	<b><i>Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic.</i></b>

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