Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development:

The Sunshine - Fraser Coast Case Study Report (Austalia)

OECD

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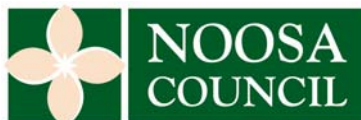USQ
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

OECD/IMHE Project

Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development

Self-Evaluation Report:

Sunshine-Fraser Coast
Australia

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KEY REGIONAL SUPPORTERS

FOREWORD

**MR GRAEME PEARCE
CHAIRMAN
OECD SUNSHINE-FRASER COAST
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

I was delighted to accept the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), Professor Paul Thomas, to Chair the Regional Steering Committee for the OECD regional engagement project, as I have been involved with five Universities during my career as a local authority Chief Executive. What I found most exciting about this project was the opportunity to compare and contrast the engagement of USC and the University of Southern Queensland – Wide Bay (USQ) across two neighbouring but different regions – the Sunshine Coast and the Fraser Coast and how our combined region compared to thirteen other regions in Europe and Mexico.

As well, I have had the opportunity to meet and work closely with both University and community leaders, all with a common quest to examine and improve how the Universities engage with their regions, and how the regions can improve their engagement with the two Universities.

As Chairman of the Regional Steering Committee it has been my goal to stimulate debate about the issues raised in the OECD project, and I am pleased to say there has been a robust discussion at all Regional Steering Committee meetings about how well this engagement is occurring. It has also been most heartening to hear the many positive proposals from both the Universities and the community representatives about how this engagement could be improved.

A dynamic and interesting process has now been put into train across the Sunshine and Fraser Coasts, to the extent the Steering Committee has agreed to schedule an extra meeting to continue this dialogue, and I would hope that as a result of the OECD initiative, the goodwill that has been created will continue as a Standing Committee for the Sunshine and Fraser Coasts and the two Universities.

In conclusion I would express my thanks to the Regional Coordinator of the project Associate Professor Ron Neller and his support staff for their cooperation and wise counsel during the project.

GRAEME PEARCE

Chair OECD Sunshine-Fraser Coast Regional Steering Committee

FOREWORD

PROFESSOR PAUL THOMAS
VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST

Engagement has been a core value for this University since the earliest planning in 1994. It was a theme that derived from extensive community consultations in which a recurring theme was the expressed need for this new public University to be innovative and regionally relevant. When this theme was elaborated it was clear that, quite apart from providing local access to a university for students who would otherwise miss out, residents also wanted three matters addressed above all else:

1. There was an urgent need to address the economic state of the region including job generation and combating unemployment, glaringly evident issues in the demographic data of the early 1990s.

2. There was a lack of major pieces of community infrastructure such as sports facilities, art gallery, cultural centre, and so on, and it was hoped the University would be active in helping rescue that infrastructure.

3. There was a need for the University to become an environmental exemplar: to set a standard for more informed and imaginative sub-tropical coastal building designs and planning to combat unimpeded urban sprawl and destruction of the natural environment.

The University has since concertedly committed to strategies, policies and practices of engagement that informed ways of how it could address those community issues, alongside the University's carefully targeted programs of regionally relevant research and teaching.

Engagement has not been imposed retrospectively. It was emplaced in the origins of a University and has been a driving force, increasingly pervasive and sophisticated across each of our first ten years as Australia's newest public university.

The future of this University is inextricably bound to the future of this region, and the main reason why I enthusiastically embraced involvement in this important OECD project, is because it will provide invaluable feedback on how we can further strengthen the symbiotic relationship that needs to exist between the region and its University to secure the future for generations still to come.

We have made an impressive start and regional identity and progress have been more marked because of the University's presence. The momentum has to be maintained and I look forward to the outcomes of this project as they will certainly contribute to even greater understanding, both locally and internationally about how vital engagement really has become, not just to the modern university, but to a globally significant lifestyle region.

PROFESSOR PAUL THOMAS

Vice-Chancellor

University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

FOREWORD

PROFESSOR KEN STOTT
PROVOST
WIDE BAY CAMPUS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

The Wide Bay Campus of the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is proud to be selected to be part of this important project, which, we believe, will have a significant influence on our University's future. The project gives us a unique opportunity to consider what we are currently doing and how we might heighten our chances of success in a context of vast change and unparalleled levels of uncertainty. Achieving international recognition for our efforts is, of course, an agreeable consequence, but more important is our attempt to consolidate our position in this regional community, because sustainable success will depend, in large part, on our ability to forge deep and meaningful relationships with those we serve. The project also offers us the opportunity to consider ways in which we might benefit, as a university, from our engagement with the community.

The project comes at a key strategic point for USQ, as engagement with the community is a key part of our declared strategic direction. Working with our regional partners opens up an expansive range of issues that we need to consider, and this project provides the ideal avenue to work out the sorts of strategies and actions that we think will have an impact over time.

Finally, while there is much emphasis these days on outcomes - and this is understandable - we see the 'process' of engaging in this project as being of even more importance. Each question asked, each document examined and each conversation: all have the potential to intervene in our thinking and to take it in new, previously unthought-of, directions. Therein lies the real benefit.

It is in that light that my colleagues and I welcome our involvement in this OECD project, and we are confident that this collaborative endeavour with our friends at the University of the Sunshine Coast, and with many people in our Fraser Coast region, will enhance relationships and provide scope for further development.

PROFESSOR KEN STOTT

Provost

University of Southern Queensland (USQ) – Wide Bay campus

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AARNet Australian Academic and Research Network
ACGR **Australian Competitive Grants Register**
ACIR Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AMC Australian Maritime College
ANZABI Australian and New Zealand Association of Business Incubators
APA Australian Postgraduate Award
ARC Australian Research Council
ASQ Australian String Quartet
AUQU Australian Universities Quality Agency
AVCC Australian Vice Chancellors Committee
BCP Basic Community Profile
BHERT Business Higher Education Roundtable
BIARC **Bribie Island Aquaculture and Research Centre**
BICT Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology
CDP Capital Development Pool Program
CGS Commonwealth Grants Scheme
CHASE Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise
CMCD Centre for Multicultural and Community Development
COMET **Commercialising Emerging Technologies**
Cont Ed Continuing and Professional Education
CPA Chartered Professional Accountants
CPD Continuing Professional Development
CPE Continuing Professional Education
CRC Cooperative Research Centre
CRICOS Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses
CSIRO Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSIT Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE
DBA Doctorate of Business Administration
DCA Doctorate of Creative Arts
DEC Distance Education Centre
DEST Department of Education Science and Technology
DOTARS Department Of Transport And Regional Services
DPI Department of Primary Industries
DSDTI Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation
EFTSL Equivalent Full Time Student Loans
EFTSU Equivalent Full Time Student Unit
EPDM Ethylene Propylene Rubbers
EQ Education Queensland
ESD Environmentally Sustainable Development
ETRF Education and Training Reforms for the Future
FACTOREE Fraser Coast Area Centre for Technology and Open Resource Education Enterprise
FASS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FCDD Fibre Composites Design and Development
FESTURI Multicultural festival
FIZ Fraser Innovation Zone
FOC Free of Charge
FOE Field Of Education

FTE Full Time Employment
GST Goods and Services Tax
HBCC Hervey Bay City Council
HBDSMP Hervey Bay Dugong and Seagrass Monitoring Program
HE Higher Education
HECS Higher Education Contributions Scheme
HEI Higher Education Institutions
HESA Higher Education Support Act 2003
IAAF International Amateur Athletic Federation
ICAA Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia
ICSC Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast
ICT Information and Communications Technologies
IGS Institutional Grants Scheme
IP Intellectual Property
IPRS International Postgraduate Research Scholarship
IQ Ideas Quest
iSHaRE Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement
ISO International Standards Organisation
ITAS Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme
ITS Information Technology Services
KBR Kingfisher Bay Resort
KCTWF Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management
LOTE Languages Other Than English
LTEC Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee
MCEETYA Ministerial Council on Education Training and Youth Affairs
MEDAB Maroochy Economic and Development Advisory Board
MIT Melbourne Institute of Technology
MOU Memorandum Of Understanding
NAIDOC Indigenous week
NCGP National Competitive Grants Program
NHMRC National Health and Medical Research Council
NSSQA National Sport Science Quality Assurance
NTN Network The Nation
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OESR Office of Economic and Statistical Research
OP Overall Position
OPACS Office of Preparatory and Academic Support
PU Polyurethane
QTAC Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre
RAD Regional Art Director
R&D Research and Development
RDLO Regional Disabilities Liaison Officer
REDS Regional Economic Development Strategy
RIBGS Regional Infrastructure Block Grants Scheme
RMC Research Management Committee
RPF Regional Protection Fund
RQF Research Quality Framework
RTS Research and Training Scheme
SCRIBE Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise
SEQ South East Queensland
SES Socio Economic Status

SCORE Sunshine Coast Office of Regional Enterprises
SCTEN Sunshine Coast Training and Educational Network
SIFE Students in Free Enterprise
SME Small and Medium Enterprise
SunROC Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils
SWOT Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
TAFE Technical And Further Education
TPP Tertiary Preparation Program
U3A University of the Third Age
USHS Urangan State High School
USC University of the Sunshine Coast
USQ University of Southern Queensland
WBBRAC Wide Bay Burnett Regional Advisory Committee
WWF World Wildlife Fund

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1   The Project and the Region

In the Project Aide Memoire it is stressed that the focus of this project is on collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their regional partners. For the Sunshine-Fraser Coast region, the processes initiated by this project were considered as important as the evaluation and review process itself. The desire for improved collaboration permeates the development of the project, the methodology followed within the region, and the writing of this report.

For the purposes of the Project, the 'region' was initially determined as the 'Sunshine-Fraser Coast'.   Although the Sunshine and Fraser Coasts share a range of demographic, social, environmental, cultural and economic features, it became evident during the Project that the differing administrative structures of the Local, State and Federal governments and the tyranny of distance (small regional population density that is concentrated in a limited number of historically discrete townships) played a significant role in separating the Sunshine Coast from the Fraser Coast.

This distinction was by no means controversial as the rapidly developing Hervey Bay to the north has far more in common with the Sunshine Coast to the south than do the intervening shires, and shires such as Cooloola find themselves uncertainly located between the two coastlines, potentially missing out in critical domains such as tertiary education. It has also been proposed by the emerging Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups (being Federally incorporated community bodies) that *"a very strong Community of Interest connects the Sunshine Coast with the Mary Catchment",* and that these areas have been artificially split between two regional bodies. They argue that the Fraser Coast has been inappropriately aligned with Wide Bay and that regional interdependency (between the Sunshine and Fraser Coasts) is likely to grow stronger over time.

Putting aside these diverging views of a region for the moment, in order to retain the terminology of the Project Aide Memoir on the one hand, yet satisfy the need for regional identity expressed by community leaders on the other, we will refer to two 'Areas' within the 'Region'. The authors nonetheless recognise that this is but a Project and Report terminology and will have little bearing or influence on regional perceptions of place.

Notwithstanding, members of the Regional Steering Committee saw significant potential for ongoing cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders across the two areas, and between the two higher education providers that serve them – the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Wide Bay and the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). This was emphasised during the meeting of the Regional Steering Committee held in Maryborough in October 2005, when members expressed the view that the regional discussions and deliberations of the Committee were valuable well beyond the Project.

On the basis of discussions and interviews undertaken during the self review process, it has clearly emerged that the Regional Steering Committee, regional stakeholders and the two higher education institutions view the methodology adopted in developing the Self Evaluation Report as an 'engaged' process, through which opportunities for self reflection, new and enhanced relationships, and the development of future joint projects have already emerged.

1.2   An Engaged Methodology and Approach

In developing their methodology, the Regional Coordinator and Project Team decided to initially undertake a comprehensive review of contextual information from both universities, which raised a variety of issues for discussion. The Project Team also explored regional documents and met with many regional leaders before establishing a project methodology. The Activities Running Sheet, reproduced in Appendix 4, highlights the extent of regional consultation undertaken and cooperation engendered.

Core members of the Project Team, along with senior staff from each university, met stakeholders from across the region, seeking out relevant participants, bringing the Project to their attention, and seeking advice, feedback and, in many cases, funding.

A significant proportion of the budget for the Project has derived from stakeholder contributions. The main contributors are as follows:

- University of the Sunshine Coast
- University of Southern Queensland (Wide Bay)
- Caloundra City Council, Maroochy Shire Council, Noosa Council (via SunROC)
- Cooloola Shire Council
- Noosa Blue Resort, Reed Property Group, Sunshine Coast Business Council

Outside of the significant contribution of the University of the Sunshine Coast, which was both in cash and in kind, the remaining funds were derived from regional stakeholders. A number of stakeholder contributions were also in-kind including, for example, the provision of the venue for the Project launch and inaugural Regional Steering Committee meeting by the Noosa Blue Resort on the Sunshine Coast.

The composition of the Regional Steering Committee also reflects the engaged nature of the process, and boasts roughly equal representation from both areas within the Project region. The external Chair, Mr Graeme Pearce, is the Executive Director of the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC). Membership includes Mayors and CEOs of the relevant local government bodies (Councils), the Vice-Chancellor of USC, the Provost of USQ Wide Bay, representatives of public sector education agencies at both State and Commonwealth levels of government, representatives of senior business and industry groups, and community representatives (See Appendix 2). Significantly, only 20% of the membership of the Regional Steering Committee was made up of university staff.

From its first meeting, the Regional Steering Committee, along with the Project Team and regional stakeholders have acknowledged that the development of this Self Evaluation Report is but a first step in creating a more engaged future for universities on the Sunshine-Fraser Coast.

The composition of the OECD team, the Regional Steering Committee and the programme for the review visit are provided in Appendixes 1, 2 and 3.

1.3   The Geographical Situation

The Sunshine-Fraser Coast is an attractive and fertile coastal strip of sandy beaches and sand islands, separated by rocky headlands, fringed to the west with low undulating and often forest covered ranges. As such, the Sunshine-Fraser coastline is a nationally recognised tourist attraction and internal migration (sea change) destination.

For the purposes of this report, the Sunshine-Fraser Coast encompasses eight local government administrative regions - Caloundra City, Maroochy, Noosa, Cooloola, Tairo, Maryborough, Woocoo and Hervey Bay City. Formal administrative regions do not exist in Australia and despite a certain commonality of economic, development, social and cultural behaviour, there is nothing formal to bind this coastline together.

Figure 1.1: Location of the Fraser and Sunshine Coasts

The Bruce Highway, the primary transport corridor, links the region to Brisbane in the South and to Cairns in the north. The Sunshine Coast is a one hour drive from Brisbane, while Maryborough and Hervey Bay are around four hours' drive.

There are three key regional airports, two serving the Fraser Coast and the other serving the Sunshine Coast.

According to Census data from 2001, the Sunshine-Fraser Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. Tourism, agriculture and development are the main economic drivers of the region, while the contribution of agriculture has been steadily declining.

The population of the region, like that for the rest of the continent, resides predominantly in a limited number of coastal cities. The main urban centres in the Fraser Coast are Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Gympie, with Hervey Bay being the largest centre. The main urban centres in the Sunshine Coast are Noosa, Maroochydore, and Caloundra, with Maroochydore being the largest, though on occasion Gympie is also considered a part of the Sunshine Coast.

The region is served both by universities and colleges of technical and further education. The University of Southern Queensland Wide Bay Campus (USQ Wide Bay) is located in Hervey Bay and offers courses in Business and Commerce, Nursing, Education, Information Technology, Mass Communication, and Community Welfare and Development. USQ Wide Bay is a campus of USQ, which has its main campus in Toowoomba, 2 hours west of Brisbane. For the remainder of this report, the notation USQ refers to the larger campus at Toowoomba and USQ Wide Bay to the regional campus in Hervey Bay.

The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) has its main campus in Sippy Downs (Maroochy Shire) and will offer over 100 undergraduate and postgraduate programs across three faculties – Arts and Social Sciences, Business, and Science, Health and Education. It also has study centres in Brisbane and Noosa. USC also offers online postgraduate coursework programs at Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, and Masters level in Business Administration and Financial Planning.

The Wide Bay Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) has campuses in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, whilst Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE (CSIT) has campuses located at Caloundra, Gympie, Maroochydore, Mooloolaba, Nambour and Noosa.

1.4   The Demographic Situation

1.4.1   *Population*

As at 30 June 2004, the estimated resident population of the region was 393,837 persons, representing 10.1% of the State's population in 0.8 per cent of the State's area. The annual average rate of change in population in the Sunshine-Fraser Coast Region between 30 June 1999 and 30 June 2004 was 3.0 cent, compared with 2.1 per cent for the State, and the assumed net migration currently varies between 8,000-9,500. Using these rates, population projections published by the Department of Local Government and Planning in 2003 indicate that the population of the Sunshine-Fraser Coast region will increase to 657,751 in 2026 and the region's share of Queensland's population is then projected to be 12.4 per cent.

Because of the rapid inward migration of early retirees, and the lack of jobs other than service, tourism and construction, an imbalance exists in the age structure of the region. Although the population structure as at 2001 was essentially bimodal (with the region overrepresented by people 65+ years and underrepresented by productive young adults 15 to 39 years) recent data from the Government Statistician suggests that the 65+ group is rapidly being overtaken in population terms by a group in their early 30s.

The region has a relatively low proportion of ethnic minorities, unlike the major capital cities. Prior to European occupation the indigenous Gubbi Gubbi people lived within the Sunshine Coast region and the Budjalla people lived within the Fraser Coast environs. Both peoples were seriously displaced and today represent only 1.4% of the region's total population.

1.4.2   *Health and Wellbeing*

The region is well served with specialist health services and modern, well-equipped public and private hospitals.

On 16 May 2005, Queensland Premier Peter Beattie and Health Minister Gordon Nuttall announced Sippy Downs (USC) as the site for a new health hub and hospital as outlined in the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. The Sunshine Coast Health Hub will involve the consolidation of existing services that could include child health, paediatric development, diabetes, palliative care and adult mental health. New services potentially include oral health chairs focusing on the paediatric population, community based rehabilitation, cardiac rehabilitation and renal dialysis. Funding of $14.72 million had been allocated for the project.

Local MP and Emergency Services Minister Chris Cummins (Kawana) has pointed out that the location and its proximity to the University had obvious benefits in line with *Smart State* (a Queensland State knowledge initiative) behaviour.

1.4.3   Participation in Higher Education

Both USC and USQ Wide Bay draw a significant proportion of their students from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. In the case of USQ Wide Bay, this includes students from rural and geographically isolated areas.

Currently, USQ Wide Bay has approximately 700 on campus students and 500 distance education students, with women slightly overrepresented in the student body overall (51%). Although indigenous enrolments have improved, a high proportion of these students are undertaking preparatory rather than undergraduate programs. The two Fraser Coast TAFE Colleges enrol approximately 15,000 students each year, including a cohort undertaking senior certificate (high school).

USC currently has 4,280 students - 3,296 undergraduate, 621 postgraduate, 694 international and 365 non award students. 3,768 are on campus and 513 are off campus students.

The following student demographics apply at USC:

- Male: 42%; Female: 58%
- Low socio economic status: 43%
- First in family to attend university (undergraduate): 53%
- Average age (all): 25 years; Average age (undergraduate): 23 years
- Mature aged (all): 53%; Mature aged (undergraduate): 43%
- Projected population by 2021: 15,000

1.5   The Economic and Social Base

The Sunshine-Fraser Coast economy is characterised by:

- A declining agricultural sector
- A low manufacturing base
- A high service industry sector
- A heavy reliance on the construction sector, especially for the Sunshine Coast
- The dominance of the tourism industry
- A higher than average unemployment level and,
- A higher proportion of small and micro businesses (with 75% of businesses having less than five employees and 90% having less than 10).

At the 2001 Census, retail trade was the largest employer in the region with 23,084 (18.1 per cent) of the region's employed labour force. Other industries with relatively large numbers of employed persons included health and community services (13,609 persons or 10.6 per cent), manufacturing (11,858 persons or 9.3 per cent), property and business services (11,349 or 8.9%) and construction (11,344 persons or 8.9 per cent).

1.5.1   Growth and Diversity

There has been an increasing focus in Australia on a move towards a knowledge based economy and society. In January 2001, the Commonwealth Government released the strategy Backing Australia's Ability, which aimed to 'encourage and support innovation and enhance Australia's international competitiveness, economic prosperity and social wellbeing' (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

This is amplified by the State (Queensland) Government's Smart State Strategy 2005-2015 (http://www.smartstate.qld.gov.au/strategy/strategy05_15/smart_state_strategy05_15.pdf), which states:

> *The Queensland Government have a vision of a State where knowledge, creativity and innovation drive economic growth to improve prosperity and quality of life for all Queenslanders. (Queensland Government 2005, 1)*

On the Sunshine Coast, SunROC – the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils has recognised the importance of knowledge intensive sectors by developing a Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), and a companion Knowledge Economy Strategy. In developing the Knowledge Economy Strategy, the initial 'spatial' mapping of knowledge concentrations did not yield useful results, but 'institutional' mapping highlighted that the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast (ICSC) played pivotal roles in the Sunshine Coast's knowledge economy. The report identified a number of potential industry clusters – sports and experience, food and ingredients, design for living, health and nutrition, and the enabling cluster of information technology.

Although USC has been leading knowledge economy developments for the last 10 years, including through the establishment of the Innovation Centre (ICSC), the development of a cohesive regional strategy is clearly a more recent phenomenon. This makes it difficult both to quantify progress to date and to assess the relative importance of knowledge based industries vis a vis 'traditional' Sunshine Coast industries. Currently, ICSC has five client companies, four tenant companies, and two service partners, generating around 60 jobs, and is still expanding.

On the Fraser Coast, Commonwealth Government funding of $4 million has recently been allocated to help diversify economic activity within the Wide Bay Burnett Region, which includes the Fraser Coast. The package, provided under the Structural Adjustment Fund, will direct funds to new businesses seeking to expand and to local government agencies for the expansion of local infrastructure.

1.5.2 *Creativity and Diversity*

The Australian Local Government Association, in its State of the Regions Reports identifies and reports on two knowledge economy indices – creativity and composite diversity.

> *The creativity index is a measure combining the regions high-tech output, innovation, diversity and human capital. The higher the creativity index, the higher the regions future growth and prosperity potential.*

On that index for 2002, the Sunshine Coast was the highest ranked lifestyle region and ranked 15th overall in Australia (US rank = 187th). Lifestyle regions rank relatively well with other Australian regions, except in comparison to core metropolitan regions. When measured against the US regions, however, they fall into the lowest quartile.

The composite diversity index:

> *…measures regions diversity in terms of its human capital and cultural amenities. The higher the regions diversity, the more likely the region's potential growth and prosperity will be realised.*

As is the case with the Creativity index, the Sunshine Coast was the highest ranked lifestyle region in Australia (SoR rank = 9; US rank = 53).

1.5.3   *Leading Export Sectors*

In SunROC's *Regional Economic Development Strategy* (REDS) (2004) it was confirmed that:

> *The Sunshine Coast's export orientation is largely defined by its success as a tourist destination. The region's total annual industry output of just under $5 billion accounts for 15% of South East Queensland's Gross Regional Product (GRP) and around 5% of Queensland's Gross State Product. (SunROC 2004, 49)*

Data analysis and interpretation undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning for REDS estimates that 9,855 jobs in the region can be attributed to external demand (export oriented sectors), which is 13% of all jobs located in the region. This compares favourably with the rest of South East Queensland where only 7% of jobs are export oriented.

Unfortunately, the region's major export sectors are predominantly low value. Despite contributing 13% of jobs in the region, the contribution to output is low at 6%.

1.5.4   *Occupational Structure of Employment*

At the time of the 2001 Census, intermediate clerical, sales and service workers were the largest group of employed persons in the Sunshine-Fraser Coast (20,935 persons or 16.1 per cent of employed persons. Other occupations with relatively large numbers of employed persons included professionals (18,826 persons or 14.4 per cent), tradespersons and related workers (17,682 persons or 13.6 per cent) and associate professionals (17,300 persons or 13.3 per cent).

1.5.5   *Levels of Public and Private R&D*

Data on levels of public and private R&D at a regional level are extremely difficult to come by. At a national level, however, a concerted attempt has been made to collect indicators to incorporate within a compendium of statistics on the knowledge based economy and society. This matter is explored more thoroughly in Chapter III.

1.5.6   *Distinguishing Social and Cultural Characteristics of the Region*

In addition to the high population growth experienced within the region, there has also been a change in the profile of the community. Both factors have implications for the design and delivery of social, cultural and human services. The Sunshine-Fraser Coast benefits from a healthy social infrastructure with numerous regional development organisations and community groups working to progress the region.

One area of concern, particularly in relation to the Fraser Coast, is the overrepresentation of people on low incomes, clustered around low entrance price developments. This means an overrepresentation of people with the greatest need being located in developments with poor access to services.

The Sunshine-Fraser Coast region also houses a significant retirement population and has traditionally experienced a loss of young people to education and employment opportunities

elsewhere. It has a relatively small number of people of non-English speaking backgrounds, and people with special health needs or a disability.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are spread across the region and come from a number of tribal backgrounds. Many have significant links with land in the region. While informal networks are generally strong, these groups may require special assistance to enable them to access mainstream services, or to develop their own services in some instances.

1.5.7   *Economic Impact of Higher Education Sector*

As stated in the National Report to the OECD IMHE-HEFCE Project on International Comparative Higher Education Financial Management and Governance (2004, 16), 'the [Australian] higher education sector generated over AUD 10 billion in revenue in 2001 and had more than AUD 20 billion in net assets, of which almost a quarter (AUD 4.7 billion) in cash and liquid investments.'

A study undertaken by the Business-Higher Education Roundtable (BHERT), commissioned in 2000, found that the sector contributed AUD 10.6 billion annually to the Australia economy (around 2% of gross domestic product (GDP)) with a total economic impact of over AUD 22 billion. Some authors, including Dean (2002), believe that figure to be closer to 4%.

Higher education accounts for approximately AUD 4.6 billion or 3% of Budget outlay. A study conducted in 2000 found that average return on investment (ROI) was around 11%.

At an institutional level, USQ Wide Bay has a significant impact on the Fraser Coast as an employer. Currently, 66 staff are employed at the Hervey Bay campus. In terms of staff and student expenditure, the impact on the region relates to their expenditure in the region compared with the loss of such expenditure if they left the region to further their education. Economic impact multipliers have been calculated by the Office of the Government Statistician (Queensland Treasury) and, based on data from 1996-97, the education industry sector has a value multiplier of 1.4 per cent per annum.

USQ Wide Bay's expenditure/output 2005 (salaries and all other expenses) of $2.4 million, becomes $3.4 million when subject to the multiplier effect.

USC is currently engaged in a much more comprehensive analysis, which suggests that the economic impact of the University on its region has three components:

1. Direct spending and re-spending
2. Knowledge based industry growth and
3. Supply of a well educated workforce.

For the purpose of this calculation, direct expenditure is reduced to include only the local portion of that expenditure. For USC in 2004, wages expenditure was approximately $25.1 million, with total non wages expenditure estimated at $12.6 million. This excludes capital expenditures of $6.9 million. Nearly all salaries and benefits would be spent locally, as are construction contracts (capital expenditure) and scholarships, whereas around 1/3 of non wages expenditure is made locally.

Income paid within the region is to some extent spent and respent within the region, creating a multiplier effect. It is estimated that the multiplier effect is around 1.5. That is, for every dollar spent, around $1.50 will be generated in the local economy.

Students and visitors also spend in the local economy. Given that many of USC's students are local (75%), we can therefore assume that the majority of them would further their education

elsewhere if USC did not exist. Hence a significant portion of their spending can be viewed as a true economic impact on the region. A conservative estimate would be that around 47% of total student spending occurs as a result of USC.

USC is one of the largest employers in the region, employing over 700 people (approximately 330 FTE staff). Without USC, and taking into account the multiplier effect of additional jobs resulting from demand created by USC employees, the unemployment rate for the region would increase by about several percentage points if USC did not exist.

In addition, around 60 people are currently employed by client and tenant companies of the University's small business incubator, the Innovation Centre. This points to the potential for economic impact inherent in the tendency of knowledge intensive industries/enterprises to collocate with a university.

The most difficult economic impact to quantify is the extent to which the economy is dependent on an educated workforce, and work is in progress to attempt to do so.

1.5.8   Key Labour Market Indicators

Unemployment

The overall unemployment rate in the Sunshine-Fraser Coast region at the time of the 2001 census was 11.7 per cent compared with 8.2 per cent for Queensland. The participation rate for the region was 54.2 per cent, which was lower than that recorded for Queensland (63.1 per cent). The Sunshine-Fraser Coast had 8.1 per cent of Queensland's employed persons and 12.0 per cent of Queensland's unemployed persons.

Recent data presented at a State of the Regions conference held at USC suggests that, over the last two years, there has been an improvement in the unemployment rate, although underemployment remains a major problem.

Recently, the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC) commissioned a study on key indicators regarding trends and prospects for the Sunshine Coast region's economic growth and development. Two key economic indicators were tracked:

- Estimated gross regional product (GRP) over the last five years (2000-2005) and
- Progress on employment creation against the 'Sunshine Coast Employment Challenge' as set out in the November 2004 Sunshine Coast *Regional Economic Development Strategy* (REDS).

The study concluded that the Sunshine Coast's GRP has been growing rapidly at an average rate of 9.5% over the four year period to 2005. Comparing economic growth on the Sunshine Coast with national trends, the average annual growth rate for the total factor income for the Sunshine Coast region between the years 2000-01 and 2003-04 is 6% (nationally, it was 6.8% over the same period). In terms of industry contribution to GRP, Finance and insurance, and Property and business services have contributed at a rapidly increasing rate.

Tourism is obviously a significant contributor to the region's economic prosperity, however, measuring the impact of tourism is problematic as there is no defined 'tourism' sector in the Journey to Work or Labour Force data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

As at the date of the 2001 Census, the Sunshine-Fraser Coast overall had a labour force participation rate of 54.2%, lower than that recorded for Queensland (63.1%). More recent but less reliable Small Area Labour Force data from the Queensland Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR) suggests that there has been an increase in labour force participation over time. Their most recent data (4th quarter 2003 to 4th quarter 2004) reflects an increase in the labour force from 168,170 to 178,790.

Of particular concern for the Sunshine-Fraser Coast, is the fact that demand for work has outstripped the economy's ability to provide a fully diverse range of employment. For example, it is estimated that, on the Fraser Coast alone, 78,400 jobs (or 3,270 jobs per annum) will be required to satisfy employment demand to 2020, assuming an unemployment rate of 10 per cent. For 2001, the monthly average unemployment rate in the area was 12.91 per cent, compared with 8.2 per cent for Queensland as a whole.

The Fraser Coast has lower than average rates of home ownership and Centrelink benefits make up a larger than average proportion of the community's after tax income. Most household types in the wider Wide Bay Burnett region have larger percentages in the very low income bracket than the State average.

Levels of Educational Attainment

Of persons aged 15 years and over with a qualification at the time of the 2001 Census, 8.2 per cent had a bachelor degree or higher (23,125 persons) compared with 10.8 per cent (305,628) of Queensland as a whole.

Table 1.1: Highest post school educational qualifications Sunshine-Fraser Coast region (a) and Queensland, 2001 (b)

	Region		Queensland	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Postgraduate degree	2 246	0.8	38 740	1.4
Graduate diploma and graduate certificate	2 859	1.0	31 775	1.1
Bachelor degree	18 020	6.4	235 113	8.3
Advanced diploma and diploma	16 232	5.7	156 001	5.5
Certificate	49 767	17.5	451 525	16.0
Not stated (c)	33 046	111.6	305 262	10.8
Not applicable	161 543	56.9	1 604 681	56.8
Total	183 713	100.0	2 823 097	100.00

    a.   Persons aged 15 years and over with a qualification
    b.   Based on place of enumeration data
    c.   Includes 'inadequately described'

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile (BCP) – Second Release, 2001 Geographical Boundaries

77.9 per cent of school students in the region attended government schools and 22.1 per cent attended non-government schools in the year 2003. The corresponding percentages for Queensland were 71.8 per cent and 28.2 per cent respectively.

1.5.9   *Labour Market Indicators*

Australia has a federal system of government with legislative powers shared or distributed between the Commonwealth and the States (Division of Powers). The Commonwealth has

specifically enumerated powers, set out in the Constitution, although the Australian High Court has made decisions which have progressively expanded the scope of the Commonwealth's law making powers.

The Commonwealth's enumerated powers (mostly set out in s51-52 of the Constitution) include taxation, defence, external affairs, interstate and international trade, foreign, trading and financial corporations, marriage and divorce, immigration, bankruptcy, and interstate industrial arbitration.

The list of powers given to the Commonwealth Parliament does not include a number of important areas including education, the environment, criminal law and roads, but, for example, under the Parliament's external affairs power, it can stop construction of a dam by a State to give effect to an international agreement on the environment.

The States – New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania – have residual legislative power and can pass laws on a wider range of subjects than the Commonwealth. The two mainland federal territories – Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory – are under self-governing arrangements and have similar responsibilities as the states. Under the constitutions of each of the States, a State Parliament can make laws on any subject relevant to that State. Under the Australian Constitution, however, the States cannot impose duties of customs and excise (s90) and cannot raise defence forces without the consent of the Commonwealth Parliament (s114).

Important matters such as education, criminal law, and roads are regulated primarily by laws of the States rather than laws of the Commonwealth.

States and territories collect taxes such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), land tax, payroll tax, and stamp duties on transactions such as housing sales. States and territories also receive revenue from the Commonwealth.

The third level of government in Australia is local government. Each of the states and the Northern Territory has a comprehensive local government act setting out the powers, roles and responsibilities of local councils. In most cases, local government has wide ranging powers to promote the good governance and wellbeing of local areas, but usually under close scrutiny and supervision by the state or territory. In Queensland, the relevant act is the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Local governments can be in the form of a city or town council or a shire. They are responsible for town planning, building approvals, local roads, parking, public libraries, public toilets, water and sewerage, waste removal, domestic animals and community facilities. Cultural, leisure, sports services, and economic services are a discretionary provision of local government.

Local taxes (called rates) are collected from home owners based on the value of their home. These taxes are used to pay for the services provided. Local governments also collect parking fees.

1.5.10 Influence of Local and State Governments over Higher Education, Research and Development

The majority of Australian universities are established under acts of State Parliaments although, as indicated in Chapter II, only a relatively small proportion of funding for universities is provided by State Governments. Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs) are controlled and substantially funded by State Governments.

The Commonwealth substantially funds major public research agencies such as universities and the CSIRO. Detail of the Commonwealth's current research agenda are outlined in Chapter III.

Local government has little to no formal input to or influence over higher education directions, or research and development activity, unless, for example, the engagement agenda of the local higher education providers specifically allows it.

Both USC and USQ Wide Bay have established relationships with local government, which provide for input into decision making on teaching, research and engagement initiatives. In the case of USC, these have been longstanding relationships, based on the University's commitment to its regional engagement ethos and a desire to collaborate on matters of mutual interest.

1.5.11 *Drivers in Federal Regional Development Policy Impacting on the Region*

The Commonwealth Government's commitment to regional development, including through education and training, was outlined in *Regional Partnerships for Growth and Security 2004-05*. For 2004-05, USD 308 2 million was allocated to the Regional Partnerships Program nationwide.

The Commonwealth Government incorporates a regional loading into the Commonwealth Grant Scheme for students enrolled at regional campuses. It also introduced 9100 new fully funded places to institutions in 2005. These places will grow to 24,883 places by 2008. Institutions were invited to submit bids through a competitive process for these additional places. USC received the highest number of additional places granted to any campus in the country for growth during this period.

CHAPTER II: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.1 Overview of the National System of Higher Education

Much of the following information is derived from the Higher Education Report 2004-5 produced by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Technology: http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/highered_annual_report_2004_05.htm and by direct contributions from the Department of Education, Science and Technology.

2.2 Student Enrolments

In 2004 there were 944 977 students studying in Australian higher education institutions, an increase of 15 025 students over 2003 (Table 2.1). Of these 716 422 were domestic students (down 3 133 from 2003) and 228 555 were international students (up 18 158 from 2003).

Table 2.1 Total domestic and overseas student numbers, Australia, 1994-2004

Year	Commencing students	Change from previous year %	All students	Chance from previous year %	Award course completions	Change from previous year %
1994	225 226	-	585 435	-	138 677	-
1995	244 802	8.7	604 176	3.2	140 918	1.6
1996	261 196	6.7	634 094	5.0	145 228	3.1
1997	266 318	2.0	658 849	3.9	155 275	6.9
1998	266 712	0.1	671 853	2.0	161 556	4.0
1999	276 404	3.6	686 267	2.1	164 423	1.8
2000	285 518	3.3	695 484	1.3	170 894	3.9
2001	301 270	5.5	726 418	4.4	187 089	9.5
2001	339 693	-	842 183	-	187 089	9.5
2002	358 770	5.6	896 621	6.5	200 748	7.3
2003	361 555	0.8	929 952	3.7	215 115	7.2
2004	362 092	0.1	944 977	1.6		-

Source: Higher Education Statistics Collection

1. Note that the table shows two sets of figures for 2001 data. This is due to the changing of reference dates for data collection between 2001 and 2002. Both sets of figures have been supplied to enable time series comparison of data under the same conditions.

2. From 2002 the scope for data collection is between September of the year prior to the reference year and August of the reference year. This applies to both commencing enrolments and all enrolments.

3. Prior to 2002, the scope of commencing enrolment data was April of the year prior to the reference year and March of the reference year, and the scope of all enrolment data was all students enrolled at the March census date with load in semester one. For example, the first figure for 2001 commencing enrolments is 301,270. This represents commencing enrolments between April 2000 and March 2001. The second figure for 2001 commencing enrolments is 339,693.   This represents commencing enrolments between September 2000 and August 2001.

2.3 Data Analysis at a National Level to Establish Demand and Supply of Higher Education 'Product'

An extensive review of higher education in Australia was conducted in 2002 during which the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, consulted widely with universities, student groups, unions and other stakeholders.

As a result, in the 2003-04 Budget, the Government announced the Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future package of higher education reforms, which is currently being implemented. In response to Backing Australia's Future, the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (AVCC), the council of Australia's university presidents, released Achieving the Vision for Australia's Universities: Making Backing Australia's Future and Backing Australia's Ability Work. In it, the AVCC addressed the issue of demand.

Each year since 1999, the AVCC has conducted a survey of applications and offers. Table 2.2 sets out data on the number of eligible applicants and offers for undergraduate university places from 1999 to 2005. It also includes the estimated unmet demand figures, as calculated by the AVCC, for the years 2001 to 2005. The actual level of unmet demand is considerably lower than the number of applicants who do not receive an offer, as not all eligible applicants have realistic expectations or will accept offers.

Table 2.2 Applications and offers for undergraduate university places

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Eligible applicants	210 085	214 232	209 713	222 728	229 427	22 8414	221 588
Number not receiving an offer	44 708	46 370	40 449	53 925	63 118	63 329	42 734
% not receiving an offer	21%	22%	19%	24%	28%	28%	19%
Estimated unmet demand	na	na	16 200	23 700	35 700	36 100	19 600

Source: AVCC survey of Tertiary Admission Centres on undergraduate applications and offers 1999 to 2005

Unmet demand figures for 1999 and 2000 are not available on a comparable basis due to a change in AVCC method for calculating unmet demand.

Although there was a substantial expansion in university education over the 1990s, the AVCC points out that it did little to change the makeup of the student population. Quoting a paper prepared for the Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) by James et al (2004), the AVCC points out that students from richer families and regions are more likely to go to university:

- Students from the richest 25% of regions make up 38% of students
- Students from the poorest 25% of regions make up 15% of students.

Table 2.3 shows the level of Commonwealth supported students through to 2008

Table 2.3 Level of Commonwealth supported students 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Existing target	397 100	409 393	409 393	409 393	409 393

Additional Places	444	10 665	18 663	27 585	39 140
Total Commonwealth Supported Places	397 544	420 058	428 056	436 978	448 533

Source: DEST internal data

Universities are also able to fill transitional over-enrolment places between 2005 and 2008. This will total 13,476 Equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) by 2008.

2.4 Governance and Regulatory Framework for the Higher Education System

2.4.1 Funding Mechanism

The higher education sector comprises 37 public and 3 private universities, which are autonomous and self-accrediting as well as 4 other self-accrediting higher education institutions. In addition, there are over 100 other higher education institutions, such as theological colleges and institutions specialising in professional or artistic courses of study.

The Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) lists universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions, providing a link to the institutions homepage. The AQF also provides information on non self accrediting higher education institutions

The Australian Government's higher education programme is designed to support a diverse and accessible higher education sector of international standing meeting Australia's social and economic needs.

The Australian Government aims to enhance the long - term sustainability of higher education institutions through a partial deregulation of the sector that will give higher education institutions more control over their core funding and greater ability to diversify their revenues. The department will continue consultation with the sector and the implementation of new funding arrangements.

The Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), which replaced the previous operating grants programme that was in place under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, was implemented during 2005. This new Scheme is more transparent and equitable for higher education institutions than the arrangements it replaces.

Under the CGS, the Australian Government provides a contribution for each Commonwealth supported student through a funding agreement negotiated with each institution. The new agreements will specify the number of places and the discipline mix that the Australian Government will fund.

The agreement is negotiated in the first half of each year in the context of each institution's mission and strategic direction, consultation between the Australian Government and State/Territory governments and consideration of labour market needs.

These negotiated agreements are designed to match Australian Government priorities with the needs of individual institutions to ensure that all institutions have the flexibility and incentives to develop their respective strengths, differentiate their missions, and increase accessibility for their students.

Research funding is addressed in Chapter III.

2.4.2   *Accountability*

The Institution Assessment Framework (IAF) was introduced in 2004 to provide an accountability mechanism for publicly-funded higher education institutions.

The IAF aims to ensure that the institutions the Australian Government funds are sustainable and deliver the outputs for which they are funded, that their outcomes are of a high quality and that they comply with their legal obligations. The IAF produces an across-the-board assessment of institutional achievements based on quantitative and qualitative data from the institutions and external sources. The Department's assessment of an institution forms the basis of strategic bilateral discussions between the Department and the institution.

The data for the assessment are in large part drawn from information that is publicly available, or already produced by institutions, or already collected routinely from them.

The Framework has four principal elements:

1. Organisational Sustainability: The assessment of organisational sustainability is to provide assurance that institutions will be able to continue delivering the services the Government is funding. It considers:

    *   Leadership and strategic direction – for assurance that the university's strategic direction is clear, is appropriate for delivering Australian Government-funded places/programmes, and is achievable and that appropriate and sound planning processes are in place.
    *   Risk management - the university has structures and strategies in place to ensure that risk is adequately managed, so that continued provision of Australian Government-funded places/programmes is not threatened; and
    *   Financial accountability - the university continues to be financially viable.
    *   Staff profile

2. Achievements in high education provision: This aspect of the framework assesses the extent to which institutions have contributed to meeting the Government's higher education objectives. It considers:

    *   the provision of student places;
    *   fairness of student access and support;
    *   research activity, and how this relates to the institution's mission and particular strengths.

3. Quality of outcomes: DEST's approach focuses on analysis of trends across a range of outcome indicators rather than institutions' quality assurance processes. It notes any follow up from the findings of recent Australian Universities' Quality Agency audits.

4. Compliance: The compliance assessment ensures that institutions have acquitted their funds (the funds have been used for the purposes for which they were provided) and that institutions have complied with Commonwealth legislation and programme guidelines.

Detailed bilateral discussions between DEST and individual institutions occur biennially, though extra visits may be scheduled if there is a specific need for additional meetings (for example, if concerns arise from the assessment).

2.4.3   *Institutional Autonomy*

Institutional autonomy derives from the enabling legislation, which is in most cases, State based. Each Australian university has a statement of mission and strategic plan that serve to distinguish them from other institutions.

Universities have autonomy in the spending of block funding but not specific purpose funding.

2.5   Major National Agencies Involved in the Sector

The Department of Science, Education and Training and its Minister, Dr Brendan Nelson, are responsible for developing higher education policy at a national level. DEST is also the key funding agency for operating/block grants.

Quality assurance is the responsibility of the Australian Universities Quality Agency. Source: http://www.auqa.edu.au/aboutauqa/auqainfo/index.shtml

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is an independent, not-for-profit national agency established to promote, audit, and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education.

AUQA was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000. It operates independently of governments and the higher education sector under the direction of a Board of Directors. AUQA is owned by and receives core, operational funding from the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for higher education who are members of MCEETYA.

AUQA is responsible for:

- conducting quality audits of self-accrediting Australian higher education institutions and State and Territory Government higher education accreditation authorities on a five yearly cycle;
- providing public reports on the outcomes of these audits;
- commenting on the criteria for the recognition of new universities and accreditation of non-university higher education awards, as a result of information obtained during the audits of institutions and State and Territory accreditation processes; and
- reporting on the relative standards and international standing of the Australian higher education system and its quality assurance processes, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

The first cycle of audits is expected to conclude in early 2007. The direct costs of audits are met by the institutions and agencies subject to audit.

Academic audits of self-accrediting institutions are whole-of-institution audits based on a self-assessment and a site visit. AUQA investigates the extent to which the institutions are achieving their missions and objectives, and the adequacy of the institution's quality assurance arrangements in the key areas of teaching and learning, research and management, including the institution's overseas activities. They also assess the institution's success in maintaining standards consistent with university education in Australia.

AUQA makes use of panels of experts with substantial senior academic and administrative experience in higher education (in Australia and abroad) to undertake the audits.

Action taken in response to audit reports is the responsibility of the governing body of the institution concerned. Exceptionally, failure to respond appropriately to reports could lead to funding sanctions by the Commonwealth or regulatory action by the relevant State or Territory Government.

2.6   Development of National Higher Education Policies

National higher education policies, in the current environment, are developed by DEST in consultation with the sector and other stakeholders. A common approach has been for The Minister to release a discussion paper seeking stakeholder input, often complemented by targeted discussions. In 2005 extensive consultation processes have taken place on the implementation of a new fund to promote learning and teaching, on issues of university governance and appropriate responsibility for the Commonwealth, States and Territories, and in building and enhancing university diversity.

2.7   Characteristics of Inter Institutional Relationships

Universities are being encouraged to diversify their funding and revenue sources through a range of joint ventures, partnerships and engagement with industry and the community.

At the same time the Australian Government is providing record funding for higher education in 2005 and 2006 of $7.8 billion, not including its support for research, and $11 billion over 2005-2014. In addition, further support is provided under new programmes designed to promote collaboration, including regional collaboration, as well as in areas of governance and workplace reform, and in the promotion of excellence in teaching and learning.

Commonwealth funding, places and support for research are increasing strongly, and additional competitive funding is made available on the basis of submissions and on performance.

The Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund (CASR) aims specifically to foster collaboration between higher education providers and business and other groups, with funding of $41 million between 2005-08. Projects supported under the Fund in 2005 included the establishment of a collaborative Institute for Enterprise and Regional Development in north-west Tasmania.

2.8   Dialogue Between Government Ministries

Higher education policy is set by the Minister for Education, Science and Training. There are two key Ministries that impact on HEI-regional engagement - the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), and the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS).

At a political level, dialogue occurs between Ministers through the Cabinet. Cabinet is a committee of government ministers chaired by the Prime Minister. It is the main decision making body of the executive government. The ministry includes about thirty members and senators. Cabinet includes about seventeen senior ministers. Only cabinet ministers attend cabinet meetings unless there is a specific matter that requires the presence of junior ministers. All cabinet discussions and decisions are secret although records of cabinet meetings are opened to the public after thirty years.

The relevant Minister for DEST and DOTARS – the Minister for Education, Science and Training, and the Ministers for Transport and Regional Services and for Local Government respectively – are members of Cabinet.

In June 1993, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) formed the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). Membership of the Council

comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island having observer status.

The areas of responsibility covered by MCEETYA include vocational education and training, higher education, employment and linkages between employment/labour market programs and education and training, adult and community education.

Functions of MCEETYA include coordination of strategic policy at the national level, negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives and interests (including principles for Australian Government/State relations) in MCEETYA's areas of responsibility, negotiations on scope and format of national reporting on areas of responsibility, sharing of information and collaborative use of resources towards agreed objectives and priorities, and coordination of communication with, and collaboration between, related national structures.

The Joint Committee on Higher Education (JCHE) is the body which advises MCEETYA on higher education matters. Its membership consists of representatives from the Commonwealth and each State and Territory department with responsibility for higher education, with the chair elected by the members of the Committee. The JCHE plays a key role in advising MCEETYA on higher education policy, including at the recent MCEETYA meeting of November 2005 which was devoted to key higher education and international education policy issues.

2.9   Regional Dimension of National Higher Education Policy

One of the outcomes arising from the policy paper Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future was a recognition by the Commonwealth Government that:

> *"Universities that provide places at regional campuses face higher costs as a result of location, size and history. Regional campuses generally have less potential to diversify revenue sources, a smaller capacity to compete for fee paying students and a narrower industrial base providing fewer opportunities for commercial partnerships." (Nelson 2003, 16)*

From 2004, the Commonwealth provided an additional $145.9 million over five years to incorporate a regional loading for students enrolled at regional campuses in recognition of the additional costs facing regional universities due to the remoteness of their geographical locations and disadvantages of scale due to smaller student numbers.

For the purpose of that loading, a regional campus was defined as one located outside a mainland State capital city area in a population centre with fewer than 250,000 people. Having satisfied the initial test of regionality, a campus is then recognized within one of four bands, established according to two criteria – distance from the closest mainland State capital, and size of institution:

- Band 1: Northern Territory (30% loading) and Thursday Island
- Band 2: Distant (More than 300km from mainland capital) and small (less than 10,000 EFTSU) (7.5%)
- Band 3: Proximate and small or distant and large (5%)
- Band 4: Proximate and large (2.4%).

Additional places were allocated as part of the package taking into account the outcomes of discussions with States and Territories on labour market needs and anticipated population growth.

At a broader level, the establishment of USC as Australia's newest public university after a twenty-five year gap, gives weight to the argument that regional considerations also play a role in decision making as to where to locate new institutions.

It should be said that regional engagement is not, however, imposed on institutions by government as a formal requirements. Universities have discretion as to whether and to what degree regional engagement forms part of their mission. Having established a mission which encompasses regional engagement, however, the university can then be judged on its performance against that part of its mission (eg through the AUQA institutional audit process – fitness for mission).

Since the Research Quality Framework Stakeholders' Forum in Canberra on 2 June this year, there has been, and continues to be, considerable discussion and debate within the sector on the issue of 'third stream' or knowledge transfer activities in universities. The Minister has noted the views that have been put to him and looks forward to further debate as stakeholders continue to develop their ideas on this issue. This issue is addressed in Chapter III.

Opportunities to access funding for regionally engagement initiatives in partnership with regional stakeholders are available under the Regional Partnerships Scheme, administered by DOTARS.

The Australian Government is providing $23.4 million from 2001-2 to 2007-08 to extend Regional Protection Funding that helps regional universities to maintain and build their capacity to carry out research which is of benefit to regional Australia. The Regional Protection Fund (RPF) helps to protect regional institutions from losses of income arising from the Government's 1999 Knowledge and Innovation reforms to the funding of university research and research training. The establishment of the RPF recognises that regional higher education institutions play vital economic, social and cultural roles in their local communities and that they generate employment and contribute to the development of regional Australia.

The Institution Assessment Framework (IAF), introduced in 2004, involves assessment by DEST of universities' sustainability – in planning processes and financial viability, achievements in higher education provision, quality of outcomes and compliance with legislation and guidelines. Universities are visited every two years for bilateral discussions about the assessment. The IAF assesses university community engagement based on publicly available documentation.

2.10   Profile and Character of Universities in the Region

2.10.1   *University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Wide Bay*

The USQ Group consists of three campuses, the main Toowoomba Campus, Wide Bay Campus, and the newly completed Springfield Campus. The initial scope of the USQ Wide Bay campus development was based on a January 1996 report on local needs and directions commissioned by USQ. The definite need for a university campus in this region was established and the development of the Wide Bay Campus was achieved with the collaboration of USQ Toowoomba and the Hervey Bay City Council.

The USQ Wide Bay Campus was constructed in Hervey Bay in 1996/1997 after an earlier presence from 1988 within the Hervey Bay TAFE College Precinct. The Hervey Bay City Precinct, developed in conjunction with the Hervey Bay City Council, co-located the USQ campus with a library, art gallery and cultural centre to be shared by USQ students and the general community. Stage One of USQ Wide Bay was completed and occupied for Semester 1, 1997 and included one building (A Block) housing administration, teaching rooms, offices and computer labs. Stage 2 of construction

(completed in 2003) included a second building (B Block) which houses nursing labs, a lecture auditorium, teaching rooms and administration offices. Stage 3 of the campus has been approved and commencement of construction of a new building is scheduled for 2006. This new building will include staff accommodation, post graduate student space, student support services, a bookshop and an expanded refectory. The Queensland Government has also recently approved $1.5 million towards completion of Stage 3 of the campus.

The campus provides a focus for on campus and distance education students enrolled in the local region. Currently there are four faculties at the Wide Bay campus comprising of Arts, Business, Education and Science (Nursing), offering a total of 50 programs. Over the last 8 years, all faculties have experienced grown in both number of programs offered and student enrolments. Initially the campus offered programs within the Business and Education faculties, and as the need for particular courses within these faculty programs arose, Sciences and Arts were introduced. USQ Wide Bay strengths include Education (Early Childhood, Primary, Middle and Senior Schooling levels), Accounting, Computing, General Commerce, Marketing, Mass Communication, Tourism Management, Nursing, Tertiary Preparation and Community Welfare and Development programs. As at 2005, approximately 700 students attend Wide Bay with approximately an extra 300 studying externally. The campus currently employs 66 staff made up from Arts (5), Business (11), Education (26), Sciences (9) and general campus staff (15). Detailed metrics of both Toowoomba and Wide Bay as provided in Appendix X.

USQ is a learner focused and community oriented University, which is committed to flexible distance and on campus education. USQ Wide Bay's vision is to be seen as a major contributor to our status as Australia's leading transnational educator, including a rapidly developing international profile for the campus. USQ Wide Bay should be seen as providing an unrivalled degree of support to students and as giving participants the most impressive educational experience imaginable.   In relationships with the region, it should be seen as the higher education provider of choice. USQ Wide Bay educational contributions should be characterised by innovation, care and lasting relationships.

The mission of USQ is to develop, enrich and serve its local and global communities. USQ Wide Bay works with its stakeholders to develop a knowledgeable and cultured society enriched through learning, scholarship, research, intellectual engagement and social equity.   USQ serves its multicultural community by preparing global citizens for life-long learning in a diverse and changing world. USQ maintains its ability to pursue its mission through a continual process of introspection, analysis, integration, innovation and improvement.

Its goal is to contribute to the community by developing a University City built on community partnerships, service and engagement. As a relatively small regional campus, USQ Wide Bay offers students and staff from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to become members of a supportive, friendly community, which fosters equitable opportunities. Equity demands that all members of our communities are treated with dignity and respect. Regional engagement will prove integral in providing USQ with opportunities to continue a balanced involvement with research projects, community events and celebrations embracing the multicultural nature of the region. USQ Wide Bay initiatives include: developing strong educational communities, contributing to the building of social and cultural capital development with the communities and contributing to the environmental and economic development of Fraser Coast and the whole Wide Bay Burnett region. USQ Wide Bay's territorial focus is initially the Fraser Coast region, but it will work in collaboration with the Central Queensland University (CQU) in Bundaberg to be the only two Universities servicing the Wide Bay Burnett region.

2.10.2   University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)

The establishment of the University of the Sunshine Coast in 1996 created the first public university on a greenfield site in Australia in over 20 years. Indeed, representatives of the Sunshine Coast region had long lobbied for a university to be established in the area, recognising a need to provide local residents access to tertiary education. They also recognised that the establishment of a university would provide unprecedented economic benefits to the region.

Founded, as it was, to serve the needs of the wider Sunshine Coast community, its Mission is:

> *To be the major catalyst for the innovative and sustainable economic, cultural and educational advancement of the region, through the pursuit of international standards in teaching and research.*

The first discussions for a university in the region began in 1973, but it wasn't until 1989 that the Commonwealth government approved the establishment of a higher education institution (HEI). In 1992 A$9.5 million was allocated to develop the Sunshine Coast campus. A 100-hectare site at Sippy Downs was selected for the new HEI. A former cane farm, the site was chosen because it lay at the geographical heart of the Sunshine Coast and its shires, and was accessible from the Bruce Highway and other major transport routes.

On July 1, 1994 Queensland Parliament passed *The Sunshine Coast University College Act, 1994*, creating Queensland's seventh public university. The first sod was turned on site on September 4, 1994 with construction commencing soon after. Stage I was completed well before the University's first day of business – February 26, 1996, when 524 new students were welcomed onto campus.

Student Population Growth

At the March census date of 2005, the University had a total student population of 4280 - an increase of 10.82 percent on 2004 (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Student Load at USC
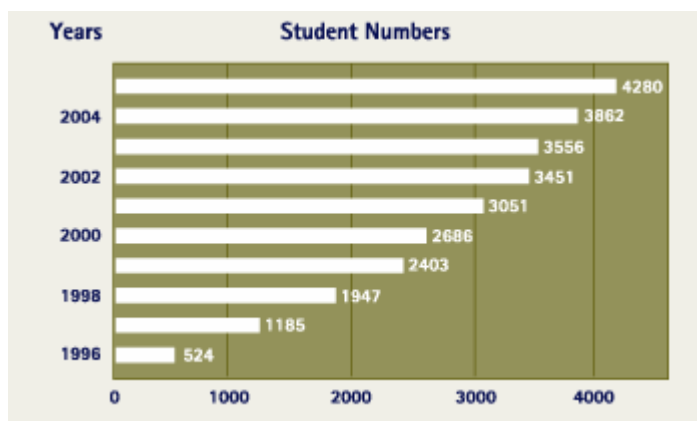
Source: USC

The breakdown for the University's student load in 2004 is provided in Table 2.4.

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Table 2.4: Student Load

Student load	2004 EFTSL*
Operating grant student load	2296.916
Research Training Scheme places	24
Other (includes full fee-paying international, postgraduate and non-award student load)	656.625
Total Student Enrolment 2003 (all sources)	2977.541

*EFTSL – Equivalent Full-Time Student Load
Source: USC

Faculty/Gender Split

Table 2.5: Faculty/combined program population and gender split

Faculty	Population 2005	Female (%) 2005
Arts and Social Sciences	1 110	70
Business	1 763	48
Science, Health and Education	1 043	55
Non-award	365	72
Total	4 280	58

Source: USC

First in Family to Attend University

The University continues to achieve its aim of enabling people to access university education, with 53 percent of the undergraduate student population (excluding Honours students) the first in their family to attend university (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: First in family to attend university

Student's age	<=20	21-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
First person in family to attend university	961	291	125	188	112	29	1 706
Percentage of undergraduate student population	52	49	54	57	58	44	53%

Source: USC

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Age Distribution of Students

In 2003, 62.2 percent of the student population was mature-aged (21 years and over). The average age was 26, however the Under 20 age group had the largest number of students, and represented 37.8 percent of the student population (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: Student age spread

Program type	<=20	21-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total	Avg Age
Bachelors	1 839	593	231	328	192	66	3 249	23
Per Cent	56.6	18.3	7.1	10.1	5.9	2.0	100%	
Honours		8	9	15	11	4	47	35
Per Cent		17	19.1	31.9	23.4	8.5	100%	
Postgraduate coursework	1	41	143	215	108	41	549	34
Per Cent	0.2	7.5	26	39.2	19.7	7.5	100%	
Higher degrees by research		4	9	14	28	17	72	42
Per Cent		5.6	12.5	19.4	38.9	23.6	100%	
Non-award	193	97	30	20	22	3	365	22
Per Cent	53	26.4	8.2	5.5	6	0.8	100%	
Total	2 033	742	421	592	361	131	4 280	25
Total Per Cent	47.5	17.3	9.8	13.8	8.4	3.1	100%	

Source: USC

International Students by Faculty and Mode

In 2005, 694 students from 48 countries were enrolled at the University (Table 2.8). The highest number of international students studying on-campus was from the United States of America through the Study Abroad program. A large number of international students studying on-campus also came from Germany and Japan. International students studying off-campus include those undertaking programs online and programs offered in Fiji, Malaysia and through Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Table 2.8: International students

| Faculty | Students | | | |
	On campus	Off campus/ Online	Online	Total
Arts and Social Sciences	52			52
Business	91	332	90	423
Science, Health and Education	30			30
Non-award (Exchange/Study Abroad)	189			189
Total	362	332	90	694

Source: USC

Permanent Home Residence of Students Studying on Campus

The Sunshine Coast community continued to show high demand for a regional University with 75 percent of students being permanent residents on the Sunshine Coast (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Home residence of students

State/Region	Students	
Sunshine Coast		
Caboolture Shire	222	
Caloundra Shire	652	
Cooloola Shire	70	
Kilcoy Shire	5	
Maroochy Shire	1601	
Noosa Shire	273	
Total Sunshine Coast		*2823*
Other Queensland		
Brisbane	319	
Central West	1	
Darling Downs	27	
Far North	9	
Fitzroy	23	
Mackay	6	
Moreton North	6	
Moreton South	26	
Northern	2	
South West	4	
Wide Bay	39	
No information	1	
Total Other Queensland		*463*
Other Australia		
ACT	6	
New South Wales	65	
Northern Territory	6	
South Australia	7	
Tasmania	4	
Victoria	23	
Western Australia	1	
Total Interstate		*112*
Total Overseas		*370*
Total	*3 768*	

Source: USC

Graduate Numbers

As at the last graduation ceremony in 2005, the University has graduated 3 112 students. Since the first graduation ceremony in 1999, 145 graduates have returned to study at the University of the Sunshine Coast and have graduated with another degree.

Table 2.10: Number of degrees conferred

Number of degrees conferred	
1999	132
2000	283
2001	356
2002	551
2003	612
2004	686
2005 (to date)	642

Source: USC

Graduate Employment Outcomes

In 2004, 43.0 percent of graduates, who were Australian citizens and permanent residents, responded to the Graduate Destination Survey. The equivalent National response rate was 61.7 percent.

The survey results showed that 84.8 percent of Australian resident undergraduate degree respondents were employed full-time or part-time, or enrolled in full-time study. This was an increase of 4.0 percent on the previous year. Of those employed full-time, 51.5 percent were working on the Sunshine Coast and 19.2 percent were working in Brisbane. The median salary for these graduates was AUD 36 000 and for those for whom it was their first full-time job, it was AUD 35 000.
Source: Graduate Careers Australia - for National figures

Graduate Satisfaction

In 2004, 39.2 percent of graduates responded to the Course Experience Questionnaire. The equivalent National response rate was 44.8 percent. Respondents gave broad agreement percentages in relation to the Course Experience Questionnaire scales/index as follows. The number of institutions that used each CEQ scale is also shown.

Table 2.11: Graduate satisfaction

Course Experience Questionnaire Scale/index	USC % agreement	National % agreement	No of Institutions
Good Teaching Scale	88.8	81.5	44
Generic Skills Scale	88.6	88	44
Overall Satisfaction Index	90.8	89.3	44
Clear Goals and Standards Scale	84.6	80.8	26
Appropriate Workload Scale	74.2	74.7	20
Appropriate Assessment Scale	86.7	83.3	24
Student Support Scale	81	84.1	12

Source: Graduate Careers Australia - for National figures

Staff Qualifications

USC has the highest proportion of academic staff with Doctoral or Masters qualifications of any university in Queensland - and fifth highest of all Australian universities.

Library Resources

The Library houses more than 85 000 print volumes and 15 000 digital resources and has a 19:1 student:library seat ratio - the highest of any Australian public university.

In 2003 the University of the Sunshine Coast was ranked number one in Australia for total budget expenditure spent on information resources, according to the Council of Australian University Libraries' statistics.

Information Technology Resources

The University has a student:computer ratio of 8:1. The University received a five-star rating for electronic support for students by the *Good Universities Guide*.

2.11   Regional Responsibility for Funding and Management of Universities

Funding of universities is provided centrally by the Commonwealth Government and administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training. Consequently there are no regional organizations with strategic responsibility over the funding and management of HEIs and nor is there direct financing or management of HEI's at a regional level. Nonetheless, there is an emphasis on projects undertaken by HEI's and regional stakeholders in partnership and the Australian Government encourages universities to build strong links with their regions as a way of ensuring higher education provision and research activity that is regionally relevant, benefits local communities and students from rural and regional areas.

CHAPTER III: CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH TO REGIONAL INNOVATION

A range of organisations in Australia play major roles in research across the public and private sectors, and across national, state and territory jurisdictions. They include:
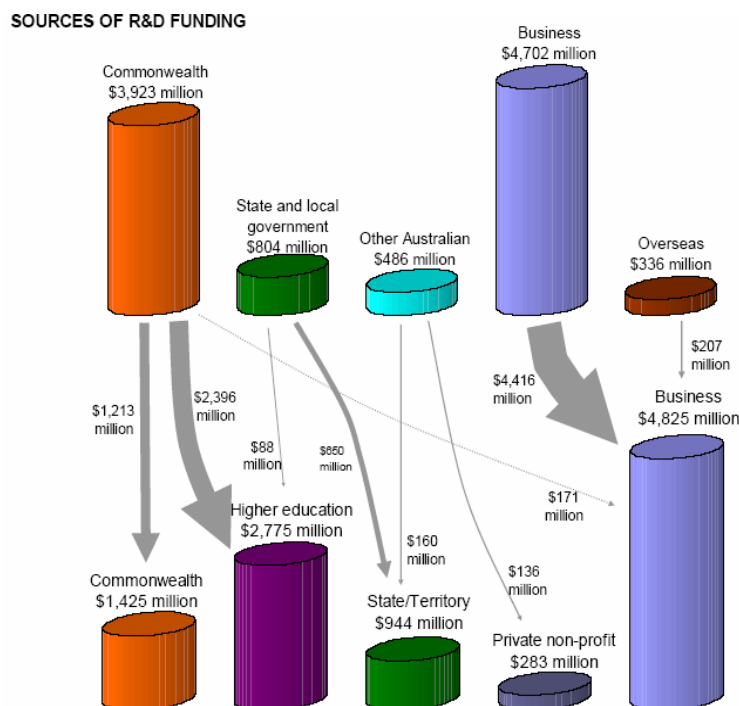
- 39 higher education institutions (universities)
- Science agencies – the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
- Organisations such as Cooperative Research Centres and Centres of Excellence
- Some large, and thousands of small, private companies in all industries such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and services.

These organisations have witnessed considerable change and growth in funding for research and development in Australia over the past 10 years, including an injection of about $8.3 billion for innovation under a major new program *Backing Australia's Ability* and its recommitment *Backing Australia's Ability – Building Our Future Through Science and Innovation*. Some key features of the changing research environment have been:

- Increased support for collaborative research
- An increasing commitment by State Governments (particularly in terms of infrastructure)
- The identification of national research priorities and
- Increasing emphasis on targeted engagement between business and the public sector and on the commercial application of research.

The figure below portrays the major flows of funding for research and development in Australia for 2000-2001. The majority of funds for the HE sector are derived from the Commonwealth Government, with minimal support from business. Indeed Australia is one of the few countries where business funding is lower than government funding of R+D as a percentage of GDP.

Figure 3.1: Major flow of funding for R+D in Australia, 2000 – 2001

SOURCES OF R&D FUNDING

Commonwealth
$3,923 million

State and local government
$804 million

Other Australian
$486 million

Business
$4,702 million

Overseas
$336 million

$1,213 million

$2,396 million

$88 million

$650 million

$4,416 million

$207 million

Business
$4,825 million

$171 million

Higher education
$2,775 million

$160 million

$136 million

Commonwealth
$1,425 million

State/Territory
$944 million

Private non-profit
$283 million

Source: Science and Innovation Taskforce, 2003

3.1 Commonwealth Funding

The Commonwealth provides support for research through two basic mechanisms - performance based block research funding schemes and peer reviewed competitive research funding schemes.

3.1.1 Performance Based Block Research Funding Schemes

Performance based block research funding schemes include the:

- Research Training Scheme (RTS),
- Institutional Grants Scheme (ITS), and
- Research Infrastructure Block Grants Scheme (RIBG).

The *Research Training Scheme* (RTS) provides an annual block grant to eligible universities to support research training for students undertaking Doctorate and Masters degrees by research. In 2005 a modified safety net was implemented, whereby a university is protected from losing more than 5% of their RTS allocation from year to year. This may be of particular value to smaller, regionally located universities that may have fluctuations in performance. Smaller higher education providers are also entitled to apply for additional RTS funds to assist with emerging research training. USC is one of six higher education providers who qualify for these funds from 2005.

The *Institutional Grants Scheme* (IGS) provides annual block grants to eligible universities to support research and research training activities, based primarily on research income data. Universities have discretion in the way they spend their IGS grant, and funding may be used for any

activity related to research. To minimise adverse impacts on higher education providers, a safety net is applied to IGS grants. The safety net measure ensures that a higher education providers IGS grant will not fall below 95 per cent of its previous year's grant indexed to current prices. This safety net is an important element for smaller and regionally based universities that may have fluctuation in their performance.

The *Regional Protection Fund* (RPF) helps to protect designated regional higher education providers from losses of income against their indexed 2001 RTS and IGS combined grants. The RPF was established in 2001 to provide protection from 2002 to 2004 and has now been extended through to 2008. Funding under this programme is limited to $3 million annually, indexed to current prices, and represents 0.1% of R+D funding to universities. The available funding is distributed to designated HEIs in proportion to their combined RTS and IGS loss against their indexed 2001 benchmark. USQ is a designated regional higher education provider, but USC is not.

Finally, the *Research Infrastructure Block Grants* (RIBG) scheme provides annual grants to enhance the development and maintenance of research infrastructure. The RIGB is allocated according to the relative success of each university in attracting research funds, as calculated from schemes in the Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR).

Figure 3.1 summarises the performance of USC in these funding schemes over the past five years and shows the rapid development of a research culture. The figures from USQ Wide Bay are difficult to calculate as the grants provided to USQ Wide Bay are based on overall institutional performance.

Figure 3.2: Changes in performance based block research funding 2001 – 2005
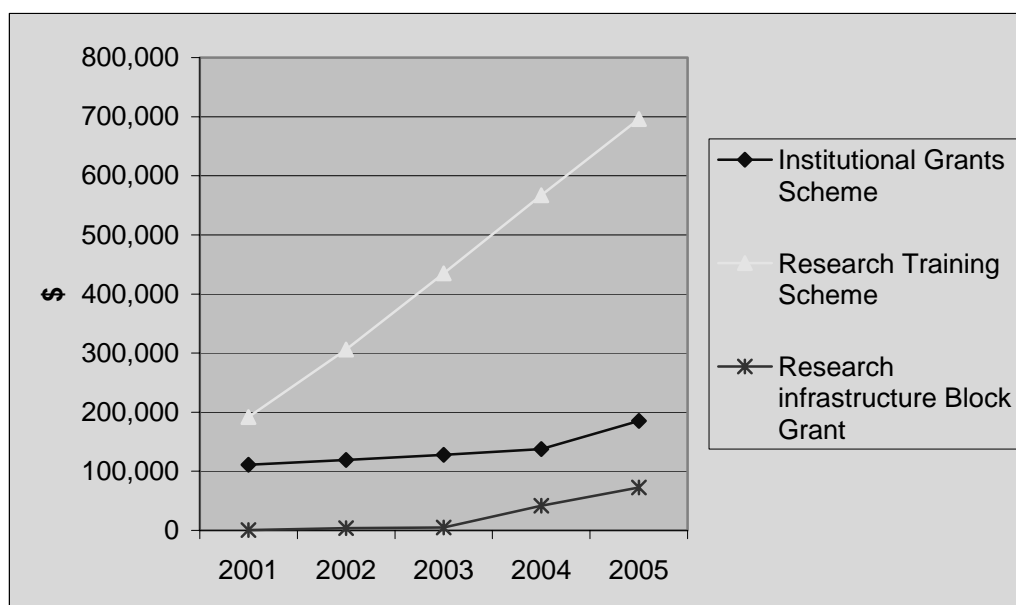
Source: USC

3.1.2   *Research Quality Framework (RQF)*

The funding arrangements for block grants to universities are currently under review by DEST. The Federal Minister, Brendan Nelson, has indicated that in future the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS) and at least 50% of the Research Training Scheme (RTS) will be allocated according to the Research Quality Framework, which will be designed to distribute research funding to reward "quality of research". In addition, the Minister has indicated that DEST will conduct a process, with the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), to explore ways in which the outcomes of the RQF will impact on funding distributed by them.

The RQF will focus on both:

- the quality of research including its intrinsic merit and academic impact - academic impact relates to the recognition of the originality of research by peers and its impact on the development of the same or related discipline areas, and
- its broader impact or use, i.e. the extent to which research is successfully applied - broader impact or usefulness relates to the recognition by qualified end-users that quality research has been successfully applied.

The emphasis is on original basic research and its application, and the main features of the proposed RQF are that:

- Groupings of researchers in an area will be assessed
- Universities will provide evidence portfolios of individual researcher's outputs within nominated research groupings, and
- The RQF Assessment Panel will assess both the quality and the impact of submitted research.

As younger institutions with emerging research areas of strength, USC and USQ Wide Bay are likely to be disadvantaged under the RQF model, which is likely to favour large institutions with a critical mass of established researchers at the professorial level.

There are no rewards in the RQF for success in 'regional engagement', and under the RQF preferred model, research impact will not be assessed or rewarded in the same way as research quality. This, therefore, is likely to favour highly theoretical academic research with little connection to end users.

3.1.3   *National Competitive Grants Program*

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has established a range of competitive funding schemes for the support of research and research training under the framework of the National Competitive Grants Programme (NCGP) in the following National Research Priority Areas:

- An Environmentally Sustainable Australia
- Promoting and Maintaining Good Health
- Frontier Technologies for Building and Transforming Australian Industries and
- Safeguarding Australia.

Funding under the NCGP is based on open competition among investigator-initiated research proposals that are subject to national and international peer assessment.

Under the NCGP, the ARC supports a number of distinct funding schemes, including Discovery and Linkage grants.

ARC Discovery

ARC Discovery grants are designed to support fundamental research of excellence by individuals and teams. It is a strictly competitive grant with no recognition of region. Only one such grant has been awarded to USC (Appendix 6).

ARC Linkage

ARC Linkage provides a number of granting styles, including Linkage Projects, Linkage Industry Fellowships, Linkage Infrastructure, and Linkage Centres, amongst others. Linkage Projects grants make up the bulk of the allocation and these support collaborative research projects between higher education researchers and industry with an allocation to projects of benefit to regional and rural communities. Proposals must contain an industry contribution and the interaction with actual or potential users of research outcomes is a critical element in Linkage Projects.

These Linkage funds are awarded on the basis of quality and there is good potential for higher education providers with strong regional engagement practices to take advantage of this grant type, and it has been the main source of federally funded grants to both USC and USQ (Appendix 6). USC has won 6 such grants bringing into the region approximately $700,000 in such funds. Last year USQ had a most successful round of Australian Research Council grant applications, with a total of four grants awarded for funding in 2005 and a fifth on reserve. However, the USQ Toowoomba campus secured all of these grants. Currently Wide Bay Sciences (Nursing) have applied for an ARC Linkage Grant that will be notified in November for about $208,700 (total) and have secured a Department of Health and Ageing grant for $32,909 (Federal Government initiative with the Department of Health Care).

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) also provides research funding in the health and medical fields, but neither university has accessed these funds.

3.1.4   Queensland Government Funding

The Queensland Government's investment in research and development (R&D) infrastructure is one of the central features of its Smart State vision. Over recent years, significant government funding has been assigned to infrastructure that supports strategic and applied research of major importance to Queensland's economic and social development.

The Government's *Smart State Research Facilities Fund* (SSRFF) provides funding on a competitive basis for R&D infrastructure in any scientific or technical field where Queensland has a comparative or potential advantage. So far, $170 million has been committed under the SSRFF.

Almost $169M has been allocated to projects to date to:

- Stimulate the level of R&D activity (including biodiscovery) in Queensland
- Provide access to unique and 'world class' research facilities for Queensland's industries
- Extend Queensland's comparative advantage in existing industries and build upon competitiveness particularly in knowledge intensive industries
- Create a net economic benefit for Queensland, preferably within regional areas.

Late in 2005, the Queensland Government will launch the new *Innovation Building Fund*, which will operate on similar terms to the SSRFF, providing $128 million over four years for research infrastructure and equipment.

Some recent investments by the Queensland Government have been in the fields of molecular bioscience, health and biomedical innovation, brain research, cellular and molecular therapies, bioengineering and nanotechnology, glycomics, a creative industries precinct, engineered fibre composites, animal science and tropical forestry. To date the allocations have been heavily Brisbane centric, though a partnership arrangement is currently being negotiated for USC to access Griffith University's Smart State Water Research Facility. A $10 million Smart State Grant was awarded to the USQ Toowoomba's Fibre Composites Design and Development Centre (FCDD), however, Wide Bay campus did not receive any of this funding.

3.1.5   Other Grants

There are a wide variety of smaller, often community focussed, funds that have been accessed by both USQ Wide Bay and USC. A summary of grants to USC and USQ Wide Bay by granting agency is outlined in Appendix 6.

3.2   Framework Conditions for Promoting Research and Innovation

3.2.1   Legal Framework

In August 2001, the *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research* was published. These reflect a unified approach to the management of intellectual property (IP) rights arising from publicly funded research where that research is funded by grants from the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). The *National Principles*, the *Patents Act 1990* and the common law have influenced university policies governing the ownership, protection and exploitation of IP.

The benefits of a well-articulated national policy, matched with strong institutional capacity capable of structuring agreements that protect the integrity of both the corporation and the university, are clear. It:

- Promotes a collaborative spirit that drives regional innovation
- Brings corporate and academic scientists into close working relationships
- Provides potential financial stability to the university and access to corporate facilities
- Transforms novel discoveries into publicly accessible products and technologies
- Reduces the time between basic discoveries and the development of products

USC is currently revising its IP and commercialisation policy whilst USQ Wide Bay is currently working with USQ Toowoomba to develop a commercialisation plan to maximize financial returns from research and IP.

3.2.2   *Incentives and Barriers in University-Industry Relationships*

Universities in Australia are increasingly expected to establish explicit linkages with other educational sectors and with business and industry, and to contribute directly to national economic and social objectives. Pressure thus exists from many sources for service standards to be maintained, and in many cases improved. For smaller universities like USC and USQ Wide Bay, the identification and exploitation of niche strengths is an increasingly important strategy to enable market differentiation, and in the case of research, effective involvement with regional industries.

According to the Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC), for some researchers it is the barriers they face during the commercialisation process that deters them from entering the commercial arena, such as:

- Lack of access to early stage capital
- A shortage of the necessary management and entrepreneurial skills
- The absence of existing relationships between researchers and industry
- A lack of skill in negotiating equitable commercial arrangements and protecting the integrity of ideas and solutions
- Unclear or inadequate incentives and infrastructure to support and reward academics and researchers who engage in commercial activity
- A cultural gap between research/education institutions and business.

At both USC and USQ Wide Bay commercialisation has particular benefits, most notably to heighten an academic's profile and to provide increased access to research funds. Nonetheless, researchers traditionally lack the necessary skills and sometimes lack interest in generating commercial returns. Two options for addressing this issue may be 'growing' another strand of researchers with commercial expertise, or fostering a body of service providers with specialist skills in negotiating the specific interests of researchers in the commercial environment. There are difficulties with both approaches, particularly given the interdisciplinary nature of some of the research teams.

One of the key barriers to university-industry relationships, particularly on the Sunshine Coast, is the lack of high quality IT infrastructure.

USC is currently in negotiations to access the *Australian Research and Education Network*, which is a strategic framework for the development of a national high bandwidth backbone to service higher education providers and the wider research community, and will provide high capacity connections that will facilitate a greater degree of research collaboration. A 2.5 Gigabits per second

backbone link between Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville is already in place and the connection to USC is proposed in the future. Unfortunately there have been numerous delays in this connection, and no guarantee of resolution.

USC thus finds its connections with the knowledge precinct at Sippy Downs (see Chapter V), other regional partners, and the global knowledge community severely hampered by a lack of dedicated carrier capacity.

3.3   The Institutions within Their National Context

Based on the above summary of Commonwealth and State Government research funding policy, a number of general observations about R+D on the Sunshine – Fraser Coast can be made.

1. Research funding for universities within Australia is highly dependent upon Commonwealth government policy. This is especially so for smaller universities and for those outside the metropolitan areas. Whilst regional protection is notionally available for infrastructural block grants, it is minimal.

2. The Australian business sector (relative to the business sector in other OECD and developed countries) does not have a mindset to engage in R+D partnerships with universities. Ironically, many smaller regionally based institutions have a strong desire to collaborate with regional business.

3. Whilst there are competitive grant programs in place that encourage universities to seek business partners, there appear to be few incentives for industry to seek university researcher collaboration (as opposed to any other mechanism of R+D, such as developing in-house capabilities, inter-business relationships, purchasing intellectual property, working with CSIRO and so on).

4. For newly emerging regionally based institutions, and especially for a green fields institution such as USC, balancing the limited resources at its disposal between the development of teaching and research programmes is problematic.

The two universities thus find themselves with limited research metrics relative to other more established universities, a feature related partly to their stage of development and partly to funding priorities and strategies essentially outside of their control.

Nonetheless, both USQ Wide Bay and USC are committed to delivering significant and internationally recognised, regionally focussed, research outcomes over the next few years, and this is clearly reflected in their research mission statements. There have been significant shifts in research attitudes and outcomes in the past couple of years, with strong indications of further improvements in the coming decade. Despite their current research metrics there remains an air of excitement on both campuses (perhaps associated with the rapidly developing region) of building nationally recognised institutions over the coming decades. They face significant challenges, however, and the following part of this chapter will outline the failure of the national policy and funding programme *Backing Australia's Ability* to recognise regional needs and the demands that these institutions face.

3.4   Responding to Regional Needs and Demands

3.4.1   Regional Dimension to Higher Education Research Policy

In May 2004, the Prime Minister announced that Quality and Accessibility Frameworks for Publicly Funded Research would be established as part of *Backing Australia's Ability – Building our*

Future through Science and Innovation. The aim of the Research Quality Framework initiative was *'to develop the basis for an improved assessment of the quality and impact of publicly funded research and an effective process to achieve this'.*

The Australian Government's Innovation report 2004-2005 '…demonstrates how government, industry and the research sector are making great advances in science and innovation and producing economic and social benefits… The Australian Government's Innovation Report 2004-05 celebrates many great achievements in science and innovation. It shows that innovation is thriving in our universities, government agencies and industries…' (Prime Minister's Foreword). Unfortunately there is no formal recognition of regions in this report nor is there an exploration of regional disparity in funding, innovation and entrepreneurial activity. The term 'region' is used synonymously throughout the report to describe smaller areas of Australia, rural Australia, and Australia as a whole.

The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) is the Commonwealth department responsible for regional development – *'Helping to ensure that regional communities have better access to opportunities and services and are able to take the lead in their own planning and development.'* Although funds to support various educational reviews or fora have been allocated, a direct and strategic involvement in education is not apparent.

DOTARS funds Area Consultative Committees (ACC), which are non profit, community based organisations managed by a committee made up of business leaders and representatives from the key economic development and community sectors in a region. The Sunshine-Fraser Coast region spans two ACCs – the Sunshine Coast Area Consultative Committee (SCACC) and the Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee (WBBACC) – the mission of the former being *'To facilitate strong regional partnerships, to continue the development of a sustainable and vibrant region'.* The ACCs administer the Regional Partnership grants to which small highly engaged research projects can access funds.

The Queensland Government has been increasingly active in research and innovation. The Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation (DSDTI) is Queensland's lead agency in relation to economic development and is the focal point for raising and negotiating matters impacting on the State's development with other levels of government. Under the *Smart State* banner, DSDTI contributes to economic growth by:

- Fostering a positive business environment for business and industry
- Promoting sustainable regional development
- Actively pursuing strong partnerships with key industry sectors
- Aggressively seeking to identify major new opportunities to assist the State's development
- Involving the private sector in capturing these opportunities
- Strengthening the State's export performance

It does this through a state wide network of State Development Centres that provide strategic regional leadership and economic development services. Regional offices for the Sunshine-Fraser Coast are in Maroochydore and Maryborough.

Smart State funds support about 12 research centres and facilities, but all are headquartered in Brisbane. Likewise, the Queensland Government contributes to numerous Centres for Cooperative Development housed in the State.

In summary, there appears to be minimal regional dimension to higher education research policy in Australia.

3.4.2 *Sunshine – Fraser Coast: Regional Dimensions to University Research Policy*

Both universities have articulated a strong regional engagement component in their Strategic Plans as well as their Research and Research Training Management Plans.

The USQ institutional Mission Statement, the Values Statement and the Vision Statement all underpin USQ's policy on research and scholarship. In 1995, USQ developed its Research Profile in the form of a matrix of niche research areas and levels of attainment benchmarked against international, national and 'Early Career' standards. This profile acknowledged that the university should develop expertise in areas addressing regionally important outcomes and recognise special research skills among new and existing staff. In October 2004, USQ undertook the development of a major new research strategy, as a specific enhancement of the USQ Strategic Plan. The USQ Research Strategy comprises a suite of inter-related policies designed to build the University's research profile. Within the broader policy framework, there are mechanisms for concentration of research endeavour, staffing strategies and funding schemes that will induce a much higher rate of quality research output. USQ acknowledges that it is a small player in the research environment nationally, but emphasises the fundamental importance of research and research training in the profile of any university, particularly in a region.

It is USQ Wide Bay's goal to develop a research concentration of mainly regional prominence, which will have a major impact on its regional communities and to build a unit that will be the first port of call for any community member or organisation interested in research. Discussions are already under way with the Hervey Bay City Council to conduct further research in tourism – which has been established as one of our fastest growing industries in the region. USQ Wide Bay is currently developing the establishment of a Marketing and Public Relations and Business Development Unit to help engage the emergence of staff/student research projects that are clearly identifiable with this regional community's priorities.

USQ Wide Bay's strategic plan emphasises research development of a more regional prominence, but as they come under the umbrella of their main campus in Toowoomba, they look towards the possibility of international prominence featuring within the Wide Bay campus. Related to community engagement and as part of their internationalisation strategy, USQ is working closely with schools in the area to help them become part of an international agenda that takes thinking about education and schooling in new and different directions.

The Research Management Committee (RMC) at USC was implemented in mid-1999 and is part of the University's formal decision-making structure and processes for managing research. USC has re-formulated its Research and Research Training plan 2005-2007 to guide the development of research at the university. The University's research mission is to:

> *Advance knowledge and understanding through regionally inspired research and research training which meets the highest international standards for quality and applicability.*

which makes it plain that the University is primarily interested in research which is regionally relevant and internationally significant. Such research would enable the University to *'pursue international standards in research'* (University mission) by its impact on the international literature, and *'be the major catalyst for the sustainable…advancement of the region'* (University mission) by addressing issues in the region. It is recognised that an adoption of a regional focus has been critical to the success of the early development of the University at a time when the University was unable to access DEST and ARC funding schemes. Through forging strong links with the local community, businesses and statutory bodies, USC has successfully accessed research funds from regional sources.

USC has expounded a policy that calls for the concentration of research effort and resources in areas relevant to its research strategy. This approach is designed to mobilise and focus the research expertise of university staff so as to enhance the economic and social development of the Sunshine Coast region. In doing so, it will enhance linkages with external agencies and provide an environment especially conducive to the research training of higher degree students.

The central mechanism for identifying and supporting research strength is through a Research Institute of the University or a Research Centre of a faculty. Research Institutes and Research Centres are expected to develop a distinctive national or international profiles for a set of research-related activities that are of significance to the region.

The list of regional partners engaged in research with the two universities is extensive. It includes government research stations, government departments, local governments, private companies and community groups. An example of USQ Wide Bay partnered research is:

Education Hervey Bay

The USQ Wide Bay Education faculty has developed strong partnerships with the local school community and Education Hervey Bay. They are working with the Hervey Bay High School on their triennial school review process, which is still to be completed and with Urangan State High School conducting an evaluation of their 'Friends' program that is aimed at addressing adolescent depression, on behalf of Education Hervey Bay. In conjunction with the Boys Education Lighthouse Schools Program, consultancy services on research reporting for 'Boys in Education' is been undertaken, involving the Hervey Bay State Schools clusters (all primary and secondary schools).

USQ's Wide Bay campus is also involved in an initiative to encourage more local high school students to continue their education after completing year twelve. Under 'The Bay Project' initiative, created by Urangan State High School (USHS), USQ Wide Bay lecturers from across different faculties will talk to the school's students each week about different career options.

USHS started the initiative as a pilot program after noticing students felt intimidated approaching officials and because the wide geographic dispersal of schools in the region makes transport difficult.

'The Bay Project' operates as a co-location of community and government agencies within the Student Services Centre at USHS. USQ Wide Bay staff have allocated a few hours to talk to students, teachers and parents enabling students to access lecturers or advisors without appointment to discuss career paths and other options. Through the initiative USQ Wide Bay staff address any education issues at the school location and encourage parents to come and talk to officials about career goals with their child.

The school is inviting USQ Wide Bay staff to be guest-speakers in subjects like Marine Science, Information Technology and Accounting. As the initiative progresses, the school will invite more staff to offer their expertise in other specialty subjects. Community agencies, such as Centrelink, will also be available to assist students and parents with any queries. USQ Wide Bay staff are hopeful the project will launch postgraduate opportunities should its success continue.

An example of USC partnered research is:

Kingfisher Bay Resort

The relationship between Kingfisher Bay Resort (KBR) and USC, is documented in Appendix 5. KBR, in partnership with USC, developed The Fraser Island Research and Education Facility, which consists of a teaching/research laboratory at KBR and an environmental educational camp at Dilli Village.

KBR provided the building for the research centre and undertook considerable renovations in preparation for University occupation. KBR also provides ongoing accommodation for researchers and graduate students, transfers to and from the Island, and ranger support both in the field and with experiments (15 theses have been undertaken there over the past three years).

Dilli Village is an environmental education camp for secondary and tertiary level students, located on the eastern beach. The site has been leased from the Department of Environment for 15 years and is serviced by KBR on a fee for service basis. KBR also provide reduced rate bus transport and cater for educational groups.

KBR also provide a variety of opportunities for undergraduate students at USC to engage in work place experience. KBR provide such students with accommodation and meals, and all transfers required. 33% of work experience students on these projects have gone on to honours studies. This is a very high percentage by national standards.

This is the first time a private company has supported the development and ongoing activities of a university research station in Australia. The relationship is built on simplicity, and mutual respect and trust, and both organisations have built a culture of understanding, from the managerial to the service levels.

3.4.3   *Provision for Regional Needs*

USQ Wide Bay has been exploring the diffusion of innovation with various small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Wide Bay region through research on the factors affecting the take-up of electronic commerce. A number of papers are now available on this matter e.g. list a couple.

On the Sunshine Coast, the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd (ICSC) is a proprietary company and controlled entity of the University of the Sunshine Coast, supported by the local, state and Commonwealth governments, and by the business community. In Phase I of its development, ICSC runs a small business incubator – the Innovation Centre – which has attracted and selected 15 businesses in sectors such as software development, electronics multimedia and nutraceuticals. Local people have founded 13 of the 15 businesses and one of the businesses was established by recent USC graduates. As the University develops, the Innovation Centre expects around one third of its businesses to come from the University staff or students.

The next stage in the project – Phase II – will be the development of the Accelerator, which will provide hi-tech office space for a further 20 businesses employing an estimated 150 people. The Accelerator will boost the development of the Knowledge Precinct at Sippy Downs, which boasts both education providers and hi tech small businesses. Sippy Downs is being designed to be a leading edge twenty-first century community that builds on the university as a knowledge hub for the region and integrates the university with residential areas, schools, hospitals, research centres and technology-oriented businesses to support the generation of premium knowledge economy jobs.

There are a range of formal and informal mechanisms also employed by both universities to understand and to respond to specific regional technology and innovation needs and demands, especially those from small to medium enterprises. These include:

- Regional government and business appointments on university boards and committees
  - Utilising the university as a focal point for business and community meetings, such as the Committee for Economic Development Association Conference, 2005 at USC
  - Regular public seminars (such as 'Meet the Entrepreneur' events at the Innovation Centre at USC)
  - The creation of regionally engaged research institutes and centres within USC
  - Informal ambassadorial roles undertaken by Members of University Executive and Research Directors at USC
  - Participation on government and community advisory boards (eg participation by USC's Vice-Chancellor on SCORE – the Sunshine Coast Organisation for Regional Engagement)
  - Staff representation on public/private bodies within the region
  - Development of a Research Unit at USQ Wide Bay
  - Hosting business forums and community events
  - Offering on campus experiences and workshops.

Due to the multitude of small to medium sized businesses and their high turnover within this region, it is clear that business opportunities need to be supported to provide a stable and sustainable economic foundation for the region. In particular, the regional community has expressed a desire to see the universities assist in the development of industry clusters and industry parks, such as the emerging food produce cluster on the Sunshine Coast and the sustainable foods industry park in Hervey Bay.

3.4.4   Recognition and Reward for Regionally-Based Research

In December 2004, the Commonwealth Government announced its decision to establish an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to support the development of the Research Quality Framework. The EAG is chaired by Professor Gareth Roberts, President of Wolfson College, Oxford and President of the Science Council in England. Sir Gareth also chairs the HEFCE Board's Research Committee and led the UK-wide review of research assessment, which reported to the UK funding bodies in 2003.

The EAG has raised with Minister Nelson the prospect of 'Third Stream' funding, which has led to considerable national interest and debate. There is, however, no guarantee that the Commonwealth will elect to recognise regionally based research in any significant manner through this or other mechanisms.

At an institutional level, in 2005 the promotion policy for academic staff at USC was amended to emphasise the importance of 'service', which includes community service and service to the University. This development reflected a recognition of 'service' alongside research and teaching as core activity, and echoed significant and enduring regional engagement initiatives undertaken at a senior staff level. Community service is seen as a scholarly practice through which T&R staff apply their discipline knowledge and skills to consequential problems in the world beyond the University. Service can be both in a remunerated capacity such as a consultancy, or without remuneration.

3.5   Interfaces Facilitating Knowledge Exploitation and Transfer

Both USQ and USC have opted to centralise the interface facilitating knowledge exploitation and transfer between the university and its regional stakeholders. For USQ, this will occur through the Office of Commercialisation and for USC, through the Office of Learning, Teaching and Research.

These mechanisms will include matters such as the development of corporate portfolios, licensing/joint franchising, consulting and training guides, corporate events and out-sourcing.

Start-up firms are handled in a variety of ways across the region. On the Fraser Coast start up firms are seeking assistance with software solutions, and a number of contracts have been or are being negotiated, which will form the basis of a significant IT Research and Development capability and will contribute to tertiary level economic activity in the region. USQ's IT staff are currently involved in consultancy work with the local program Bay Connect.

On the Sunshine Coast, the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd (section 3.8) specialises in small hi tech start ups and is responsible for four graduate companies (section 3.8.1).

3.6   Research Institutes, Centres, Contracts, Collaboration and Consultancy

Both universities have established a number of institutes and centres that focus research activity within the region. USC has developed a two-tiered system of institutes (broader, multi-faculty research structures) and centres (faculty based research units). This structure emerged over a three-year period (2002-2004) and arose from strategic mapping of existing academic interests, regional needs and Commonwealth research priorities.

The activity of these entities is described in detail in Appendix 5 and are summarised below.

3.6.1   Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise (SCRIBE) at USC

SCRIBE was the first research institute established at USC, in 2001. The SCRIBE objectives are to identify key regional business issues, develop new knowledge, galvanise researchers across the University, and importantly, diffuse knowledge across the region and other national and international forums.

SCRIBE's research agenda was developed by its ongoing research/consultancies for business and government agencies that inform the institute about regional issues and business concerns, its ongoing environmental scanning and analysis to identify relevant research topics and its involvement with academic staff across disciplines.

Areas identified by SCRIBE for research, and which SCRIBE contributes to, include:

- Seniors and Regional Development Impacts
- Event Evaluation and Tourism
- Development of an input-output model for the Sunshine Coast
- Development of Regional Statistics/Sustainability Indicators
- Sports Business Industry Development
- Regional Planning
- Crime and the Region
- Regional Governance.

During 2004 SCRIBE undertook regular regional updates of employment and other economic trends, provided analysis on key economic and business issues, presented research at national conferences on client evaluation, regional projects, event evaluation, and governance, and completed reports on future issues confronting the Sunshine Coast.

3.6.2   Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement (iSHaRE) at USC

iSHaRE was established in February 2004 to provide a research platform at the interface of the environmental and health disciplines, recognised as important features of the demographics and landscape of the rapidly developing Sunshine Coast. Over 40 researchers from three faculties have combined into two programs:

- Sustainable Environments (with six areas of strength), and
- Healthy People – Sustainable Communities (with five areas of strength).

The term 'regional engagement' in the title reflected a philosophy that such research needs to be both embedded within, and conducted in conjunction with, the region and its stakeholders.

iSHaRE also manages the Fraser Island research facilities, comprising two sites – a research laboratory at Kingfisher Bay Resort, and an environmental education field camp at Dilli Village.

Over the 18 months since its inception, iSHARE has been awarded 17 research grants and consultancies, and iSHaRE researchers have initiated 23 research (mostly postgraduate) projects utilising the University facilities at Fraser Island. iSHaRE researchers have produced 48 journal and book publications since inception, and 33 abstracts for conferences.

iSHaRE maintains a high regional profile via a widely distributed newsletter, consultancy activity, and regular meetings with regional government and business leaders.

Both SCRIBE and iSHaRE have very high regional profiles, and have been called on to tackle a number of difficult or sensitive regional issues.

3.6.3   USQ (Wide Bay) Research Unit

A Research Unit is currently being established at the USQ Wide Bay campus, which will prove to be a key university based research resource in the region. The unit will further research and scholarship and will have a major impact on USQ Wide Bay's regional communities. Its aim is to be responsible for:

- Strategically placing USQ Wide Bay as the first point of contact for anyone in the region considering a research agenda
- Communicating and negotiating research projects with relevant stakeholders
- Negotiating the outsourcing of research through networks within other institutions
- Involving stakeholders in research activities as co-researchers
- Developing a model of research training for the region.

3.6.4   Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) at USC

The University of the Sunshine Coast formally approved the Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) on 4th February 2004. On 13th August 2004, Rob de Castella officially opened CHASE, one month before the opening of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

CHASE has developed a multi-streamed research focus on two specific areas:

- Developing Healthy Activities in the Community, and
- Understanding and Enhancing Sports Performance.

The inaugural year for CHASE has been an exciting and challenging one. One of the most features of CHASE is the enthusiasm of its team members. The combination of skill level and enthusiasm has enabled several opportunities for future research to be created. For example, in its first year of operation, CHASE obtained a significant amount of research grant income, and attracted a number of high profile industry research partners such as the Australian Institute of Sport, Swimming Australia, Cycling Australia, the New Zealand Rugby Union, and AusIndustry. In addition, several honours and PhD scholarships have been created with key industry organisations. The priority for the next two years of operation is to consolidate the research relationships, strengthen of the collaboration of the CHASE team, and ensure that maximum possible research outputs are attained.

3.6.5   Centre for Multicultural and Community Development (CMCD) at USC

CMCD was established by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in 2002 and was officially launched by the Premier of Queensland, the Hon Peter Beattie, in April 2003.

The Centre was created in response to the absence of a coordinated organisation focused on community and social development on the Sunshine Coast and in Australia. A number of factors provided impetus for the Centre's establishment, including increased public debate regarding immigration, refugees and racism. CMCD operates from two locations, one in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the other in the Brisbane Central Business District. This allows for the flexibility to work across Queensland while maintaining a primary focus on work in the Sunshine Coast region.

CMCD undertakes research and related activities on issues relevant to social, community, multicultural and race studies. In addition to research activities, the Centre undertakes consultancies and tenders, conducts short courses and conferences and contributes to policy debate in areas such as multiculturalism, institutional capacity building, community participation and anti-racism strategy. CMCD has completed 12 publications and reports with another five nearing completion.

At present there are no formal research institute or centre collaborations between the two universities, although, as a result of this project and the increased communication between the universities, researchers from both universities are now working together on the development of a regional research project on Productive Aging with Bendigo Bank, the State Department of Communities, and over twenty other regional stakeholders.

3.6.6   Government Research Stations

The Sunshine–Fraser Coast contains three significant state-government research stations, at Bribie Island, Nambour and Gympie, under the auspices of the Department of Primary Industries and Forestry (DPI&F). In each case, relationships with USC were initiated early in the development of the University through site visits by the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor commencing in 1994. USC has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in relation to each site.

Bribie Island

The Bribie Island Aquaculture Research Centre (BIARC) was the first dedicated multi-functional aquaculture research facility to be built in Australia. Commercial-scale production facilities enable research teams to conduct research that has a direct, industry-

wide application. The Centre plays a significant role in technological development and extension to the aquaculture industry in tropical and subtropical Queensland.

Nambour

The Nambour Research Station is Queensland's major subtropical fruit and nut research and extension centre. With access to national and international funding sources, specialist staff often work in conjunction with investigators from other research agencies, including USC, to provide a co-ordinated team approach.

Gympie

Located immediately north of Gympie, the Horticulture and Forestry Science Station undertakes projects and offers services in pure and applied research, technical advice and management, development of decision support systems and timber related legislation regulation.

The research stations have been a valuable resource for USC for research collaboration, research training (in the joint supervision of Honours Masters and PhDs), and undergraduate training (eg student placements for 3rd year research projects and DPI&F staff lecturing in undergraduate programs). The collaboration with Forestry staff at Gympie has, for example, led to significant success in ARC linkage grants. The collaboration with BIARC has led to a joint appointment, Dr Abigail Elizur, who holds a 50 % appointment at BIARC and 50 % at USC. This has led to the development of an innovative new degree program, Bachelor of Animal, Plant and Marine Biotechnology, where students spend their 4th year in a placement working with DPI scientists. Enrolments for its 1st intake in 2006 have been strong. Details of the projects, students and other outcomes associated with these stations are listed in Appendix 5.

3.7 Advisory, Consultancy and Intellectual Property

At USQ a consultancy and private practice policy is well established. The University has all rights to fees and charges that may result from consultancy or other services provided by a member of staff as a part of their assigned University duties, but may share with that staff member income resulting from such consultancy. Private practice is also possible and is a form of consultancy in which the staff member contracts directly with the client in return for a fee for the provision of a professional service within the ambit of the staff member's professional qualifications. With such private practice the University (or the Southern Queensland Research Company Pty Ltd) seeks full cost recovery via an agreed fee basis.

USC has varied its approach to consultancy activity in response to rapidly changing circumstances, and is currently developing a consultancy policy that recognises and rewards the staff member on private practice somewhat substantially (seeking a 30% return on profits only). The policy is in draft format and discussions are currently underway to address the nature of consultancies contracted under the umbrella of the Research Institutes and Centres.

A list of the consultancies undertaken at both institutions is provided in Appendix 7.

Intellectual property is a topical issue for universities generally and both USC and USQ are developing or have developed policies to guide and support the ownership and exploitation of research outcomes. Both policies seek to encourage the transfer of knowledge into the public domain, and

where commercialisation is an option that the originators are entitled to an equitable share of any financial returns from such commercialisation (including the university itself).

3.8   Sabbatical Placements and Support for Regional Development

Although there are but a few sabbaticals at USC to date, iSHaRE has initiated a grant program to encourage sabbatical visitors to engage with regional governments, businesses and other stakeholders with a view to mentoring and supporting the development of ARC Linkage proposals. For example, three visiting professors in 2005 played significant advisory and mentoring roles in Maroochy Shire Council, Hervey Bay City Council and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. This model is currently being investigated by the Office of International and Development with a view to implementing it throughout the University.

3.9   Innovation Centre and Technology Park

Within the Sunshine-Fraser Coast region, a number of developments have been proposed which have been termed 'technology parks'. This, however, reflects a misunderstanding of the concept. In fact, most of the proposals are for industrial/business parks, which involve, in essence, a collection of companies with more or less related activities, in close proximity, exploiting the benefits of synergy.

By contrast, a Technology Park is concerned with the development of entrepreneurial, knowledge based, small to medium sized enterprises.

Technology Parks, when associated with universities:

- Allow the large scale creation of multi disciplinary and multi sectoral research partnerships
- Attract collaborative investment in innovation by leading firms and
- Accelerate the use and commercialisation of research outcomes.

They also offer industries economies of scale and scope, access to a strong science and technological base, and a culture conducive to entrepreneurship.

The University of the Sunshine Coast has taken a leading role in the development of a Technology Park at Sippy Downs, which was identified in the Queensland Government's South East Queensland Regional Plan as a 'knowledge hub'.

Its rationale in spearheading this project included:

- Contributing to economic development in the region through industry linked projects
- Enabling the University to pursue industry collaboration with tenants and strengthen industry links more generally
- Attracting tenants capable of forming mutually beneficial links with the University and
- Providing opportunities to commercialise University research, including by providing incubation facilities for start ups.

The Technology Park project, which is also discussed in Chapter VI, was conceived by the University with three implementation phases:

- The Innovation Centre: A small business incubator for high tech start ups and University spin outs located at the entrance to the University
- The Accelerator: A next stage development designed to accommodate graduates of the incubator program, compatible high tech businesses and service firms and

- The Technology Park itself.

The Technology Park will provide a pathway through which graduating and high growth companies from the Innovation Centre and the Accelerator can be retained within the region. It will also focus on attracting complementary established companies, as well as service providers.

Significant momentum for the project has already been generated by the success of the Innovation Centre, which the Australian Government named 'Regional Incubator of the Year' in 2003, after just two years of operation.

The Innovation Centre operates from a purpose built facility on the edge of the USC campus at Sippy Downs. The facility also houses an auditorium, which can seat up to 2,000 people, making it the largest within the region.

To support the development of an entrepreneurial culture on campus, the CEO of the Innovation Centre has assisted University staff in the development of a core course called 'ICE - Innovation Creativity and Entrepreneurship.' This course is undertaken by all undergraduate students at USC, regardless of faculty or program.

The Fraser Coast plays host to an Aquaculture Precinct, Tourism Information and Community Enterprise Centre, Airport Industrial Park, a Knowledge, Information & Technology Zone (KITZ) and the Fraser Coast Marine Industrial Park. On the Sunshine Coast there are under construction the Noosa Shire New Knowledge Business Precinct, the Caloundra Business and Industry Precinct (214 hectares) and the Yandina Industrial Estate to complement the existing Caloundra, Kunda Park and Nambour industrial parks.

3.10   Conclusions

3.10.1   *Regional Research Collaboration: Desirable or Necessary?*

Despite their relative youth both universities are building solid research platforms and have exhibited significant increases in research activity in recent years. This has been facilitated by rapid increases in the numbers of research-qualified staff, regionally collaborative research projects, grant applications and internationally peer reviewed publications. Both have developed extensive and successful collaboration with research partners in business, government and the community, in line with their mission statements, which clearly articulate their goals to be regionally engaged research and teaching institutions.

With the development of the Research Unit at USQ Wide Bay there will be greater collaboration between the university and regional stakeholders in the Fraser Coast area. This unit seeks to identify and develop areas of research concentration in collaboration with key members of the community. Research topics that are of major concern to businesses and local authorities in the region will also be identified and developed.

USC is currently reviewing and consolidating its research strengths through its institute/centre model, from which have emerged strong regional engagement and development philosophies and practices. The university will continue to roll out its incubator and tech-park facilities, and continues to support and reward the emergence of a strong research culture. The relationship between the University and the business sector on the Sunshine Coast has been significantly enhanced recently by the creation of SCORE.

There has been limited collaboration between the two universities, partly because of the tyranny of distance and partly because of the youthfulness of both campuses in the Sunshine–Fraser Coast region, but also because the two institutions have developed somewhat differing teaching and research programmes. This is unlikely to continue for much longer however, and the emerging teaching and research programs in nursing, education and marine science at both institutions provide a pathway to collaboration and cooperation. The two universities recognise that they are in close proximity to the state capital metropolitan area and its significantly larger knowledge and research resources, and that their continued participation in their region and service to regional development will require a concerted effort on both parties, and perhaps one that is benefited by improved collaboration or brokering between them.

3.10.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Related to the Contribution of Research to Regional Innovation

Strengths

- Close relationship with the local and regional communities
- Strongly articulated regional engagement and regional development attributes in research management plans
- The primary source for research training for the region
- Small but successful track record of winning collaborative 'linkage' and community grants
- Research institutes geared strongly towards regional research issues and regional capacity building
- Successful business incubator established
- The integration of staff across the campuses in research activity, with an emphasis on multidisciplinary collaborative and partnership research
- Identifying and developing specific research topics of major concern to educators in the region

Weaknesses

- Lack of critical mass of researchers and heavy reliance on non-regional partners
- Insufficient participation or 'visibility' by researchers in regional decision making bodies
- Young or new developing university research units
- Limited budget dollars
- Inadequate recognition of region by federal and state funding bodies

Opportunities

- Continue to bring stakeholders into the activity of research
- Build on and support research projects that are clearly aligned to regional community priorities
- Recognition and promotion (education) of linkage style grants by university with regional partners
- An increased postgraduate research presence on the campuses in partnership with regional stakeholders
- Build on international research links that have been put into place
- Research outcomes that contribute in positive ways to improvements in campus-wide pedagogy, and teaching and learning

- Continued enhancement of supervisory capacity and developing a model of research training for the region

Threats

- Being perceived as "teaching only" universities
- Research culture may be below the national average
- No well perceived 'front door' to redirect potential partner research in either institution
- Restructuring of research institutes and centres under the RQF model may detract from regional engagement
- Proprietary right claims by partners possibly too severe
- Working within distance education may not be a stable environment for research

CHAPTER IV: CONTRIBUTION OF TEACHING & LEARNING
TO LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS

There have been a number of national developments recently that have impacted upon the nature of teaching within universities in Australia, including the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and the Carrick Institute. The Australian University Quality Agency has also been exerting significant influence for several years. The Agency conducted an audit of USQ in 2002 and will conduct the first quality audit of USC in 2006.

The *Learning and Teaching Performance Fund* (LTPF) arose out of the 2002 *Higher Education at the Crossroads* review, and recognises that whilst teaching is a core activity for all higher education institutions in Australia, current Commonwealth funding, internal staff promotion practices and institutional prestige tend to reinforce the importance of research performance rather than teaching performance. The Government believes that rewards and incentives for excellence in learning and teaching will promote the overall quality of the sector, enabling excellence in learning and teaching to be placed alongside delivery of research excellence in terms of contribution to Australia's knowledge systems. The LTPF will allocate around $54 million in 2006, increasing to $82 million in 2007 and $109 million in 2008, and will reward those institutions that best demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching and university performance. The fund will also have consequences for the reputation and image of universities in the community and within the sector.

The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education was launched by the Minister for Education, Science and Training in August 2004 and seeks to promote and advance learning and teaching in Australian higher education. 2005 is essentially an establishment year and from 2006 the Carrick Institute will manage an expanded university teaching awards program, grants programs, and other activities such as the provision of clearinghouse services and processes for the dissemination of good learning and teaching practices. The Carrick Institute provides excellent opportunities for universities to further develop learning and teaching through a number of programs. Beyond this, it provides opportunities for staff to become involved in involved in collaborative ventures with colleagues in other universities and institutions that advance aspects of university learning and teaching and enhance the reputations of individuals and the universities. University performance in the Carrick Institute's programs could have consequences for an institution's reputation and image in the community and within the sector.

The Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) quality audit of USC in 2006, as it did at USQ in 2002, will ask four key questions about learning and teaching in the institution: What are you trying to do? How are you trying to do it? How well are you succeeding and how do you know? How are you trying to improve? The audit will establish the extent to which the University is aligning its resources and energies with its Mission, and will assess the effectiveness of university evaluation and improvement processes.

Overall, the external context in which the two universities are operating is characterised by a progressive displacement of traditional Commonwealth block funding with an increased emphasis on competitive funding and funding from the private sector. Universities with a strong regional focus must position themselves to be successful in bringing competitively achieved resources into the institution through, and in support of, its range of learning and teaching activities.

For USC these external influences come at the beginning of a period when a range of new programs are being planned and implemented, and many new staff will be appointed. Given that USC

received the largest number of additional places for 2006 of any campus in Australia, planning for teaching and learning is now at a critical point.

Exciting, though this growth is, it is accompanied by a realisation that the character of the institution is also changing. A major feature of this change is the need to establish and consolidate systems that will enable the institution to continue to function effectively and efficiently as it becomes larger and more complex. Much of the recently redrafted Learning and Teaching Plan focuses on the processes of transition to the next phase of development for the University in a rapidly growing region at a time when resourcing of public institutions is increasingly linked to measures of productivity.

4.1   Localising the Learning Process

4.1.1   Identifying Regional Needs

During their respective establishment phases, USQ Wide Bay and USC were cognisant of the importance of regional needs and characteristics in developing their programs and courses.

Indeed, during planning for the new institution that would become USC, extensive regional consultation was undertaken to arrive at a suite of academic programs that would emphasise:

- Courses based on needs associated with regional advancement
- Innovative and niche approaches to program development
- Strong interdisciplinary work to address real world issues (eg the environment)
- Practical as well as theoretical elements including problem solving, work experience internships as features
- A core program to deal with learning/interpersonal imperatives in a range of professions
- Student needs (market driven in early years)
- Maximising graduate employability prospects
- Emphasising IT including encouraging independent and lifelong learning
- Receptiveness to mixed modes of study during degree programs
- Inclusiveness with respect to a range of community groups (eg U3A) (See Chapter VI for further information on the establishment of the University).

This consultative process involved some 150 organisations within the region and was the result of a strong philosophical commitment to regional engagement and consultation on the part of the University.

There is a degree of similarity between the two institutions that reflects a common recognition of, and approach to, regional needs. At USQ Wide Bay learning programs emerge from four faculties (Arts, Business, Education, Sciences) whilst at USC they emerge from three (Arts and Social Sciences, Business, and Science, Health and Education). These Faculties are in line with the more popular fields of study for secondary school completers, of whom 20.6% seek degrees in society and culture, 20% in management and commerce, 11.2 % in health, and 7.7% in education. USQ (Toowoomba and Wide Bay) receive 2.9% of Queensland's Year 12 completers, whilst USC receives 2.2%.

To ensure that both institutions continue to identify regional needs when proposing and developing new programs both universities have:

- Academic boards with strong community/industry representation
- Learning and teaching management committees
- Faculty advisory boards, made up predominantly of community leaders

- An external program review every seven years (USC) and every five years (USQ)

The need to ensure regionally relevant learning and teaching outcomes is vital to the continued growth and development of both institutions. This is because:

- The majority of students are derived from the region
- Participation rates are impacted by demography (viz a significant proportion of persons in low socio economic circumstances – according to the Queensland Government's *Next Step* Report (2005) regional participation rates are estimated to be about 10% less than metropolitan rates
- The capacity to charge differential rates of HECS and to offer full fee paying programs promotes increased competition and client awareness.

4.1.2   *Meeting Regional Needs*

USQ Wide Bay and USC exist in a region that is primarily driven by tourism and construction and for which unemployment, underemployment, the proportion of residents of low socio economic status and low education participation rates are of concern. Both institutions provide opportunities for local residents to study without the need to move to another location, and a more affordable place for persons in remote and rural locations to study than metropolitan alternatives. Although rentals and other expenses are higher on the Sunshine Coast than in other parts of the region, USC has developed (with industry partners) student accommodation adjacent to the university. The importance of this is highlighted in the *Next Step* Report (2005), which identifies economic/financial capacity and accessibility of study locations as the second and third most common reasons respectively for not continuing from Year 12 to higher education.

Enabling programs and preparatory programs also play a large part in encouraging job seekers, persons from a low socio economic background or first in family to university to undertake further studies. At USC, enabling courses are offered in:

- Chemistry
- General Mathematics
- Mathematics for Physics
- Statistics and
- Biology.

Enabling courses are provided free of charge to Commonwealth supported students enrolled in an undergraduate degree program.

All learning programs are geared towards creative solutions for the long term, so that the Sunshine–Fraser Coast labour force can benefit and grow. However, some courses address a more urgent need within the community and demand for places at both campuses significantly exceeds the available capacity.

The Commonweath Government, in *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*, acknowledged two national priority areas – Nursing and Teaching – and provided additional funding for nursing and education places to assist universities to meet the costs of the clinical nursing placement and the teaching practicum. USQ Wide Bay offers Bachelor programs in both Nursing and Education (Early Childhood, Primary/Middle Schooling & Senior/Middle Schooling) whilst USC offers Bachelor programs in Nursing and Education (Senior/Middle Schooling)

Engagement has also been, and is being further, strengthened by the introduction of several programs related to regional needs and strengths that have been identified from community and employer consultation. For example, at USQ Wide Bay the Bachelor of Human Services (Counselling), and a proposed Bachelor of Marine Tourism (both subject to approval), and the extension of the Diploma in Community Welfare and Development to external mode will allow for greater participation by regional business and industry.

At USC the new Bachelor of Regional and Urban Planning, Bachelor of Social Science (Counselling), Bachelor of Coastal Studies, Bachelor of Animal, Plant and Marine Biotechnology and the Bachelor of Sport and Technology all build on regional growth industries.

Both USQ Wide Bay and USC are developing and implementing Bachelor of Education programs specialising in or providing options in the training of Marine Studies teachers (which has also been identified as a growing regional need), and these programs would be unique to this region. USQ Wide Bay has partnered with the Australian Maritime College and has proposed a program where students would have the opportunity to obtain their boat and radio licences, first aid certificate and dive tickets, increasing their value to a potential employer. USC is developing a collaborative research/teaching relationship with the Australian Institute for Marine Studies (Townsville) and the University of Queensland, and is to utilise the existing skills ticketing program through regional high schools. Whilst these external partnerships bring additional expertise to the region they also lend themselves to inter-regional competition, and exploring these concerns is now an agreed goal of the two universities.

Both universities have or are initiating a Head Start Program, which is a transition to higher education where Years 11 and 12 students who would benefit from exposure to higher education enrol and study in an accredited degree program as visiting students. USQ Wide Bay will cover the student fees for the course, whilst USC scholarships are available to pay course fees for low socio-economic and Indigenous students. At USC over 100 students participate each year.

At the other end of the spectrum there are large and growing populations of people over the age 50 years in the region. USC has provided facilities for a branch of the University of the Third Age on campus. U3A Sunshine Coast Inc. is a self-help non-profit organization within the Sunshine Coast and hinterland which has nearly 2000 members who attend a wide range of classes held at locations throughout the local region. U3A has a close relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast – the Vice-Chancellor is their Patron – and members are able to 'sit-in' on lectures at the University free of charge.

USQ (Wide Bay) facilities are used extensively by the local community, including groups such as the University of the Third Age (U3A) which is a non academic educational organisation for older members of the community. The campus provides facilities (specifically the computer labs) to the local U3A at significantly less than commercial rates and some staff have and continue to act as lecturers on a voluntary basis.

At USC the Faculty of Business offers 'The Tim and Gina Fairfax Postgraduate Scholarship in Regional Development', a Master of International Business with a regional industry practicum (soon to be accredited), and has two postgraduate students who are currently researching regional exporting and business links in Fiji.

4.1.3   *Regional Perceptions in Identifying and Meeting Regional Needs*

Regional stakeholders to this project have recognised that the universities have targeted the general regional needs well, however, they wished to see Commonwealth support for the development of more professionally accredited programs and programs tailored to meeting regional niche needs. They agreed that initiatives at both institutions address some of these needs, such as the urban and regional planning degree at USC (which recognises rapid growth in local government areas), expansions at both campuses in nursing, and new programs in marine tourism and coastal studies. Nonetheless, the most significant factor emerging from surveys of student movements out of the region remains the limited range of courses on offer relative to the metropolitan area of Brisbane.

Given the projected regional population, the universities' commitment to a collaborative and proactive approach to regional development, the emergence of industry clusters, and the development of knowledge communities, it was generally felt that enhanced support for the region in terms of educational, ICT and other hard infrastructure was long overdue.

4.1.4   *The Role of Careers Services in the Process of Localising Learning*

At both universities Student Services areas provide specific career choice information and support. At USQ Wide Bay information students' gifts, talents, values, skills experience etc and are matched with their occupational knowledge, and what is appropriate or most suited identified for them. USQ Wide Bay also help with job application skills – resume writing, addressing selection criteria, interview skills – and tailor these to the type of job that they are applying for. Career services also look at the specific study area most appropriate to the career they may be after, and/or postgraduate qualifications needed. Finally, they offer advice on how and where to apply for jobs locally and globally. At USQ Wide bay Student Services also provides careers counselling and advice to prospective students, regardless of whether the person eventually elects to study at USQ or not.

At USC the Careers Officer and a Graduate Employment Officer provide a range of services including individual career counselling, workshops on career planning and job search, assistance with quality resumes and job applications, graduate employment resources, Email notification of graduate and other employment opportunities, a Careers Area Room with graduate resources and computers, and a Browse Career Hub – an online career site for student employment. In addition, Career Services provide services for Employers and Recruiters, including promoting casual or graduate jobs free of charge, providing employment/company information for students, arranging contact between students and employers, arranging internships/work experience for students and drop-in time appointments.

At USQ Wide Bay, Student Services have been involved in providing the 'Tertiary Taster' program for the last 4 years, in partnership with Wide Bay TAFE. This involves giving participants the opportunity to meet lecturers and students, go on a campus tour, answering questions and generally giving them a 'taste' of campus life. The program also caters to special needs students, and looks at alternative entry and pathways into university related to the disability or special needs of the student. Further development of the program is scheduled for July 2006, using funding provided through the Regional Disability Liaison Officer position to bring potential students from the outback. Student Services has also been able to organise that the Regional Disability Liaison Officer participate in the program.

4.2 Student Integration in the Region

4.2.1 *Course Placements*

At USQ Wide Bay all students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing (Pre-Registration) are required to undertake and satisfactorily complete at least 840 hours of clinical experience. Students are not permitted to do their clinical placement at the same venue as their place of employment. Some placements may be in community settings, which easily provide the experience necessary to cover the objectives of the course and program. The Clinical Liaison Officer maintains a record of previous student placements. Across the three years, all students will have a variety of valuable clinical experiences.

The planned Nursing Program at USC will require students to undertake 1100 hours of clinical learning, the majority of which will be on the Sunshine Coast. There is strong support from community agencies to be involved in the clinical learning of students and in 2005 all of the 2nd year students had at least 96 hours experience in a community setting. After formal approval of the nursing program by USC and the Queensland Nursing Council, a Clinical Placement Administrator will be appointed to coordinate the booking, records and maintenance of contracts related to the clinical experience aspects of the program.

All students enrolled in Early Childhood, Primary and Senior and Middle Schooling pre-service teacher education programs at USQ Wide Bay must complete both supervised professional experience and non-supervised professional experience. Supervised professional experience placements are all attached to individual courses. These courses have on-campus components that integrate with the field-based professional experiences. Non-supervised professional experience students must participate in professional experiences beyond formal placements attached to mentors in centres, schools or colleges. The nature of these experiences differs from program to program. All student placements and liaisons with all local and regional schools are organised by the Professional Experience Officer.

Within the Arts Faculty at USQ Wide Bay, fieldwork and internship placements exist for public relations (PR) and journalism students. At USC, internships exist within the Public Health and Coastal Studies degrees in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education. Two new programs commencing next year at USC (Human Services and Social Science (Counselling)) both have extensive placement opportunities for students, and these programs have the approval of the Department of Child Safety as suitable preparation programs for their workers. The Bachelor of Regional and Urban Planning program (in FASS) offers student placements within government, industry and non-government organisations coordinated through a Planning Industry Reference Group who advise on opportunities.

At USC, the Faculty of Business (FoB) is active in this regard including:

- 'Students Mean Business' (student club) through which USC students enter into mentoring programs, and develop networking and professional development initiatives in conjunction with the local community. Local industry members actively support the student club by providing advice and practical business opportunities for the students to experience.
- SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) is active at USC and the SIFE team was 2nd runner up at the SIFE Australia National Competition in Sydney in July 2005 (the aim of SIFE is to encourage university students to create economic opportunity for others)
- SMART (the Social Marketing and Advertising Research Team) was founded in July 2005 and aims to forge relationships with industry, government, academic and consumer groups.

4.2.2 Course Assessments

Courses and programs at both universities include industry/organisation assessment components that benefit a regional partner. For example, Australia Zoo (Beerwah), Kingfisher Bay Resort (Fraser Island) and others have encouraged Public Health students at USC to undertake Environmental Health audits of their premises that then form the basis of industry certification. Likewise, environmental science students at USC regularly assist community groups to design, write and apply for community grants, as part of their course assessment.

4.2.3 Volunteer Activity

Both universities encourage their students to volunteer to help community organisations and projects as a means of developing personal, academic and life skills and of providing a conduit between potential employers and graduates. At USQ (Wide Bay) all students are encouraged to be involved in volunteer activities that can be either accredited to their relevant courses, provide them with necessary certificates for their course/employment or just to enhance their learning experiences. Students are also involved in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), which encourages students to form networks with community, business and educational organisations through the development of projects designed to pass on students' knowledge of free enterprise to others. SIFE has also run business enterprise competitions that attract local school students to campus and promotes post-school and career options in business. This is an important initiative for the Wide Bay area because of its high level of socio-economic disadvantage.

At USC such volunteer activity is not credited, but strongly endorsed across the university as a means of demonstrating credibility of graduates with regional employers. iSHaRE maintains a register of students for selected work experience with their regional partners, such as local governments, community groups, tourism and industry business. USC's Student Guild ensures insurance coverage for work experience students, but do not otherwise involve themselves in student volunteer placements.

4.2.4 Regional Perceptions to Student Integration in the Region

One of the most resounding messages to emerge from regional meetings was the desire of the region to support and encourage student participation in industry and governance. Most local government, business and industry stakeholders preferred a model of internships (6 months full time), but were nonetheless supportive of other models (eg part-time). There was a broad based recognition of the value to the student (experience) and to the employer (new knowledge and potential retention of regional talent). On a number of occasions the notion of scholarships or awards to support such ventures was raised by stakeholders.

4.3 Postgraduate Activity and Regional Needs

At USQ post graduate activity is limited at present, but there are plans to expand this area of operation to ensure that regional community needs are met. USQ Wide Bay is currently developing at doctorate/masters program that will suit and benefit the Fraser Coast. This is to be achieved by the development of a proposal for a program that will involve workplace learning rather than leaving the workplace and the region for research. Over the past two years there have been Masters and Honours students based at the USQ Wide Bay campus as well as two PhD's (Tourism in Hervey Bay; Information Technology Systems in Aged Care Facilities) as well as an MIT (Research) student (Business-to-business communication in the Australian Timber and Wood Products industry).

USC has a strong Masters and PhD program (including 17 Masters level candidates, 44 PhDs, six DCAs, and 11 DBAs). USC led Australia in online Masters delivery with the introduction of its online MBA in 1997. Whilst there are no formal programs to embed graduate research into the regional economy, APA placements and IPRS (International Postgraduate Research Scholarship) placements invariably work with or are supported by industry. For example, sustainable production research students are funded by Horticulture Australia, environmental research students receive grants from local governments, and environmental interpretation research students receive support from industry and community groups.

4.3.1   *Regional Perceptions to Postgraduate Activity*

On the basis of regional meetings, interviews, focus groups and so on, it was quite clear that this is an area that needs significant regional stimulation and education. In line with national perceptions of the nature of R+D within Australia, most regional stakeholders were not familiar with Commonwealth funded opportunities for collaborative research, or how such collaboration could enhance product development, labour skills, marketing and the like. Whilst there is a very healthy alignment of research and regional needs, this has often been achieved within institutional capacity.

4.4   Support for Volunteer Associations

There has been a long association of community and voluntary associations within these universities. The Education faculty at USQ Wide Bay work closely with Education Queensland (EQ) using EQ staff to run workshops for students and USQ Wide Bay staff. In turn, USQ Wide Bay staff facilitate workshops for EQ individuals and schools. Intellectual input to this relationship is through EQ, the Wide Bay Sexual Assault Unit, and the Network of Environmental Educators (initiative of the HBCC).

USC has negotiated with Education Queensland to have their ICT Learning Innovation Centre located on the USC campus at Sippy Downs, and has supported the:

1. Sunshine Coast Ornithological Society
2. National office of the Australian Health Promotion Association
3. Natural Resource Management South East Queensland: Sunshine Coast Branch

with office facilities and support.

4.5   Student Recruitment and Regional Employment

4.5.1   *Regional Student Recruitment Policies*

The regional recruitment processes adopted at USC include:

4. Regional Preference Scheme: USC has a regional preference scheme in place whereby applicants who reside in or attend a school in the Sunshine Coast region bounded by the local government areas of Caboolture, Kilcoy, Maroochy, Noosa and Cooloola are given an additional OP score or two additional Ranks (for non-school leavers).
5. **School Visits/Ambassador Program**: This is an annual program of school visits involving the External Relations Officer and a group of student Ambassadors in visiting over 80 schools in the region, most of which are state schools, Catholic or Christian schools with large low SES and rural or isolated student cohorts.

6. **TAFE visits**:   The University conducts information sessions at local TAFEs with information on alternative entry, programs, courses, articulation arrangements, and support services.
7. **Schools visiting the campus**: The following schools, located in regional and isolated areas, visit the campus for student familiarisation: Gympie, Murgon, Isis, Kepnock, Tin Can Bay, Gin Gin, Kilcoy, Kenilworth, Yeppoon and Windaroo and a Brisbane low SES school, Woodridge State School.
8. **Headstart Program**: This program provides a transition to higher education whereby Year 11 and 12 students who would benefit from exposure to higher education enrol and study in an accredited higher education course as visiting students. A fee is incurred (although not the full cost) and scholarships are available to pay course fees for Low SES and Indigenous students. Over 100 students participate each year.
9. **Keep Pace Program**:   This is a free student, parent and community education program which targets low SES, and rural and isolated community members and aims to demystify and welcome them to the University. The program includes academic writing and study skills, careers education, QTAC preference change information, alternative entry and returning to study information.
10. **Courses for Careers Day**: A free bus is provided to bring school students, their families and interested community members from Kilcoy, Woodford, Beerwah, Gympie and Cooroy to a full day exhibition of University courses and potential careers.

11. **Summer Schools**: This is a University subsidised opportunity for high school students to undertake a short summer school to develop skills in a new area of study (courses include Indonesian, Scallop Aquaculture, Developing a Dolphin Business Plan, and DNA manipulation).

USQ Wide bay also has an extensive regional recruitment policy including:

1. **Headstart Program**: This program provides a transition to higher education whereby Year 11 and 12 students who would benefit from exposure to higher education enrol and study in an accredited higher education course as visiting students.
2. **"Tertiary Tasters"** are organised by Student Services to allow community disability groups to access our campus and receive expertise and advice on what the USQ Wide Bay campus has to offer them.
3. **Schools visiting the campus**: Schools located in regional and isolated areas visit the campus for student familiarisation
4. **School Visits**: There is an annual program of school visits by staff.
5. **Open Day**: An annual event along the traditional open day model.

There are no regional collaborative partnerships or quota arrangements to manage regional recruitment between the two universities.

4.5.2   A Regional Education Supply Chain

Both USQ Wide Bay and USC recognise that they are an essential part of the regional education supply chain.   Both are making significant contributions to the educational, social, cultural, environmental and economic development of the region.

A goal of the USQ Wide Bay Strategic Plan is to extend excellence in teaching by ensuring that learning and teaching are state-of-the-art, innovative and consistent. The desired outcome from this would be a high rating of employment of USQ Wide Bay graduates by regional employers. There is a

clear need to continue to foster communication channels with regional communities so USQ Wide Bay can be the major supply chain for our region. As an example, requests are made of the Business faculty to refer IT students to local companies for skilled employment. USQ Wide Bay campus has also created an initiative to encourage more local high school students to continue their education after completing year twelve. This initiative is called the 'Bay Project', where lecturers from across different faculties will talk to Urangan State High School students each week about different career options. This project has enabled USQ Wide Bay to connect with local students to try to persuade secondary students to pursue higher education, which in turn will lead to a higher skilled workforce in the region.

The Education and Training industry on the Sunshine Coast is represented by the Education Cluster, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast.

In consultation with the Sunshine Coast Office of Regional Enterprise (SCORE), the Cluster is making it one of its priorities for 2006 to review and develop a model that illustrates how effective linkages could be developed by the secondary schools, Cooloola Sunshine Institute of Technical and Further Education (CSIT) and the University.

Of course, such linkages already exist, but warrant both documentation and expansion. For example, USC is involved in an extensive scoping exercise with local TAFEs, encompassing multiple locations, to develop a framework for program articulation and student pathways between TAFE and the University. Already, CSIT and USC offer 'flagship' dual degree programs of four years' duration – Diploma of Event Management/Bachelor of Business (Tourism), Diploma of Hospitality/Bachelor of Business, Diploma of Sport and Recreation/Bachelor of Business and Diploma of Tourism (Operational Management)/Bachelor of Business (Tourism).

4.5.3   Pathways to Regional Employment

Staff at USQ Wide Bay are extensively involved in regional organisations and small businesses. (Refer to Table 11: USQ Wide Bay Staff Representation in the Community). Local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are developing a high regard for the USQ Wide Bay campus. USQ Wide Bay endeavours to strengthen strategic partnerships and form positive enduring relationships as socially-engaged academic entrepreneurs.

The Executive Officer (Marketing/Public Relations and Human Resources) will be working in conjunction with the soon to be appointed Business Development Manager and Executive Officer (International Development) from 2006 to increase the USQ Wide Bay campus profile in the region. This will create pathways to increase relationships with industry, community, the education sector and the international market. Student Services will also play a pivotal role in working in conjunction with the Executive Officer (International Development) to secure accommodation for international students. USQ Wide Bay's vision is to be seen as a major contributor to USQ's status as Australia's leading transnational educator, including a rapidly developing international profile for the campus. Research indicates that international students inject more than AUD$18,000 per annum into our regional economy. (Note: this figure does not include part time work undertaken by students, the cost of the programs at the USQ Wide Bay campus and the associated boost to the regional economy as student accommodation and a range of related services is built or increased to accommodate international students).

Student Services are also involved with student employment, visa applications, and counselling and have developed relationships within the community to keep abreast of information and

opportunities for international and domestic students. They are involved with Chambers of Commerce, labour service providers, and small to medium size employers.

On the Sunshine Coast, the creation of SCORE has been one of the most notable examples of cooperation at the highest regional political levels to advance regional economic outcomes. The importance of the education industry to this cause is illustrated by the fact that both USC's Vice-Chancellor and the Director of CSIT were invited to become members.

Part of SCORE's Terms of Reference is*: To consider and support the top ten agreed regional strategies [for economic development] to be implemented for the next three years.* These priorities include to 'Encourage and promote the development of the Sunshine Coast's Knowledge Economy', including initiatives to attract and retain knowledge based industries, and develop or attract knowledge workers to the region. USC, the Innovation Centre, and CSIT are considered critical institutions in the development of a knowledge economy. The participation of the Sunshine Coast Business Council in SCORE opens the way for the establishment of closer relationships between USC, CSIT and the business community, particularly in developing pathways to regional employment.

To that end, USC has recently appointed Ms Christine Buchanan of Robert Gordon University as a Visiting Fellow of the University to undertake an assessment of how the University can build improved graduate employment outcomes, including increased levels of graduate employment within the region. Robert Gordon University has an outstanding record in graduate employment and is a benchmarking partner to USC.

As identified earlier, there appears to be a strong desire to support on-site learning in industry and governance as a means to retain regional human capital. The Regional Steering Committee will explore the opportunities identified through its regional meetings early in 2006.

4.5.4   Support for Graduate Enterprise and Alumni

USQ Wide Bay campus is reaching out to graduates – old and new – by inviting them to join a newly reformed, local chapter of the USQ Alumni Association. USQ Wide Bay is currently reinventing this service to provide a number of interesting benefits and special USQ events. By forming a local Alumni chapter, USQ Wide Bay can keep in touch with past students and provide members with social and networking opportunities with professionals and old friends. Interested community members and graduates from other institutions are encouraged to join as 'Friends of the University' who, along with the USQ graduates, will be offered opportunities to expand social and professional networks through special USQ events. The friends of the Alumni will include 'other graduates, graduates families, friends and business contacts', as agreed by committee members. 'Friends' would be interested and concerned with the welfare of USQ Alumni, USQ and related matters. The USQ Alumni Association is an organisation that creates a focus for the community.

USQ Wide Bay Alumni & Friends' Ideas Quest (IQ), our continuing professional learning series, commenced on Thursday 24 November 2005 during the Hervey Bay City Council's Active Ageing Conference. A session titled 'Grey Matters' will be the first event in the IQ series where guests will be invited to join in this spirited debate on aging. It has been proposed that, in 2006, the Ideas Quest will stage a hypothetical and host a Dialogue Café.

USQ Wide Bay sees the establishment of relationships to find successful companies that may be interested in employing our graduates as high on the agenda, along with collaboration of the Alumni and local government departments to give the Alumni some additional direction in the near future.

Wide Bay has always been proud of the close-knit, family atmosphere that students experience whilst studying through USQ Wide Bay.

Established in 1998, the key activities of the USC's University Foundation are:

- assisting alumni and friends to maintain contact with each other and the University
- building strong relationships with the community
- inviting support to priority projects
- reporting the progress of this support and how it aids the University's development.

Foundation holds regular activities for alumni such as events, reunions, and guest lectures. Already USC Alumni events have been held on the Sunshine Coast and in Brisbane, as well as in China. These 'Stay Connected' events give alumni members the opportunity to renew friendships and past acquaintances, as well as to network with business and industry representatives. The first event in Brisbane, on 14 April 2005, was held at the Jan Manton Art Gallery in South Brisbane, which was then playing host to the aptly title 'Connected' exhibition by Merilyn Fairskye.

2006 marks the University's 10-year celebrations, and a range of alumni events will be held during the year.

4.6   Promoting Lifelong Learning, Continuing Professional Development, and Training

4.6.1   *Continuing Education and Continuing Professional Development*

Students throughout the region can enrol as an external USQ Toowoomba student to engage in continuing education/professional development. The Professional Development/Single Course Program provides flexible access to over 700 of USQ's distance education courses in three study periods per year. The Program is offered by the Continuing and Professional Education (ContEd) section of USQ. Courses are offered off-campus (via distance education) or Online (via the Internet) and students are able to commence in Semester one, two or three. Students are able to spread their study over the three semesters of 15 weeks.

This program is designed to cater for a range of people who want to update professional studies, improve career prospects or gain credit at another university, and other adults who are seeking an opportunity to enter tertiary study.

International Students and Postgraduate fee-paying students can apply to study single courses for credit toward an award program at another institution. Students are responsible for ensuring that the course/s selected will be approved by their home university.

USQ offers three study periods each year. Semester 3 has grown to be very popular for Continuing and Professional Education students. The third semester particularly targets:

- Fee paying students (undergraduate or postgraduate) from other universities wishing to gain credit towards their studies
- Overseas trained accountants who are seeking conversion of overseas accounting qualifications meet CPA Australia and ICAA requirements
- Professionals upgrading skills or gaining skills in a new area
- Professionals satisfying CPE or CPD requirements

The University's Learning and Development Policy provides the opportunity for all employees to access appropriate Professional Developmental Programs to increase their skills, broaden their

experience and enhance their future career opportunities. A specialised Academic Staff Development Program has been developed for all USQ teaching employees and postgraduate students with a teaching interest. USQ provides a range of Professional Development alternatives in the area of Learning and Teaching:

- Academic Staff Development Program
- Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education
- BUILD program (to assist staff to develop professionally during their employment at USQ)
- Academic Development Leave and Study Assistance
- Academic Promotion

A wide range of other professional development alternatives are also provided by The Library, Office of Preparatory and Academic Support (OPACS), Information Technology Services, Distance Education and e-Learning Centre and Human Resources Professional Development Program.

The USQ Wide 'Bay Project' initiative has the potential to assist USQ staff to continue their education through the development for postgraduate opportunities for those interested in becoming a part of this education initiative.

The USQ Wide Bay Education faculty work closely with Education Queensland (EQ) using their staff to run workshops for students and USQ Wide Bay staff. In turn, USQ Wide Bay staff run workshops for EQ individuals and schools. Early Childhood Education facilitate workshops, conferences and committee meetings with the Early Childhood Teachers Association (ECTA) and TAFE. These joint meetings utilise lecture theatres and teaching rooms on the university campus, and teaching facilities at the TAFE.

At USC Visiting Student status is available to students who wish to study a University course(s) for professional or personal development, but who do not wish to enrol in the complete undergraduate degree program. Visiting students receive normal instruction, assessment and formal results. If a visiting student subsequently enrols in a degree program at the University, previous study may be assessed for **advanced standing**.

USC also runs a Summer Semester, with courses taught in an intensive mode and offered to current USC, visiting and cross-institutional students. For Summer 2005/06, the following courses are on offer:

Core Courses
- COR110 Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- CMN213 Editing for the Communications Professional
- CMN215 Creative Writing A: Structuring Narrative
- INT235 Philosophy of International Relations in a Changing World
Faculty of Business
- BUS101 Applied Research Methods
- BUS102 Economics for Business
- BUS103 Business Law and Ethics
- BUS104 Managing the Organisation
- BUS105 Marketing Theory and Practice
- BUS106 Introductory Accounting

Faculty of Science, Health and Education
- EDU101 Learning About Learning

4.6.2 *Access to Learning from Under-Represented Groups*

The student body at both universities includes a high proportion of people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, often representing the first in their family to access university study or accessing study as adults after a background of educational disadvantage. At USQ Wide Bay mechanisms for transition to tertiary programs of non-uniform entry profiles continues with an increase in enrolments in a range of enabling and preparatory programs such as the: *Tertiary Preparation Program* (TPP) and the *Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program*. These programs are designed to help people from the community to pursue their goal to undertake university studies and are marketed to the public at Careers Days and Open Days. To assist students from a range of equity groups undertake tertiary studies, a range of scholarships are offered, such as: mature age/ non-school leaver, Indigenous, regional and rural residential scholarships.

The same fundamental philosophy pervades USC where a number of programs are in place to improve the access to learning by under-represented groups. These include:

1. An **Indigenous special alternative entry facility** whereby Indigenous applicants who have not been offered a place through the usual QTAC process may apply for admission. There also are **Headstart scholarships** for Indigenous students.
2. The University participates in both regional and Brisbane post secondary career option **expos for students who have a disability**.
3. A range of adaptive technologies is available in the **Learning Connections** room.
4. USC runs a **Keep Pace Program** for students, parents and the wider community that targets low SES, and rural and isolated community members to demystify and welcome them to the University. Participation in the program is free and includes sessions/workshops on academic writing and study skills, careers education, QTAC preference change information, alternative entry and returning to study information.
5. In 2004, 49% of students at USC were the first in their family to attend university. To assist parents with dealing with transition for their son or daughter, the university has produced a *Guide to Parents*. The publication has been well accepted by both parents and students and is one that is popular when student ambassadors visit the schools in the region.
6. USC manages a number of **Commonwealth Learning Scholarships**, a small number of **University Equity Scholarships** and over 30 donor scholarships, bursaries and prizes.

In addition to the above there are a range of programs for students once they are at USC that support equity including scholarships, computer basics courses, the student mentor program, the Peer Adviser program, the Academic Skills (Equity) program, the Library Information Literacy Program, Enabling Courses, and the First Year Experience program.

In 2006 more targeted access and equity programs will be running and USC anticipates that it will also engage with the community by linking earlier into a student's life, (viz Year 7 onwards), to promote and inspire young students to a tertiary education. This will particularly focus on Indigenous students, but also those at schools that have been identified as having high numbers of low SES students.

4.7 Changing Forms of Educational Provision

USQ was an early adopter of online education and training. The research effort to support this work has included a focus on online pedagogy, which is at the heart of successful teaching and learning online.

At USQ the strategic move to the online environment was a natural step based on almost 25 years of innovation in flexible delivery. The central role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in USQ operations is supported by the development of an organisational culture capable of generating and sustaining innovation as a corporate, rather than individual, ethos. This organisational culture developed as a result of a series of policy and structural initiatives based on USQ's guiding objective: 'To be a leader in flexible learning and the use of information and communication technologies in the tertiary education sector'. This objective generated a significant investment in ICT over many years.

USQ is moving to more flexible hybrid or Transmodal delivery options. Transmodal delivery involves the provision of course content through a resource-based learning package, supplemented by selected interactive teaching support activities using communication technologies or face-to-face sessions. Transmodal delivery enables all students to access core content in a variety of formats consolidated onto a single CD and supplemented with teaching support activities specifically designed for the particular course, program or discipline, and delivery context.

Key Components of Transmodal Delivery include:

- A common resource-based learning package on CD for all students: The resource-based learning package on CD is the same for all students whether enrolled on campus or off campus. It can include any or all of the following: introductory materials, study guide, essential readings, power point presentations, audio and video files, other multimedia applications and simulations, software, reference lists and links to online systems via USQ*Connect*.
- Student access to interactive teaching support activities: In addition to receiving the CD of resource materials, what varies for students is their access to a combination of interactive teaching support activities available. For example: On-campus students can access face-to-face sessions (lectures, tutorials, workshops, laboratories etc) and online discussion forums, teleconferences, teletutorials and telecords. Selected groups of international students could receive various combinations of teaching support as listed above, possibility supplemented by local face-to-face tutoring through licensed agents etc. Telecords are offered for some courses to provide the opportunity for students to hear from their lecturer during the semester. The lecturer records an audio file, drawing on issues discussed in the course discussion group or from student enquiries. Students enrolled in the course can access the audio file from their USQStudyDesk.

There is no single form of Transmodal delivery for all programs and delivery contexts. In fact, there can be various forms of Transmodal delivery for courses and programs within different disciplines, but the core content of the resource-based learning package on CD remains the same for all students within a course offering.

The resource-based learning package on CD becomes more powerful when used in conjunction with USQ online systems. All learning management systems used by USQ provide for online discussion forums and USQ teaching staff have the option to utilise this functionality in their courses.

Additional content and resources can also be released to students throughout the semester if using WebCT Vista.T.

The University of Southern Queensland's Distance Education Centre (DEC) and Information Technology Services (ITS) became the first higher education distance education facility and IT support facility, respectively, in the world to receive international quality accreditation by the International Standards Organisation (ISO 9001). This was upgraded for both the DEC and ITS to ISO 9001:2000 in 2001. This external accreditation includes such activities as telecommunications support, multimedia development, electronic publishing and network design and maintenance.

Given its strategic commitment to online education, USQ has made a concerted effort to undertake the empirical research necessary to provide a firm foundation for its work. There is a growing body of research in this area in relation to open and distance learning. While it is acknowledged that research is the key to development, growth and future success of open and distance learning, this is especially true in the rapidly expanding field of online education.

USC currently offers a range of online postgraduate business programs.

In 1997 the University developed Australia's first online Master of Business Administration. Since then, three hundred online MBA students have graduated and, in 2005, more than 300 students study online. Online students use Blackboard e-Leaning software.

The Faculty of Business currently offers the following online programs:

- Graduate Certificate in Business Administration
- Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning
- Graduate Diploma in Business Administration
- Graduate Diploma in Financial Planning
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Financial Planning.

USC also offers Bachelor of Business students in Noosa to undertake their studies at USC Noosa Centre.

Like the Sippy Downs campus, the Noosa Centre is a self-sufficient centre equipped with technologically advanced facilities designed to cater to each student's academic and study needs. The Centre houses a computer laboratory, library, student lounge, lecture and tutorial rooms, and resources and support including:

- administrative services
- 24-hour computer access to e-reserve collections and databases
- library collection
- flexible study support
- full delivery by academic staff
- staff-student consultation
- support services from Student Administration and Student Services

To study at the USC Noosa Centre, students enrol in a Bachelor of Business program. The Bachelor of Business provides students with an excellent grounding in all facets of business, and produces graduates with skills applicable to a wide range of employment areas. After one year of

study at the USC Noosa Centre, students complete their Business studies at the University's Sippy Downs campus. Students may transfer to another Business degree after enrolment.

USC also offers its unique Core Courses, three interdisciplinary courses for students enrolled in an undergraduate program. Full-time students must complete the Core Courses by the end of their first year of study. Part-time students must complete the Core Courses by the end of the second year of study.

The Core Courses are Communication and Thought (COR109), Innovation Creativity and Entrepreneurship (ICE) (COR110) and Environment, Technology and Sustainability (COR111).

The Core Courses provide:

- a firm grounding in inquiry-based learning
- an opportunity to enhance the ability to communicate ideas and information
- guidance in developing interdisciplinary contexts of specific topics and subjects
- an environment which fosters the consideration of social impacts
- a stimulating learning environment encouraging intellectual growth and curiosity

The Core Courses aim to:

- be a positive and constructive introduction to the university experience
- provide effective progression into other courses in all faculties
- encourage students to explore innovative and creative uses of technology
- contribute to the development of graduates who are good communicators.

4.7.1 Institutional Coherence

Institutional coherence is maintained by having a clearly defined strategic plan and related subordinate plans. This planning structure ensures that all members of the university community are focussed on clear goals and objectives, with defined outcomes.

USQ sees itself as a customer-focused organisation, fully appreciative of the value and the need for effective management of knowledge and the recognition that educational institutions are now delivering learning online to the world. The University firmly believes that its survival is dependent on the operational outcomes of a decisive Information Systems Strategic Plan (2003 – 2006).

Central to the development of the USQ Information Systems Strategic Plan has been the articulation of twelve USQ ICT Strategic Objectives:

1. To be a leader in flexible learning and the use of ICT in a tertiary education context
2. To maintain USQ's leadership as a dual mode institution in the innovative use of educational technologies and flexible delivery, including the provision of operational infrastructure to support online initiatives
3. To provide greater opportunities for students to access ICT and to more fully exploit ICT in teaching, administration and general management
4. To meet student needs by being flexible in access, courses, modes of delivery, locations of teaching and student support
5. To ensure that students are appropriately prepared for involvement in an e-world
6. To respond to a recognition that the effective and efficient creation, management and delivery of intellectual assets is critical to the business success of the University for the present and the future

7. To respond to a recognition that key factors contributing to management effectiveness include the value of information to the business, quality of content and appropriateness of delivery
8. To ensure that staff have access to the ICT they require to perform their job effectively; including networked workstations, access to relevant information and the necessary and appropriate training
9. To ensure that every staff member of USQ will, at the completion of every customer interaction, have enhanced the relationship between the customer and USQ
10. To pursue continual improvement to methodologies for utilising technologies in professional practice, particularly the uses of ICT that enhance customer services
11. To pursue mutually beneficial partnerships with international and other education providers in the innovative use of ICTs
12. To monitor closely cooperative ICT ventures between vendors and the university sector for insight into potential productivity gains

At USC, the Strategic Plan is the University's highest level planning document, along with the Master Plan. The University also has Functional plans, such as the Learning and Teaching Plan, that apply across the University and that pertain to its core business. Each Cost Centre also has an Area Operational Plan that is driven by the Strategic Plan and the Functional Plans. The Strategic Plan and Functional Plans drive the allocation of resources through the budget process. Area Operational Plans demonstrate how the allocation of resources to Cost Centres advances the goals in the higher level plans.

The current planning process, which has recently concluded in the development of a revised Strategic Plan, was initiated by University Council, which developed a detailed environmental (SWOT) analysis and identified the directions for a consultative process to follow. Extensive consultations were undertaken with key regional stakeholders over roughly a two month period. At various stages throughout the process, the University's Senior Management Team provided input and critique, fine tuning each draft until the final version was developed through the Office of the Vice-Chancellor.

The Strategic Plan's framework is built around two areas of focus – Regional Engagement and Sustainability – which are explored with reference to eight key areas:

- Growth and development of the University
- Learning and teaching
- Research
- Regional Engagement
- Internationalisation
- Student Support
- Staff and
- Environmental sustainability.

4.7.2   *Flexible Education*

USQ is one of the leaders in the field of on-line learning. Studying by distance education or online allows one to study from the comfort of ones home anywhere in Australia or overseas, without having to attend regular lectures on campus, and allows more distant or rural participation in learning. The Distance Education program at USQ is recognised as one of the best in the world with more than 18,000 USQ learners studying by distance education.

Universities are increasingly expected to establish explicit linkages with other educational sectors and with business and industry, and to contribute directly to national economic and social objectives. Knowledge of the region in regards to our demographics and the population's access to ICT based technology is particularly important. Students have the flexible choices of attending on campus course delivery or online access, which is particularly advantageous for those who are working full time or part time.

USQ's strategic plan outlines guiding strategies for business development and partnership, and cultural changes in the community.

Guiding Strategy 9 - Business Development and Partnership

Seek out strategic partnerships:

- Only enter into partnerships if there is a strong business case
- Aim to have a global presence, be a domain leader
- Expand customer base by acquisition and/or strategic partnerships
- Use technology to facilitate business outcomes
- Develop new avenues for products, product delivery and market access
- Design synergy in products and services to increase customer appeal
- Ensure complementary business activities

Guiding Strategy 10 - Cultural Change

Strive to maintain USQ as an organisation that continually adapts management, organisation and skills to accommodate new information and technologies:

- Ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of the information services strategies and values of USQ
- Internally: Encourage staff awareness, involvement, ownership, access to training and familiarisation, use, commitment, etc
- Externally: Monitor and accommodate customer value shifts; be aware of best practice in service delivery and technology management in any relevant industry for adaptation to USQ.

USC recognises the use of ICT in developing communication and collaboration strategies that augment its physical presence. ICT is seen as a crucial part of being a catalyst for regional engagement that affords collaborative learning and research and additionally facilitates continuous re-engagement of educational services under the banner of life-long learning.

Specifically USC is developing solutions and strategies in the following areas:

1. **Networked Learning Environment** - The establishment of a Networked Learning Environment that supports anytime, anywhere access to educational activities. In particular, USC is currently reviewing the implementation of a Community Access Portal that integrates learning activities with general communication and interaction across the University. This will create a social context for learning that will support the transfer of knowledge and skills within the university community and foster relationships between education and research.
2. **Production Studios** - The establishment of production studios and equipment by which the University and community will seek to develop highly engaging multimedia content for use in learning and teaching is being implemented. Such content production typically relies on

community-based expertise in developing real-world relevancy and authentic knowledge contexts around which the University and region, and builds relationships and collaborative business strategies. Recent examples are the documentary film productions based on regional issues of the closure of a sugar mill ("The Last Crush") and the effects of atomic waste disposal on a local indigenous tribes ("Out of Sight, Out of Mind"). The later production has recently been accepted for commercial distribution to international markets.

3. **Collaborative Infrastructures** - The development of collaboration infrastructures that support synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (stored and forwarded) communication channels is being implemented. Such infrastructure supports the establishment of online communities thus increasing the scope for regional engagement. Some of this activity is used in learning and teaching, however, the infrastructure is equally facilitative of research and community activities. Examples of such activities are the collaborative teaching of Indonesian via web-based seminars. These are activities that involve several universities, both regional and international, and are especially effective due to their political relevance and social contexts. They also promote effective dialogue between cultures and foster the sharing of common cultural goals and an awareness of particular issues intrinsic to international relations. The same infrastructure is used for fast and easy setup of meetings and similar group activities that are otherwise cumbersome as well as costly to support.

4. **Smart Technology** - The University has developed teaching spaces that utilize smart presentation technologies and provide strong links to industry best practice. An example is the recent BICT (Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology) degree that uses highly engaging teaching spaces that are enabled by SMART presentation systems. These use industry breed technologies in their teaching to ensure rapid transfer and industry relevance. Graduates from this degree are industry-grade professionals and are also very comfortable with the collaborative, idea sharing scenarios used in the professions. The use of SMART technologies also facilitates the efficient transfer of complex ideas and assist in developing authentic learning scenarios.

Placed Based Versus Virtual Learning

As USQ moves into more flexible, hybrid/Transmodal forms of delivery the "distance" or "online" students now have a wide range of interactive options so that they should no longer have any reason to see themselves as disadvantaged in relation to provision of higher education. However, the more significant issue is gaining a better understanding of the potential of each environment and mode so that the strengths of each can be applied in the learning/teaching environment, as appropriate to the content and discipline area. These sentiments are echoed at USC where with movement into more flexible, hybrid forms of delivery it has experienced tensions and challenges, some of which are based on the provision of services and their supporting infrastructures while others are more ideologically bound.

Universities can do more in distance or online contexts than give an attenuated experience of main campus teaching. These attenuated experiences include supplying lectures on video, videoconferences, audio taped classes, or the provision of a lecturer to take first year classes strictly in accord with how it would be undertaken on the main campus. Flexible delivery takes into account the individual student profile, acknowledging that they may be at different stages of learning. While student profiles, learning styles, preferences and study experience vary significantly, the first year students may require more of an on campus presence whereas mature age students or those in later stages of their programs may require more on line study choices.

Despite these advantages and advances a number of issues arising from the adoption of trans-modal delivery with regard to the student population have been identified and include:

- Increased need for academic staff development (including technology training and understanding of appropriate 'netiquette') so that they are aware of the needs of online students together with on campus students
- Organisational development considerations
- Policy and regulation changes
- Availability of print materials to students
- Increased usage of CD production capability
- Online dissemination of materials also raises copyright considerations given the ease of copying such digital material and identifying ownership
- Time constraints for online students working full time or whose family considerations limit the amount of available online time for accessing materials or discussions,
- The need for University awareness of any growing 'Student to University' digital divide whereby the pace of university technology applications and delivery methods may outgrow technology readily available to students. Students may be restricted to slower internet connections, older computers or limited funds for current communications technology making access slow, frustrating or prohibitive. This would be particularly applicable to students on low incomes or from lower socioeconomic and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Other factors that are more institutional in nature, particularly in a younger institution such as USC that does not have a culture of on-line delivery, include:

1. **Cost -** The move to virtual forms of communicative and collaborative activities in learning and teaching involves huge expenditures of capital if the services are to be reliable, resilient, scalable, and future proof. Such costs are seldom appreciated or fully understood in the initial stages of development. This causes tensions in competition for the available funds with place-based capitalization of facilities and infrastructures. While the relative advantages of virtualization can be demonstrated, the thousand-year-old traditions of in-place teaching and face-to-face discussion are often assumed to be the logical and hence primary mode of interaction. Hence virtualization is seen largely as augmenting in-place activities, and indeed many virtual infrastructures initially endeavour to recreate more place-bound interactions. This leads to the costly duplication of technologies that support both the real and virtual spaces. This can lead to one or the other not being optimized, and the resulting diminishment in the quality of service.
2. **Cultural tension**s **-** Related to the preceding point is one of cultural resistance to the embracing of newer forms of ICT. A familiar example is the resistance to moving to a more student-centred approach to curriculum design. The resistance carries through from central administration of courses, time tabling, provision of educational technologies, to the intra-faculty labour models that fails to make explicit the provision (and recognition) of time spent for activity based virtual course coordination and resource development. Compounding these tensions is the difficulty required in implementing the "teaching-research" cycle whereby research informs teaching and vice versa. ICT middleware infrastructures are crucial to facilitating this, but cultural traditions of publishing, tenure, promotion and academic identity all run counter to the rapid dissemination of knowledge and research results.

4.8   Enhancing the Regional Learning System

Since the early 1990s, concepts of learning regions, smart cities, creative cities, and the like have received increased attention among regional economists, economic geographers and regional policymakers. This development marks the recognition that factors determining growth of regions are

increasingly intangible, like institutions and culture, and increasingly mobile, like capital, codified knowledge, and human capital.

This focus on regional learning reflects an awareness that improving regional outcomes is a medium to long term process, based on a willingness and concensus among regional actors involved. Learning in this context not only means to adapt to new circumstances, but also to reflect critically on regional institutions and learning processes.

The USQ vision in their Strategic Plan states that, 'It is highly regarded for its learning and teaching excellence, focussed research and enterprise, multiculturalism and effective engagement with the community'. The University's mission also states that, 'The University serves its multicultural community by preparing global citizens for life-long learning in a diverse and changing world. The University maintains its ability to pursue its Mission trough a continual process in introspection, analysis, integration, innovation and improvement'.

The Learning & Teaching Enhancement Committee (LTEC) was established in late 2004. The Terms of Reference for the Committee include:

- the development of mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Plan
- the evaluation, dissemination and sharing of information on good practice in learning & teaching
- the oversight and promotion of professional development activities designed to enhance learning & teaching and
- promotion of innovation in learning, teaching and assessment.

The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee (LTEC) has initiated the following projects:

- Review and refine the Learning and Teaching Plan - the purpose of the project is to seek input from the University community on the Teaching and Learning Plan with a view to aligning it with the current Mission, Vision and Values Statements and the USQ Directions Paper.
- Undertake an audit of existing mechanisms associated with the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Plan and develop an institution-wide implementation plan for Learning and Teaching.

USC's commitment to partnerships, which has been lauded by the Commonwealth Government, involves partnerships with business, government departments and community organizations, in order to provide innovative learning experiences for students and stimulate valuable research initiatives, which ultimately benefit the region.

Those partnerships and their purpose include:

For education with:

- Education Queensland to develop the Knowledge Precinct around the University
- Central Queensland University to offer a Bachelor of Nursing to Sunshine Coast residents
- Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE to offer combined award programs
- Sunshine Coast high schools to offer the Headstart program (a year 11 and 12 university experience) to local high school students

- Chancellor State College to share infrastructure such as athletic facilities, carparks and storm water management
- Immanuel Lutheran College to host and support the Voices on the Coast Youth Literature Festival

For the environment with:

- Kingfisher Bay Resort and Dilli Village - to establish research and education centres on Fraser Island
- Australia Zoo - to collaborate on research projects and share expertise

For Business with:

- Innovation Centre and Genesis Technology Development Limited to develop a A\$20 million private equity capital-raising program for entrepreneurial ventures
- The Queensland Department of State Development, Trade, and Innovation (DSDTI) and Maroochy Shire Council to develop a technology park adjacent to the campus
- National Innovation Awareness Strategy (NIAS) Student Business Plan Competition, the result of a Commonwealth of Australia Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources grant, to offer future business leaders the chance to link with the local business community and test their ideas
- Sunshine Coast based Community Solutions to place Study Abroad students in internships with local businesses as part of their study experience
- Students Mean Business, the Faculty of Business students club, to hold professional development workshops throughout the year to enable local industry members to engage with students
- Queensland Transport, Queensland Rail, Chancellor Park and Sunbus - to establish additional public transport routes to the campus for students

For Internationalisation with:

- More than 60 partner institutions in over 20 countries provide opportunities for regional students to study overseas through student exchanges and online education.

Each university has a stated commitment to regional learning systems, and have done so in the context of their perceived sub-catchments within the broader region. As part of a more flexible delivery across the region, and to cater for those local government areas that are voicing concerns over the delivery of such services, especially those that fall midway between the universities, the universities have sought to explore their credit transfer systems, the complementarities of their programs, the potential for duel badging and other innovative collaborative ventures that at the same time make more efficient use of their resources. USQ Wide bay has agreements with a number of educational institutions worldwide which allow for transfer credit for relevant studies, work experience and job training deemed equivalent in objective, standard and/or content when applying to enrol in a USQ program.

4.8.1   *Collaboration Between Higher Education Providers*

Both USQ and USC have a commitment to collaborative arrangements with regional, national, and international higher education providers, which are often expressed in terms of joint badged degrees (eg Nursing at USC) or credit transfer.

As yet there exists minimal collaboration between the two universities.

4.9   Conclusions

Both universities aim to create and maintain a learning environment that provides the basis for students to develop as independent lifelong learners, become effective problem solvers, and gain knowledge and skills relevant to their future needs.

USC developed a solid understanding of regional needs and characteristics through an extensive consultation program in its formative days and has embedded a strong philosophical commitment to regional engagement in its ongoing development of teaching. Strengths of USC include its ongoing development of a seamless education supply chain, equity of access program, the high regional activity component of the degrees, and overall student satisfaction. Indeed USC has been identified as the 2nd best university in Queensland for the delivery of programs (after the University of Queensland), topping the country in equity of access and student satisfaction.

USQ Wide Bay is an educational community committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research. It provides access to accredited tertiary education programs for learners form diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds. USQ Wide Bay recognise that they play a pivotal role in the life of its regional communities. With a growth of 60% between 2000 and 2001 alone, USQ Wide Bay recognises that their programs are instrumental in the contribution of up-skilling the rapidly growing population to cater for industry and community needs.

Over time, USQ Wide Bay been involved in regional activity in the areas of placement of students in local schools businesses and hospitals, educational planning with the local TAFE institute, delivery of public lectures seminars and presentations, schools outreach programs and active membership in the Maryborough and Hervey Bay Chambers of Commerce, health forums, sponsoring our local Whale Festival, providing regional participation in our campus Open Days, working with Education Hervey Bay and the ETRF (Education and Training Reforms for the Future).

Regional businesses, industry, governance and other employers desire to see the two campuses expand in light of the continuing regional exodus of talented youth. They seek and support an expansion of professional and regionally relevant programs and desire closer participation between advanced level students and the region via work place internships and practicums. There is wide spread recognition that the quality of education delivery and the services that the universities provide for their students are outstanding.

Although the tyranny of distance has kept these two institutions reasonably apart, each catering to their respective areas, they are nonetheless beginning to target more specialized regional audiences (such as marine tourism and education) and there is potential for increased friction between the programs. There is also the issue of resourcing programs such as these, and the two institutions may well benefit from a more collaborative sharing arrangement.

4.9.1   *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Related to the Contribution of Teaching and Learning to Labour Market and Skills*

Strengths

- High quality teaching profiles at both institutions
- High staff – student contact at these smaller institutions
- Programs are current and relevant to industry needs
- Rapid recent development of new programs to service the region
- Use of the 'Head Start' program in high schools

- A range of flexible delivery offerings
- Campuses are recognised for with personal attention to students and smaller class sizes
- Regular evaluation of curriculum
- strong (enabling) programs for entry pathway by 'non traditional' students who require additional preparation prior to award study
- Quality learning resources and technologies
- Strong integration of students in course placements and volunteering activities

Weaknesses

- Exporter of students
- Costs of resourcing programs in rapidly developing and changing landscape
- Industry recognition and capitalization of graduate research opportunities
- Minimal size of regional enterprises – difficulty in securing commitments from headquarters
- Campuses have limited amount of postgraduate activity

Opportunities

- Development of increased collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships with regional organisations, enterprises and individuals
- Increased collaboration between universities on boutique, regionally focused programs
- Increased use of information technology and external delivery experience to deliver remotely
- Increased involvement of employers in curriculum
- Employer recognition of graduate quality
- To assure the wider community that these educational environments and programs are driven by a transparent, university-wide understanding of effective learning and excellent teaching practice

Threats

- Perceptions of space and region leading to sense of 'security'
- Regional indifference to virtual learning environments
- Increased fees from students reducing regional participation rates
- Federal budgetary and funding restraints,
- Risk of the industry becoming 'oversaturated' with student course placements.

CHAPTER V: CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the key elements of the South East Queensland Regional Plan, produced by the Queensland State Government, is the development of strong communities: *Cohesive, inclusive and healthy communities with a strong sense of identity and place, and access to a full range of services and facilities that meet diverse community needs.*

The importance of developing strong and sustainable social, cultural and environmental infrastructure is important from two distinct perspectives - ensuring equity in service provision and meeting the expectations of those on whom the region will increasingly rely to lead economic development, that is, those capable of turning innovations into new business ideas and commercial products.

With respect to ensuring equity, a number of factors affect the provision of community services including regional infrastructure, the ageing population, emerging needs, and varying lifestyle choices. In the SEQ Regional Plan, the Queensland Government acknowledges that groups with the highest needs are often concentrated in urban fringe locations, rural areas and some suburbs where services are not available or well matched. The groups at most significant disadvantage include:

- low income individuals and families
- unemployed people
- people living in rural communities
- young people
- older people
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people with Disabilities and
- people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Despite the positive connotations of the term 'lifestyle region', a significant proportion of the population of the Sunshine-Fraser Coast falls into one of the above groups.

With respect to meeting the expectations of those who drive economic development, Richard Florida and his colleagues in the United States can provide some guidance. According to what they term 'creative capital theory', economic growth is determined by the locational choices of the holders of creative capital. The theory also identifies the underlying factors that shape the locational decisions of these creative people. According to Florida, their choices are driven by factors such as 'thick' labour markets (conducive to horizontal movement), lifestyle, social interaction, diversity, authenticity (feel or character), identity and quality of place.

In terms of 'quality of place' creative capital holders make choices based on three main dimensions:

- What's there: The combination of built environment and the natural environment – a proper setting for the pursuit of creative lives
- Who's there: Diverse kinds of people, interacting and providing cues that anyone can plug into and make a life in that community and

- What's going on: The vibrancy of street life, café culture, arts, music and people engaging in outdoor activities – altogether a lot of active, exciting, creative endeavours.

Within the Sunshine-Fraser Coast and in the context of these two important drivers of demand, USQ Wide Bay and USC have a critical role to play in supporting sustainable social, cultural and environmental development.

5.1   Social Development

Universities traditionally contribute to social development through the provision of expertise and research support. This includes service by staff, access to infrastructure, applying research outcomes to regionally important issues, and the input of student expertise (eg student placements and internships).

Whilst the direct delivery of broad ranging social services would not normally be part of the universities' role, this does not preclude the development of service delivery partnerships which take advantage of knowledge and expertise from within and outside the universities. For example, the Student Services area of the USQ Wide Bay is currently in discussion with Hervey Bay City Council, the Neighbourhood Centre, and the Wide Bay Sexual Assault Unit regarding the joint development of a counselling service. This service would be self funding and would be staffed by student counsellors from the Bachelor of Human Services and Counselling degree working with close professional supervision.

The capacity to access university infrastructure can sometimes be the difference between a program or event going forward and a good idea being lost. Across both USQ Wide Bay and USC, non office space is available to the public, however, differing levels of university support may apply. For example, at USC, community events such as FESTURI (multicultural festival) and NAIDOC (Indigenous week) are free of charge while commercial activities are charged at commercial rates. Charities and not for profit community organisations have benefited from direct USC sponsorship of events/functions to the tune of around $70K each year, not including in kind support.

Looking to the future, USC is increasingly seeking to enter into partnerships to develop social and cultural infrastructure at its Sippy Downs site. For example, the University is currently in negotiation with local councils, the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE (CSIT), Chancellor State College, and Education Queensland for the planning and development of two complexes – a world class sports/athletics stadium, and a 500 seat cultural centre.

USC has a history of such ventures, including the development of its high tech business incubator, the Innovation Centre. As part of the Innovation Centre construction project, a two thousand seat auditorium was constructed within the building to house both University events (eg graduation) and community events. This multi purpose facility is crucial in a region that suffers from a limited range of social and cultural facilities. Its success as a community venue is evidenced by the fact that it is now booked years in advance by community groups.

Developing safe and healthy communities is another critical element of regional social development, as articulated in the SEQ Regional Plan. This includes encouraging active community participation, promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing crime.

USC offers a range of undergraduate programs in areas relating to community health and wellbeing, including Community Work, Counselling, Social and Community Studies, Welfare

Services, Health. It also offers postgraduate programs in Health Promotion, Nursing, and Community Services Management.

Staff teaching into these programs, who are also active researchers, regularly engage in joint projects to support positive outcomes for the community. One such example involves three research projects on assessing adolescent health and wellbeing using students from Chancellor State College's Middle School (located in the Knowledge Precinct of which the University is the hub) as subjects.

- The first study aims to characterise the typical dietary intake of adolescents and identify key factors influencing individual dietary choices. Ultimately, it seeks to better understand the relationships between attitudes towards eating and dietary choice.

- The second study seeks to characterise the health and wellbeing status of adolescents and correlate this with a range of environmental parameters including indoor air quality in the home and/or school environment.

- The third looks at actual and perceived physical activity and fitness among Australian adolescents. One specific research question addresses the relationship between indicators of physical activity and health related fitness in youths aged between 11 to 14 years.

It is anticipated that each of the studies will provide two fold benefits. First, they will provide valuable baseline data, which will lead to a 'rolling out' of future studies. Second, it is anticipated that they will impact on the manner in which health and wellbeing issues are addressed at State schools through both curriculum and other school based activity.

Community members are also able to access University health and wellbeing services at both USQ Wide Bay and USC. At USQ Wide Bay, the Community Health service has been able to utilise USQ's nursing facilities for flu vaccinations for community members, staff and students. At USC, community members can access the *CHASE* Sport and Health Clinic, and the sport and health testing services that can be made available both on campus and off site

Along with health and wellbeing, safety within a community is of critical importance, particularly in centres of high population growth. An example of positive collaboration in preventing crime lies in a recently completed project undertaken jointly by USC and Queensland Police entitled 'Just Let it Go'. The project is aimed at reducing assault and community violence, and involved the formulation of multi media ads by the University, using professional knowledge and expertise jointly provided by faculty staff and Queensland Police. Studies and focus groups followed, along with an analysis of reported assaults. The campaign, which ran this year, has been well received within the community and by stakeholder groups although it is too early as yet to determine its impact on reported incidences of assault and violence.

5.2   Cultural Development

Another plank in the development of a strong social infrastructure lies in acknowledging and supporting cultural diversity as a contributor to the rich social tapestry of the region.

Although the Sunshine-Fraser Coast's demographics are characterised by significant inward migration, it is only now beginning to experience an increase in cultural diversity through international migration, refugee settlement, increasing numbers of international students and international tourism more generally.

It is therefore interesting to note that USC is the only university in Queensland, and probably in Australia, to develop and incorporate a cross cultural sensitisation and communication module in the core curriculum that every undergraduate student in the University has to complete. This module is structured towards students examining the assumptions and beliefs in their own cultures, while developing a basic understanding of the skills necessary to work across cultures

From a research perspective, USC has also established the Centre for Multicultural and Community Development (CMCD), a research centre with a key focus on issues of multiculturalism, social and community development. Launched by the Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, on 4 June 2003, CMCD provides regional, state and national leadership in issues of cultural and human diversity, social and rural development, community capacity building, and community and environmental sustainability. The Centre operates out of two locations, one on campus and the other in the Brisbane CBD, and has conducted research and training across Queensland and New South Wales. It has international linkages in countries including India, Thailand, Vietnam, East Timor and the Sudan. CMCD continues to maintain a key focus on the region, with almost every project contributing to research and community capacity building on the Sunshine Coast.

One such project was the Multicultural Families project, funded by the Department of Families and Community Services, which had numerous outcomes in terms of community capacity building, increased involvement of minority groups in the mainstream, recognition of barriers to access and development of skills in the community. It also led to CMCD organising a national conference on the subject, where research participants were sponsored to attend and present papers. The 'Multicultural Families Conference', held on the Sunshine Coast in 2004, involved over 200 academics, government servants, practitioners and community members from across Australia. CMCD also cosponsored a conference on Human Security with Naresuan University in Thailand in November 2003.

On 8 and 9 December, 2005, the Centre will play host to the 'Racisms in the New World Order' Conference, which will boast national and international speakers and which will, once again, be held on the Sunshine Coast. The conference will bring together government officials, academics, practitioners and community members from across Australia as well as from the UK, United States, Singapore, South Africa and New Zealand, and will focus on proactive approaches to dealing with racism in the context of international events such as those involving the 'War on Terror'.

At the level of international multicultural exchange, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at USC has opened negotiations with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) to identify ways of involving USC in future ACIAR projects. ACIAR is a Commonwealth Government agency that operates as part of Australia's Aid Program within the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It contributes to the aid program objectives of advancing Australia's national interest through poverty reduction and sustainable development. These negotiations were opened on the basis of a successful ACIAR project already undertaken at USC.

The Sunshine-Fraser coast has significant and active Indigenous communities, and both USQ Wide Bay and USC recognise the importance and complexity of cultural exchange with these groups.

- There is a significant level of contact between the University and the local community, including with international students who are given a 'Welcome Country' presentation during Orientation Week
- There is significant Indigenous participation in FESTURI (which is a multicultural festival hosted by the University and which is discussed later in this chapter) to promote awareness of Aboriginal culture

- The University's Indigenous Services Officer also provides assistance to international students who are Indigenous members of their own communities, providing a welcome to and involvement in the local Indigenous community where appropriate
- A Cultural Resource Library, containing historical and reference texts on Aboriginal Culture and Heritage, is held within Student Affairs – this resource is available to all USC students and staff.

As part of a USC research project, a video on Indigenous perspectives and valuing Indigenous knowledge was produced, which has now been taken up by a commercial distributor.

Support for Indigenous persons by both universities can be categorised in two ways:

- Direct support for individuals and groups
- Research and the provision of expertise towards issues furthering positive outcomes for Indigenous people both within Australia and internationally.

Direct support for Indigenous individuals and groups includes:

- *Provision of on campus facilities to Indigenous individuals and groups:* Buallum Jarl-Bah (the USQ Wide Bay Indigenous support unit) assists and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout their tertiary studies in areas of advocacy, research, consultation and promotion of Australian Indigenous culture. Representatives from Buallum Jarl-Bah and the School of Nursing have been guest speakers and offered expertise in welfare and health advisory support in the local communities of Cherbourg and Eidsvold, and to the Fraser Coast Indigenous Community Health. They have also provided Indigenous support to the TAFE and also attend the aboriginal graduations as guest speakers. The 'Friends of Buallum Jarl-Bah Aboriginal Corporation' uses the campus facilities to provide a mentoring service to the aboriginal students
- *Appointment of support staff:* At USC, an Indigenous Services Officer within Student Services acts as a 'first port of call', including for Indigenous people thinking about study at the University, TAFE or elsewhere
- *Advisory Committees:* At USC there exists a Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee with 7 indigenous community members that meets at least 3 times a year
- *Support for new Indigenous students:* At USC, special attention is given to the relationship between Indigenous and international students – for example, during orientation week (O-week) celebrations, Indigenous students provide a traditional welcome for international students
- *Financial support:* Includes scholarships and bursaries for Indigenous students (eg the Olga Miller Bursary at USQ Wide Bay) and financial support for community initiatives such as Community NAIDOC week (National Indigenous week) at USC
- *Direct input to and support of local community groups:* At USC, this includes support for the Reconciliation Group and the Indigenous Network Group, input to issues of Indigenous support officers in local schools, and strong links and assistance to the CSIT Indigenous student body
- *Provision of Academic support:* USC participates in the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS), which is a Commonwealth Government funded program designed to provide academic assistance to Indigenous students over and above their course requirements
- *Provision of dedicated space* eg the 'Buranga Centre' (meaning to 'hear, listen and know' in the Gubbi Gubbi and Butchulla languages) at USC provides an Indigenous study and social space

- *Provision of Indigenous studies courses:* At USC, courses are run for staff and students to raise awareness of Indigenous culture and increase understanding
- *Indigenous participation in multicultural events:* There is significant Indigenous participation in FESTURI (which is a multicultural festival hosted by USC and which is discussed later in this chapter) to promote awareness of Indigenous culture.

One interesting feature of Indigenous support at USC is the fact that the University's Indigenous Services Officer also provides assistance to international students who are Indigenous members of their own communities, providing a welcome to and involvement in the local Indigenous community where appropriate.

From a research perspective, a number of Indigenous research projects developed by staff in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at USC are worth mentioning. For example, a research project was completed in 2003 and funded by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management (KCTWF), in association with Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation and Chuulangun Aboriginal Corporation. The project was entitled 'An Indigenous role in sustainable partnerships' and was designed to provide the intellectual underpinning for Indigenous involvement in sustainable exploitation of wildlife, conservation of biodiversity and management of habitats.

5.3   Support for Sport

Traditionally, universities, and specifically their student organisations, have been a driving force in regional sporting activity by fielding teams in a range of sporting competitions across the region. At USQ Wide Bay teams have been fielded this year in women's netball, women's and men's indoor soccer and hockey and is organised by the Student Guild.

At USC, sport and wellbeing are also areas of academic and engagement emphasis, as well as significant infrastructure initiatives. The University offers a range of undergraduate programs in sport and related areas including psychology and exercise science, science communication, sport and industry, sport and technology and exercise therapy.

Research in the area is focussed around the Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (CHASE) and is undertaken in one of two complementary areas of research strength – understanding and enhancing sports performance, and developing healthy activities in the community. The discipline base in CHASE is drawn from expertise in research areas of sport science, marketing and management, cultural analysis, health promotion, biomedicine and biotechnology, and leisure and recreation.

An examination of current research projects reveals that a number are both regionally relevant and internationally significant:

- Enhancing surfing performance – a biomechanical analysis
- Effective feedback for coaches and physical education teachers
- Performance enhancement in surf lifesaving
- Indigenous sports education – accrediting coaches and recreation officers
- Biomarkers of overtraining in athletes and
- Biomedical markers for recovery in exercise and training.

One particularly interesting research project being undertaken on *'Improving Musculoskeletal Strength and Postural Stability in Community Dwelling Older People through a group-based Exercise*

Program' aims to fill the gap in our understanding of the significance of a mediolateral exercise program on the postural stability of community dwelling older adults.

Presently there is minimal information available regarding the availability of and involvement in healthy activities and fall prevention measures by the population of older adults dwelling on the Sunshine Coast. Thus, this research was also conducted to allow development of a sustainable exercise based community fall prevention program to provide access to community support networks at the local community level and access to activities that provide ongoing community involvement.

CHASE also runs a testing and research program, and the soon to be accredited (November 2005) National Sport Science Quality Assurance Program (NSSQA), which will enable USC to work with nationally ranked athletes. USC is on track to become the first university in Australia to gain this accreditation.

Collaborators and partners in CHASE activities include the Australian Institute of Sport, Queensland Academy of Sport, Swimming Australia, Cycling Australia, Australian Paralympic Team, Department of Sport and Recreation, Australian Sports Commission, Australian Coaching Council, Fitness Australia, Local Council Authorities, Private and Public Schools, Sporting Organisations, and Australian and International Universities.

The University already provides a range of sporting facilities on campus that are accessible to the community. USC has high quality sporting and athletic facilities available for hire including an IAAF standard athletics track, multipurpose playing fields, and the University Club. The IAAF standard athletics track was opened in 1999, and is the only athletics facility at this standard within the region. The track is available for hire for training, meets and public use. Located on campus at Sippy Downs, the facility has eight and ten lane running tracks, and equipment for hurdles, steeplechase, javelin, shotput, discus, hammer throw, high jump, long jump, triple jump, pole vault and disabled throw events. It also has night lighting, toilets, kiosk facilities and two rooms.

The University has also developed to competition standards a multipurpose playing field for rugby union, touch football and soccer. This field is equipped with lights for night training. A second playing field has been prepared for training sessions and matches not requiring lighting.

In addition, the Capital Programs and Operations area at USC has played an integral role as part of the Steering Committee for a thorough ongoing examination of sport and recreation facilities within the region. Under the auspices of SunROC, the *Regional Sport and Recreation Facility Study (2005-2010)* was conducted in order to provide a shared vision and guide the planning delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure of a regional to international standard. The draft report was published in August 2005.

Recommendations across sixty nine candidate activities were made and prioritised in the areas of:

- Policy development at a regional level
- Outdoor sports
- Field sports
- Indoor sports
- Aquatic sports
- Courts sports
- Recreational activities and
- Other related activities.

In addition, USC has been accredited by the Australian Institute of Sports as an 'Athlete Friendly' University.

5.4   Support for the Arts

One aspect of cultural development that is often subject to regional disadvantage is support for the arts. At both USQ Wide Bay and USC, support includes that directed at students through the provision of scholarships and, more broadly, support for regional artists, access to infrastructure for displays and exhibitions, and academic programs in arts related areas.

Retaining students within the region to study art is a significant challenge, in part because it can be difficult for regional artists to establish recognition within a broader community.

The Arts Faculty at USQ Wide Bay manages a scholarship (the Len Fisher Award) that is funded by the Lioness Club of Hervey Bay in memory of the late Len Fisher. The scholarship, which is valued at $500, is designed to encourage highly motivated local students in the Arts to undertake tertiary studies in the region, and in the longer term to contribute to the growth and development of the Arts. To be eligible, a student must be in the initial stages of a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Multi-media Studies or Bachelor of Mass Communication at the USQ Wide Bay Campus. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of a mix of academic performance and potential, a demonstrated interest in media, the liberal arts including humanities or creative arts, community contribution, demonstrated motivation and dedication to study in their course.

USQ Wide Bay also provides partial sponsorship for two staff exhibitions this year entitled 'Loose Threads' and 'Entwined in Time, which were staged at the Regional Art Gallery in Hervey Bay Library.

The University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery, which was largely funded by the community, acts as a de facto regional public gallery in the Maroochy Shire and is part of the network of regional galleries and museums in Queensland. It is the only public gallery for national touring exhibitions in the Shire.

The Art Gallery plays host to a range of exhibitions focusing on contemporary arts and design practice. The exhibition program incorporates a variety of media including digital art, painting, drawing, graphic design, illustration and animation. It includes work by nationally and internationally renowned artists, regional practitioners, and displays by University Art and Design Students. The Gallery also presents talks, workshops, and public events to coincide with exhibitions.

Exhibition programming is aimed at maintaining educational relevance by presenting exhibitions that link through theme or media with the Art and Design area or other courses within the university (ie marketing, tourism, social history, environmental science, etc). The Gallery also supports exhibitions designed to highlight issues of social, cultural and community relevance, serving a provocative function and stimulating debate and interest.

The Gallery also plays a significant role in introducing young people to the visual arts, both those attending courses at the University and those from local primary and secondary schools. In 2004, the USC Gallery had approx 7,300 visitors of which approximately 46% were part of an educational visit. This percentage statistic is the highest for any recorded public gallery or museum in Queensland. The Queensland Art Gallery, QUT and Queensland Art Museum (UQ) show educational visitors fall in the range of 6%-14%. Overall visitor numbers to the Gallery in 2005 have increased and are expected to be well over 10,000 visitors for the year.

A number of Art awards, including the Regional Art Director (RAD) Awards and the Queensland Minister's Awards, are held at the Gallery each year.

USC also maintains its own collection, which focuses on contemporary Australian art, with works on display throughout the campus. One of the most beautiful parts of the collection is a set of photographs by renowned nature photographer Gary Glover, which is on display in the central administration building. The flora and fauna captured in these works are native to the Sippy Downs site, and the photographs were commissioned by the University in the early stages of site development.

In addition to the visual arts, the performing arts are also a focus for support for both institutions.

In collaboration with the Hervey Bay Young Professionals, the USQ Wide Bay Student Guild coordinates Cultural Film Nights on campus as part of a Cultural Enrichment Diversity Project. In addition, the Education Faculty runs end of semester presentation performances for students undertaking drama/arts/movements components in their primary middle schooling program (Arts Education and Educating the Creative Person).

On a different scale, USC's Foundation (the University's fundraising and alumni arm) coordinates the performance of the Australian String Quartet (ASQ), which is an annual event at USC. Around 320 people attend each year and it has been running for four years. The annual concert at USC is the only one played by the ASQ in a regional centre and is considered by many to be one of the more important events in the Sunshine Coast's cultural calendar.

Both recorded and live performances are also supported through initiatives at USC. On 18 August 2005, the University and Education Queensland, through the ICT Learning Innovation Centre, launched a new, state of the art recording studio within the ICT building of the University. The studio's debut featured Chancellor State College's Middle School choir recording a backing track for their school promotional video.

The studio is available to schools and the community for high grade audio and video recording of local choirs and singing groups, recording bands, and for the production of music videos. Other features include green screen facilities, studio lighting, sound absorptive walls and ceilings, and a separate sound dubbing room. The sound recording system is based in Digidesign Protocols HD along with production grade microphones and other recording equipment.

The studio is also used for sound and video production in support of University learning and teaching, and research activities that require multimedia production. It can also accommodate music/sound/video production for the corporate sector and in support of regional arts activities, and other studio based work such as photography.

Live vocal and musical performances are a feature of three other annual cultural events on the Sunshine Coast.

- *Voices on the Coast*, which is hosted and supported by USC, is a regional community event that brings some of Australia's finest writers, poets, illustrators and performers to the Sunshine Coast. Several years ago, 'Voices' was poised to cease operation. It was only through the financial and in kind support of the University and Immanuel Lutheran College that this critical cultural event has not only survived but also thrived. The program consists of a range of creative and stimulating activities that provide opportunities for interaction between writers and audience. Student days held on 30 and 31 May of this year attracted

over 3,500 students. In light of the success of 'Voices', the event has been extended to include adult participation in 'Voices Plus'.

- *Voices Plus* is held as part of Courses for Careers Day by the University of the Sunshine Coast Library, in conjunction with Immanuel Lutheran College and Queensland Writers Centre. The event is held over two days and this year included a "One-Stop Shop for Writers!" and author talks and panels.

- *Festuri* is a multicultural celebration, which is hosted on campus on an annual basis. The festival is a four day celebration of cultural diversity and understanding, which culminates at the University on Sunday with a family day of fun activities.

The *Multicultural Speakers' Forum* explores important multicultural issues in a safe and open environment and the Storytelling Tent offers traditional ethnic folktales and modern stories designed to engage the audience with person accounts of experiences in various countries.

Despite these and similar initiatives, it should be said that cultural facilities within the Sunshine-Fraser Coast region continue to be in relatively short supply, which is why USC is actively seeking partnerships in the development of a Cultural Centre at Sippy Downs.

5.5   Environmental Sustainability

Both USC and USQ Wide Bay have a strategic commitment to environmental sustainability in two contexts:

- Sustainability in campus development and
- Advancing regional environmental sustainability.

5.5.1   *Sustainability in Campus Development*

At USQ, the commitment in terms of campus development is expressed as: 'A priority to continue to be given to maintaining a high quality physical environment at all campuses for the benefit of staff, students and visitors.'

As all USQ Wide Bay campus land is owned by the Hervey Bay City Council, all building development must be approved by the local council, and the University must comply with mandatory development policy requirements. The initial development of the USQ Wide Bay buildings and facilities took into consideration things such as flood levels and storm water issues. Further developments included economic and energy conservation initiatives such as time switching buttons for lighting and air conditioning. Many building materials used were ecology safe to Queensland safety standards, of natural origin capable of recycling and of low maintenance.

USQ is currently developing its own environmental sustainability policy. The goal is to develop a draft document to act as a catalyst for the University community to 'rethink, reduce, reuse, repair and recycle'. The policy, when ready, will be submitted to the University Council for endorsement and subsequent implementation. Once the policy is endorsed by Council, a process of encouraging participation and leading by example will commence, ensuring that environmental sustainability is a critical element in the social and professional lives of USQ's staff and students.

There are currently no '5 star' environmental ratings for campus development, however, USQ is working with the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Group and the Green Political Party to see the environmental rating introduced in the future.

In July this year solar panels were erected onto the Library building roof. This was an initiative of Ergon Energy and was installed through the Hervey Bay City Council compliance unit. Monitoring equipment and screens were set up in the Library foyer. The screens relay how much power is produced by the solar panels, how much is used, and how much is sent to the regional grid. Ergon Energy has sponsored the project totally, provided the panels and the monitoring equipment. In return, Ergon use the Hervey Bay joint use library in their media campaigns, as an example of sustainable energy programs.

USC's commitment is couched in the following terms: To continue to lead, by example, in the areas of campus planning and development, sub tropical architecture and all operations that have environmental impact.

According to USC's Environmental Policy:

> *The University of the Sunshine Coast is committed to the principles of environmental responsibility and sustainable resource management at local, national and international levels. It will meet this commitment through community involvement and leadership in education, research, and sustainable management practices.*

The University implements this policy through a number of initiatives designed to demonstrate leadership in sustainable practices and in educating and guiding the University community to ensure that students and staff behave in an environmentally sensitive manner.

The environment has been a primary consideration throughout the University's development. The University's location adjacent to the ecologically sensitive Mooloolah River National Park has highlighted the importance of managed development of the site, including the need for structural, landscaping and water and waste management strategies to minimise our impact on the National Park.

The National Park is a sensitive estuarine area of wallum heath, eucalypt woodlands and tea-tree swamps. The University's proximity to the National Park, combined with the open spaces on campus, has seen an increasing population of eastern grey kangaroos (*Macropus giganteus*) finding sanctuary on site. Around 50 of the kangaroos are now estimated to travel between the campus and the National Park. Plovers, wood ducks, Australian miner birds and butcherbirds also live in harmony with the University community.

To aid in the protection of this important and unique habitat, USC has implemented a number of environmentally sustainable initiatives:

- Extending the natural local habitat of native fauna
- Preserving a green finger corridor through the University's grounds into the National Park
- Developing a stormwater management system of lakes, swales and settling ponds to protect the National Park's waterways from high nutrient levels and sediment run-off
- Maximising use of natural lighting and ventilation in buildings to minimise electricity usage
- Protecting the native fauna by prohibiting domestic animals on campus
- Restoring and replanting of areas on campus (in excess of 50,000 new native trees have been planted)
- Creating an island refuge for native birdlife in the centre of a feature lake
- Identifying areas of the campus as wildlife reserves

- Implementing a waste management plan to recycle, use recycled products and treat hazardous waste
- Relocating rare and endangered boronia and acacia species from a nearby residential development site onto an area of the campus to preserve the local wallum heath habitat, and allocating a PhD research project to monitor the germination and revegetation of the species
- Sharing sporting facilities, car parking and storm water run-off with Chancellor State College to minimise infrastructure
- Working with Maroochy Shire Council to develop wildlife underpasses on Claymore Road to protect wildlife moving between the campus and the Mooloolah River National Park.

The University was the first Queensland university to sign the international Talloires Declaration, pledging its support of environmental initiatives around the campus and surrounding community.

USC is also renowned for its distinctive architecture. The buildings on campus have received more than 25 awards for planning, architecture and construction, and all buildings on campus focus on environmentally sustainable design (ESD) to suit the sub tropical climate on the Sunshine Coast. In practice, this means that buildings have been designed to incorporate strategies for passive lighting and natural ventilation to minimise the use of non renewable energy.

The University's ESD design strategies include:

- Extensive use of screens, fins, sun shelters, and tree plantings to reduce direct sunlight on buildings
- Chilled water to supply air conditioning to buildings, where applicable
- Integrated building cooling systems including atriums, breezeways, louvres, thermal chimneys and high loft ceilings to take advantage of prevailing breezes
- Use of lightweight building fabric and low maintenance materials.

The University has an Environmental Advisory Committee that meets four times a year and reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee's role is to advise on strategies or initiatives that impact on the campus environment and surrounds.

5.5.2 *Environmental Sustainability Possibilities for the Region*

One of the major contributions by both universities to environmental sustainability possibilities for the region lies in its teaching programs.

USC offers undergraduate programs in environment and heritage, planning, environmental science, and sustainable tourism. It also offers postgraduate coursework programs in climate change management, environments management, environmental protection, tourism management, and wetlands management.

Through a cross institutional arrangement with the Australian Maritime College (AMC), USQ Wide Bay is able to offer students marine study programs through its Business and Education faculties, aimed at allowing students to critically assess marine resource management problems in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development and to be able to develop effective solutions to such problems. The programs provide a working knowledge of the following technical subjects: marine ecology and biology, project planning and management, marine resource management and exploitation, coastal zone processes and their management and natural resource economics.

From Semester 2, 2006 the arts course CDS 2001 Sustainability Issues in Community Development will commence at USQ Wide Bay. The course begins by examining the many conflicting definitions of sustainability, a number of key principles and several alternative models of sustainability. These are placed in the context of the prevailing paradigms of western society and the many problems and challenges of the early twenty-first century, especially as they relate to populations and the carrying capacity of local regions and the planet as a whole.

A systems approach to sustainability allows the identification of unsustainable activities and key natural resources, especially land, water and energy. Current environmental, economic and social problems can be examined in this context and solutions, both current and proposed, evaluated as to their long term contribution towards sustainability.

The Hervey Bay region will be used as a case study in the context of the "sea change" phenomenon, with consideration of such issues as climate change, housing, transport, water and agriculture. Community involvement in sustainability planning is emphasised in the context of the building of social capital and sustainable community structures and organisations. Some alternative strategies for regional community and economic development will be examined including eco-villages.

In 1999, USQ Wide Bay campus was awarded funding of $16,000 from the Wide Bay Burnett Economic Development Association to assist with the opening of an Australian Water Resources Research and Training Centre. This was negotiated also with USQ Toowoomba Engineering Faculty members for a research and internship arrangement with Wide Bay Water and the Centre.

Again, with an emphasis on marine science, USQ Wide Bay, (in partnership with the Hervey Bay Dugong and Seagrass Monitoring Program (HBDSMP)), has played a major role in reporting on conditions and conserving the marine environment in surrounding areas.

As part of this partnership, the Seagrass Eco Agent Education Kit was developed for distribution to all schools. The Kit is designed to raise awareness in school students and to provide an appreciation of the vital role seagrass meadows play in the marine environment. It also serves to develop an understanding of seagrass biology, its distribution, and human and natural threats, as well as methods of protection.

It is anticipated that this initiative may serve to increase the number of students who choose marine studies as a career. The Kit was officially launched at the University by The Honourable Anna Bligh, Minister for Education, on 28 August 2003.

In terms of research input to sustainability issues, three of the five research institutes and centres at USC have research programs designed to understand and manage the environment in a more sustainable manner.

For example, iSHARE's Sustainable Environments research program builds on the philosophy of ecologically sustainable development (ESD), broadly encompassing the physical, biological, economic and social conditions of all life forms. The program is focussed on the development of integrated management systems that ensure the maintenance of three critical components of ESD – biodiversity, ecological integrity, and natural capital.

One area of strength in sustainability research is sustainable management of tourism activities, focussing on those associated with fragile ecosystems, environmental interpretation and communication, and sustainable tourism development and management.

A recent research project investigated the environmental attitudes and actions of small tourism operators in Queensland. The results indicated that focussed educational programs would be necessary to 'green' small tourism operators, as there is a gap between their professed beliefs and recorded actions, with a low rate of compliance to the need for an environmental licence to operate.

The area of sustainable tourism involves partnerships and collaboration with the Australian Maritime College, the Environmental Protection Agency, Tourism Queensland, Griffith University, the University of Queensland, the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management, Kingfisher Bay Resort, and the University of Wyoming.

One area of particular environmental significance within the Sunshine-Fraser Coast is Fraser Island, on which is located USC's Fraser Island Research and Education Facility. Fraser Island is a World Heritage Area located off the southern coast of Queensland. It is a complex ecosystem of sand dunes, lakes and subtropical forests that grow solely on sand, and is an outstanding global example of continuing biological and geological processes. Over 120 kilometres long and over 22 kilometres across at its widest point, the Island has developed over 800,000 years and is both a unique natural environment and an ideal location for scientific research.

The Fraser Island Research and Education Facility includes two sites:

- Kingfisher Bay Research and Education Facility on the western side of the island, and
- Dilli Village Environmental Education Camp on the eastern side.

The Kingfisher Bay Research and Education Facility located at Kingfisher Bay Resort, is a facility for advanced level environmental and eco-tourism research, and education (primarily for rangers and university groups). The facility provides a well-equipped open-plan teaching room, a laboratory for basic environmental research, refrigerator and freezer rooms, a small office and library, and a specimen receiving deck, and accommodation for researchers and graduate students.

Dilli Village Environmental Education Camp is located on low sand dunes 400 metres from the beach. It provides an eco-edu-tourism experience for island visitors including persons wishing to use the Village as a starting point for activities associated with the Great Walks. The Village provides accommodation for students and staff, education programs (arts, business, eco-tourism and science) and access to field study sites for primary, secondary and tertiary student groups. Researchers and groups with genuine environmental interests in the region are encouraged to use the site. Additionally, Dilli Village welcomes private individuals such as family groups, day visitors and small group tours.

5.6   Conclusions

5.6.1   *Vision and Strategies*

Interestingly, the issue of collaboration on issues in social, cultural and environmental development did not feature significantly in consultations with stakeholders during the preparation of this report. To extract community perceptions on the matter USC looked to the Maroochy 2025 project, a community visioning exercise, which is now almost complete. Thirty-two representatives of the Shire, chosen through a formal selection process run by the Council (with the assistance of the University), came together to develop a shared vision of the future in an exercise without precedent on the Sunshine Coast.

They identified six key vision elements:

- Our valued natural environment

- Our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning communities
- Our diverse transport infrastructure and mobility
- Our responsible participatory decision making and foresight
- Our smartly managed rural and urban future
- Our innovative and diverse economy.

Clearly, the community significantly values and seeks to advance social, cultural and environmental development. Fourteen strategies were listed in developing 'our healthy, vibrant, inclusive and learning communities' many of which are relevant to University-community style partnerships:

- Expand and sustain neighbourhood based safety and wellbeing programs and networks in order to strengthen emergency preparedness and crime prevention
- Identify, select and implement successful and innovative affordable housing for all ages
- Foster community awareness of the benefits of positive and productive relationships (at a personal and group level)
- Develop a Social Plan inclusive of ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexuality, religion and disability
- Create further shared, inclusive and partnered opportunities between communities and Government
- Establish and sustain community mentoring and volunteering programs for all ages
- Establish a broad range of inclusive learning opportunities that contribute to our community's cultural diversity
- Define and record the opportunities that ensure the community has access to lifelong learning programs
- Develop a framework for holistic, healthy living in our community
- Provide a 'whole of Shire' master plan for affordable and inclusive programs and facilities (sport, leisure, relaxation and creative activities)
- Enable young people to develop their uniqueness and self esteem by providing a range of experiences that contribute to the growth of self motivated, independent learners
- Develop an information sharing network (via electronic and face to face contact) that forms an information bridge between the community and the Council
- Create a network of community hubs that incorporate focal 'people places'/ 'people spaces' where the community can access information, education, support services, shopping and events
- Celebrate our cultural diversity.

If we accept that the work of the community visioning team in Maroochy Shire can be extrapolated, even in part, to include the rest of the region, there is clearly a future for regional higher education providers in providing ongoing support for social, cultural and environmental development.

One of the major potential stumbling blocks to future developments at both institutions lies in the perception of universities as 'competitors' for scarce social and infrastructure funding. This emphasises the importance of developing enduring partnerships and ensuring that university priorities accord with those of the region overall.

5.6.2 *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Related to Social, Cultural and Environmental Development in the Region*

Strengths

- Stated strategic emphasis on engagement and the environment (including from Mission and Strategic Plan)
- Senior management commitment to engagement as a core value
- Close relationships between HEIs and local and regional communities and reputation of institutions and individuals
- Provision of enabling and preparatory programs to potential students
- USQ Wide Bay's reputation as a leader in distance education and flexible delivery modes
- The USC Art Gallery and USQ Wide Bay joint Council/University Library and Art Gallery as a regional resource
- Priority given to developing sporting and health/wellbeing facilities on USC campus
- Location of USC in Health Precinct with public/private hospital development linked with strong emphasis on sport, health and wellbeing at a curriculum and research level
- Discipline areas relevant to social, cultural and environmental development
- Strong links to Indigenous community

Weaknesses

- Stage of development and capacity to meet expectations from the community
- Size of campus may present growth problems in the future (eg for new buildings and facilities)
- Hervey Bay City Council retains ownership of all USQ Wide Bay campus land, limiting the influence the institution can have on the environmental development of the campus
- Approach to Indigenous partnerships does not fit easily into the University-regional partnership paradigm
- Artistic projects may sometimes not be considered 'research', especially for funding purpose (eg inability to access Australian Research Council (ARC) grants)
- Internal competition for funding for infrastructure and provision of support
- Physical infrastructure developed using debt need to be managed so as to allow loan payments to be met – this means striking a balance between commercial imperatives and community expectations
- There is an expectation of access to University facilities by both internal and external groups and little acknowledgement that the University has to prioritise requests for access – demand outstrips capacity
- Continuing development of on line and flexible delivery mechanisms may reduce the number of on campus students and resulting social, cultural and economic flows
- USQ Wide Bay has minimal autonomy in developing and marketing programs and facilities

Opportunities

- Regional growth
- To contribute to the social, cultural and environmental development of the region by the development of human capital through education
- Community goodwill and expanding knowledge of what's available at and through the two institutions
- Increased sponsorship/support for fundraising activities

- Location of the two campuses with existing educational/health/cultural infrastructure creates the potential for the development of 'hubs' focused around the two campuses
- Environmental issues continue to be significant in the community
- Membership by staff of regional groups (eg the Regional Manager's Consultative Committee) gives the opportunity to plan and discuss potential futures in the region

Threats

- Overoptimistic expectations of the future growth of both the region and the campuses
- Perceptions of the 'role' of academics and universities – Core roles of teaching and research V direct provision of services to the community
- Lack of clarity surrounding the term 'region': What is our region?
- Significant over-reliance on Commonwealth funding for the arts
- Projects 'seeded' by the University may ultimate move beyond its capacity to resource
- In the case of USQ Wide Bay, continuing support from Hervey Bay City Council is not guaranteed
- Increased competition from other HEIs.

CHAPTER VI: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

Capacity building through mutual partnerships can be seen as: "A sustained, purposeful and mutual connectivity between the attributes of the region and the full knowledge attributes of the university that generate outcomes that would not otherwise occur" (Garlick 2005).

This 'mutual connectivity' does not occur by accident, nor is it built simply on good will. Instead, it requires planning at a strategic level, and transparent, agreed mechanisms for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

6.1 Mechanisms to Promote University Regional Involvement

Within the Australian context, one of the most important mechanisms for promoting university-regional involvement is the development of strong relationships between the universities and the relevant local governments.

In the case of USC, a critical aspect of that relationship is the involvement of the University's Vice-Chancellor as a member of SCORE, which is a committee of SunROC, the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils, whose members include the three Mayors, the three Deputy Mayors, and the three CEOs of the Councils.

SunROC's Mission Statement, adopted 19 August 2002, is:

> *SunROC will be known as the pre-eminent lobbying organisation for the regional interests of the City of Caloundra and the Shires of Maroochy and Noosa and, through effective lobbying and council cooperation, the Sunshine Coast will have the best physical infrastructure of any region in Australia.*
>
> *This in turn will achieve the highest standards of economic, environmental and social infrastructure for the region and the quality of life of the citizens of the Sunshine Coast.*

Within SunROC, SCORE's charter is to progress identified regional priorities that were the result of discussions with and input from regional stakeholders. Its key areas of activity are:

- Reviewing the Sunshine Coast's Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) and facilitation arrangements, and monitoring effectiveness
- Promoting the Sunshine Coast region and its diversity – Tourism, lifestyle and investment attraction
- Developing and improving the Sunshine Coast's intra and inter regional road and rail network
- Developing and improving the Sunshine Coast's stock of industrial land
- Developing and improving the region's telecommunications infrastructure
- Encouraging and promoting the development of the Sunshine Coast's Knowledge Economy.

At its meeting of 26 August 2005, SCORE members agreed that the Sunshine Coast Education Industry Cluster (Chaired by Professor Thomas) *'review and develop a model that illustrates how effective linkages could be developed by the secondary schools, CSIT and the University'*. The Vice-Chancellor's membership of SCORE thus provides an avenue for exchange of information and ideas and development of joint projects aimed at progressing the identified regional priorities.

The operation of SCORE is informed by the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) and its companion Knowledge Economy Strategy, which incorporated an 'audit' of the economic present (including knowledge resources) and an economic future based on the development of a knowledge economy and society. USC is repeatedly cited as critical to these developments in both REDS and the Knowledge Economy Strategy.

The objective of catalysing regional economic growth by supporting a knowledge economy had already been given practical expression by USC's leadership in the Technology Park Project. In the South East Queensland Regional Plan, developed by the Queensland Government, Sippy Downs (where the University is headquartered) is identified as a Knowledge Hub, with the expectation that it will evolve into a Major or Principal Activity Centre by 2026.

According to the Plan:

> *These Centres provide the focus for major emerging communities, comprising the primary focus of regionally significant urban growth. They are planned to evolve to provide key sub regional or district concentrations of administrative, business, retail, cultural and entertainment activity. They are also the preferred locations for major health, education and public transport services. (Qld Govt 2004, 37)*

The Sippy Downs Development Control Plan and Urban Design Master Plan envisage Sippy Downs as an integrated knowledge community, and a regional hub for the knowledge based economy on the Sunshine Coast. To capture the essence of this vision, the parties characterise developments in and around Sippy Downs as a 'Knowledge Precinct'. The Precinct therefore comprises both physical developments (eg the Sippy Downs Township, a Technology Park, etc), and knowledge based developments.

One of the central elements of the Precinct is the Technology Park project, which was conceived with three implementation phases:

1. The Innovation Centre: A small business incubator for high tech start ups located at the entrance to the University
2. The Accelerator: A next stage development designed to accommodate graduates of the incubator program, compatible high tech businesses and service firms and
3. The Technology Park itself.

Phase 1 of the project – the Innovation Centre – was launched in January 2002, and was recognised in the following year as 'Australia's Regional Incubator of the Year' by AusIndustry and the Australian and New Zealand Association of Business Incubators (ANZABI). The University not only contributed $5 million to the establishment of the Innovation Centre but also 'championed' its development.

Supported by all three tiers of government and by the business community of the Sunshine Coast (and, increasingly, Brisbane) the Innovation Centre has attracted and selected twelve high potential companies (from over 200 inquiries and applications) across a range of industry sectors, including software development, electronics, multimedia and video production, technical documentation, and neutraceuticals. The businesses currently based at the incubator employ around 60 people, with 45 in full time jobs.

Already, the incubator is ahead of schedule to fill its remaining space, and it is anticipated that the Centre will be at full capacity before the end of 2005.

This rapid growth has meant that planning for Phase 2 – the Accelerator – has had to be brought forward. The Accelerator will support businesses through their early stages of growth and development and, with a flow through of growing businesses, it is estimated that at least 500 jobs will be created in its first 10 years of operation.

Importantly, it will allow for high growth, high tech businesses to be nurtured and retained within the region, providing next stage space for graduates of the Innovation Centre's incubation program, and allowing for compatible high tech businesses and service firms to colocate.

The final phase in the Technology Park Project – the development of the Park itself – will provide a pathway through which graduating and high growth companies from the Innovation Centre and the Accelerator can be retained within the region. It will also focus on attracting complementary established companies, as well as service providers.

Interestingly, the governing body of the Innovation Centre company (Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd), its Board of Directors, is another example of cooperation and partnership. The Board is essentially a stakeholder board – a not uncontroversial option – with representation from the University (as sole owner), Maroochy Shire Council, the Queensland Government (through the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation (DSDTI), local business, University Council (the University's governing body), and practicing entrepreneurs (two members).

Board members not only contribute to the effective governance of the incubator, they also plan for future stages of development (the Accelerator and Technology Park). In addition, they are able to and have in the past provided practical help to the incubator program by identifying and referring prospects, assisting in the conduct of due diligence (DSDTI), assisting in mentoring clients, linking clients with potential investors, and so on.

Like USC, USQ Wide Bay is cited in the Hervey Bay City Council's (HBCC) Corporate Plan 2005-2008. The Council's vision under cultural development states that it will 'Continue to develop the partnership between HBCC and USQ with regard to the joint use Library facility, promoting a safe and harmonious environment for both community and students', and to, 'Deliver arts and cultural experiences through the Hervey Bay Regional Gallery, museums, libraries and participation in festivals.' HBCC's social objective is that 'Hervey Bay continues to provide excellent education facilities, however the increase in younger population will see the need for expansion in the educational area in the future. The development of the university has enabled many young people to continue their education and employment in the Wide Bay area'.

Community access to on campus facilities is also a feature of both campuses' engagement activities and is addressed in Chapter V.

6.2 Promoting Regional Dialogues and Joint Marketing Initiatives

6.2.1 Regional Dialogues

In terms of opening up dialogue with regional stakeholders, not since initial consultations over the establishment of each campus have we seen such a rich vein of communication open as has occurred during the development of this Report.

As a result, one of the major outcomes of this Project will be to explore the issues raised in the course of this dialogue.

A significant number of issues were raised during our community forums and interviews that essentially pertained to establishing more effective communication mechanisms, with a view to:

- Creating an environment within the community in which entrepreneurial activity can flourish, including student and graduate entrepreneurs
- Building skills within the region to facilitate the pace of regional development (eg building skills in urban planning, increasing postgraduate opportunities)
- Promoting lifelong learning and providing access to learning opportunities, including professional learning opportunities, at a range of physical locations within a region with a dispersed population (eg through the use of technology)
- Enhancing pathways between education institutions and into the workforce (eg through improved relationships with employers/industry) especially in areas such as tourism management, value added forest and horticultural products, education, nursing, and marine and coastal management and
- Increased joint regional marketing activities, promoting the region nationally and internationally, for tourism and business attraction.

USC and USQ Wide Bay use membership of regional committees as a means for opening up dialogues with stakeholders. Reasons for and benefits deriving from such representation include:

- The opportunity for involvement with various community services
- Establishing a 'presence' in the region
- Facilitating collaboration between Queensland public sector agencies and other HEIs
- Exploring the nexus between social entrepreneurship and local politics
- Furthering a regional profile in research
- Engaging in PR and remaining in contact with community issues
- Networking
- Promoting consultancy opportunities
- Working towards USQ student participation
- Promoting the potential for integration of community events with USQ courses and
- Promoting opportunities for student participation in Professional Context Experience.

For USQ Wide Bay these include the Regional Health Council, Wide Bay Burnett Conservation Council, Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre, and the Wide Bay Sexual Assault Association (a full list of committee membership for USQ Wide Bay appears in Appendix 8). In the case of USQ Wide Bay, staff representation is collated and monitored by the Executive Officer (Marketing/Public Relations and Human Resources).

At USC staff have been heavily involved in regional committees and an extensive (but incomplete) list is attached (Appendix x). Work has commenced under the auspices of the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Committee to develop such a list.

Both campuses are also active in promoting institutional activity through the media. For example, USC's Vice-Chancellor has a weekly (Saturday) column in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* newspaper, which has a circulation of around 42,000.

6.2.2   *Stakeholder Involvement in HEI Decision Making*

In the reverse situation, regional stakeholders are strongly represented in the policy and governance mechanisms of both institutions. Given that USQ Wide Bay's governance and policy

mechanisms are centralised to the Toowoomba main campus, it is perhaps more relevant to discuss USC in this context.

As Winter et al (2005) point out in Beyond Rhetoric: University-Community Engagement in Victoria:

> *The constitution of governing bodies and the establishment of advisory boards are methods of enabling community impact that have been employed since the founding of many universities.*

The formal policy and governance structure at USC incorporates community and student involvement at many levels. Pre eminent is Council, which is the University's governing body. Council, which is in the process of being reconstituted following changes to the University's enabling act. As reconstituted, Council will comprise 11 external members, including one elected Chancellor, six Governor in Council appointees, and four appointees of Council (one of whom must be an alumnus). Two student members, elected by the student body, complete the membership of Council.

Special emphasis is placed on regional involvement and expertise when making appointments to Council and other University committees.

External membership of University committees extends beyond Council to Academic Board, Planning and Resources Committee, Audit and Risk Management Committee, Human Ethics Committee, Animal Ethics Committee, Foundation Board, University Environment Committee, Indigenous Advisory Committee, and Faculty Advisory Committees.

6.2.3   Joint Marketing Initiatives

For USQ Wide Bay, joint HEI-regional marketing initiatives have tended to be undertaken with other post secondary education providers. These initiatives include the joint marketing of articulated programs with Wide Bay TAFE, including tourism and hospitality, business, and education, which was broadened when USQ and TAFE joined forces with Hervey Bay City Council to host an event for local tourism and hospitality providers to create awareness of educational opportunities in this industry grouping.

Also, USQ and the Australian Maritime College (AMC) have developed marketing initiatives for their joint program in marine tourism, which offers the opportunity to extend the range of maritime and tourism/hospitality training/education available in the local region. With the support of local councils, there is potential for the development and marketing of Wide Bay as a national centre for training/education in tourism, hospitality and marine studies.

Although USC too has engaged in marketing of jointly badged programs, it has also been involved in a number of joint marketing initiatives with regional stakeholders, including two that were completed during 2005.

The first involved the University in its capacity as lead institution in the region's Education Industry Cluster. At the initiative of the University, a proposal to develop a website as a marketing initiative aimed at international students was advanced and agreed by the Cluster. To make the website a reality, financial and data contributions were sought from individual institutions and a submission was then made to the State Government (Queensland Education and Training International) for matching funding, which was successful.

A tender process was then undertaken to identify an appropriate site developer and host, and the website was constructed, based on contributions collated by the University.

The website can be accessed at: http://www.studysunshinecoast.com

Another example is the development of the 'Surprisingly Smart' book. *Surprisingly Smart* profiles around 80 successful Sunshine Coast businesses in the IT, professional and creative industries sectors. It was developed through funding provided by the three regional local councils and sponsorships/advertising from established businesses in the region.

The project was initiated by the Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd and was designed to raise the profile of the Sunshine Coast as an attractive location for knowledge based businesses. The end result was a 100 page booklet profiling successful businesses already operating on the Coast.

Surprisingly Smart is a key initiative resulting from the MOU signed between ICSC and the Mayors of the three local councils to cooperate in advancing the knowledge economy. The project was also backed by the local office of the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, the Sunshine Coast Area Consultative Committee, USC's Faculty of Business and by private businesses - particularly Sajen Legal and Telstra.

The project included research to identify over 400 knowledge based businesses operating on the Coast - mainly in IT, professional and creative sectors. These were then culled to around 80 firms to profile in the 100 page full colour booklet. Around 3,500 copies of the booklet were produced, with around 2,000 already distributed to key influencers including directors of local businesses, venture capitalists, government officials, local, state and federal politicians, and the media.

A launch event was held on 9 June 2005, featuring a key note presentation by Dr Karen Woolley of Proscribe, and attended by around 80 local business and community leaders.

The *Surprising Smart* book has helped to generate significant local and national media coverage highlighting the Coast as an attractive smart business location - with feature articles in the *Australian*, the *Financial Review*, and the *Courier Mail* (Brisbane based).

Plans are underway to follow up on this initiative with further media communication exercises and distribution of the booklet at key industry trade shows. Local Councils and the State Government have also expressed an interest in backing the Innovation Centre in producing booklets for other industry sectors and in the possibility of developing a *Surprisingly Smart* display at the Sunshine Coast Airport.

6.2.4 *Evaluating and Mapping the Impact of the Regional Higher Education System*

As outlined in Chapter I, both USQ Wide Bay and USC have made some preliminary attempts to assess their economic impact on the region. Each institution considered the impact of a multiplier effect of between 1.4 and 1.5 per cent per annum, which allowed them to address direct, indirect and flow on spending within the region.

USQ Wide Bay is also of the view that the time is right for a more exhaustive analysis of the impact of the two HEIs.

On the Sunshine Coast, the Education Cluster is undertaking a consultancy for SunROC, looking at an economic analysis of the impact of the education and training sector.

Once complete, a communication plan would need to be developed by each institution, as well as the Education Cluster in the case of the Sunshine Coast.

6.3　Institutional Capacity Building for Regional Involvement: USQ Wide Bay

A restructure of executive management at USQ has seen the establishment of the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Engagement & Social Justice) and the associated establishment of a regional engagement portfolio (Regional Engagement Task Force) for the institution.

The Regional Engagement Task Force has been charged with the responsibility for recognising and supporting regional engagement activates across the full scope of its operations. An important first step is to establish a sound information base to inform this process. As such, an audit of community activities at USQ is currently being undertaken.

The aim is to conduct a thorough audit of USQ's regional engagement and community service activities as a basis for better understanding the full scope and nature of USQ's activities in this area, to identify issues and priorities and to inform the development of an effective regional engagement framework for the University. The processes involved in the review will include:

- A scan of practice across the sector – including the identification of good practice and effective models where possible
- The identification of relevant internal documentation – including policies, reports and reviews – that impact on the University's activities in this area
- The identification of the full range of activities undertaken by USQ in this area, together with a schema for organising this information in a meaningful way
- The identification of data relating to the University's activity in this area, where it exists, to determine the impact and effectiveness of major regional engagement and community service strategies, as well as areas of need
- The conduct of appropriate meetings, seminars, interviews and surveys as needed to support the collection and interpretation of data
- The development of a report for review by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee (VCC) which will include:
  o A comprehensive snapshot of regional engagement & community service activities at USQ, grouped into appropriate categories
  o A description of the operational context in which these activities operate, including the identification of factors which facilitate or support USQ pursuing objectives in this area; as well as those which serve as constraints and limits to success
  o An assessment of USQ's performance in these areas of activity; as well as an assessment of the contributions made by individual strategies employed by USQ
  o The identification of good practice and innovative ideas in regional engagement & community service provision
  o The identification of major concerns and needs, and areas where improvements are required and
  o The inclusion of recommendations for improving USQ's equity performance, including a consideration of priorities and funding implication.

Regional engagement is an important part of USQ Wide Bay's mission. It is USQ Wide Bay's goal to contribute to the community by developing a University City built on community partnerships, service and engagement. The USQ Strategic Plan 2005-2009 states:

> *USQ will continue to develop its regional engagement portfolio by building productive linkages and networks that support effective business development, creating opportunities*

for productive and mutually beneficial partnerships, and promoting innovation and the constructive exchange of ideas; with benefits flowing back to the regions USQ Wide Bay serve.

The USQ Directions Planning Principles also states that:

USQ must take the opportunity to work even more systematically with each of its communities in order to contribute the best of what may be derived from a 'University City' – developing strong educational communities, providing regional leadership, building strategic partnerships, contributing to regional development, and building local and cultural capital.

Regional decision making is largely the responsibility of the Provost of Wide Bay campus or, in the case of Toowoomba campus, the Vice Chancellor. Communication, in the case of Wide Bay, is through involvement with local Chambers of Commerce, institutions such as Education Hervey Bay (a network of local education providers) and involvement in organisations such as the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Advisory Committee (WBBRAC). Every attempt is made to involve regional stakeholders in significant USQ events/ceremonies. Most USQ staff are also involved in regional bodies and report regularly to staff meetings. The Provost makes recommendations for regional decisions to the Vice Chancellors Committee or Vice Chancellor's Executive Committee and seeks ratification for action.

The Executive Officer (Marketing/Public Relations and Human Resources) will be working in conjunction with soon to be appointed Business Development Manager and Executive Officer (International Development) from 2006 to increase the USQ Wide Bay campus profile in the region. This mechanism will create pathways to increase relationships with industry, community, the education sector and the international market in regards to regional activities and funding issues.

With the development of the new Research Unit and the appointment of its Director, USQ Wide Bay will also see greater collaboration with both university and non-universities, and regional stakeholders in the Fraser Coast region.

USQ Wide Bay has made a significant contribution to the overall development of the communication and information technology expertise of the local community in line with its role as a regional higher education provider.

Local IT is an emerging industry in the region. Information technology staff (academic and support staff) have been involved extensively with community-based projects including Bay Connect, setting up the first Macromedia Users Group outside of the capital cities in Australia (fostering the emergent information technology industry with Hervey Bay) and were instrumental in setting up a branch of the Australian Computing Society in Hervey Bay. Hervey Bay City Council, along with the University's strengths in software engineering and business management, recently launched the Fraser Innovation Zone (FIZ) – adjacent to the CBD and based on the university campus.

The first FIZ meeting in 2001 attracted 100 business people to the University to videoconference with the Gartner Group (a major international IT player). Start up firms are seeking assistance with software solutions, and a number of contracts have been or are being negotiated, which will form the basis of a significant IT Research and Development capability within the Innovation Zone and contribute to tertiary level economic activity in the region.

The development of Bay Connect, a community-based Internet development and training project began in Hervey Bay with Australian Commonwealth Government funding provided by the

Networking the Nation (NTN) program. The grant from NTN of some $715,000 over four years accounted for only 54% of the funding sought in the initial submission.

To engender the necessary funds to ensure the continuation of the project, Bay Connect offered a range of service to private individuals and organizations including Internet services such as ISP access, training, web site hosting and sponsorship opportunities.

This public Internet access project is helping to solve a community problem of 'information poor' that was first highlighted by the Hervey Bay City Council in 1994. The strategic management is the responsibility of a committee formed from representatives of the Hervey Bay City Council and the Community Solutions group.

Initially, in 1998 Bay Connect was set up like a Freenet with free public access to maximise pensioner use, however a user-pays system was introduced in 2000. The business plan and implementation model developed as part of the project is now used as a exemplar for other similar projects nationwide.

The project is now self sustaining and has spread to other nearby local regional communities. The project aimed to meet its objectives by:

- establishing public access sites in a wide range of geographic locations,
- constructing a website to disseminate community information,
- training Hervey Bay residents in the use of the Internet and related ICT technologies,
- promoting the effectiveness of the Internet as a networking and information source,
- providing opportunities for local enterprises to promote themselves and conduct business electronically.

Another initiative in the Fraser Coast region is the launch of the Fraser Area Centre for Technology and Open Resource Education Enterprise – the FACTOREE. This is a joint project of the USQ Wide Bay, the Department of State Development and the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE with assistance from Telstra Country Wide, the centre acts as a 'drop-in centre' for local businesses. Here they can come and talk to experts who have forged connections with the major players in the IT field. Clients are able to see examples of the latest information and communication technologies and discuss how they can use technology to assist them in their operations.

The project is predominantly concerned with generating awareness and helping businesses as they decide to adopt new technologies – thereby facilitating the shift from the 'old' to the 'new' economy. A secondary aim of the project is to attract and retain IT professionals to the region, effectively creating the Smart State's 'Smart Region'.

Local high schools also participate in the University's Head Start programs, introducing courses to IT and LOTE students, with opportunities for expansion of seamless education pathways being actively developed. These are critical in respect of the regional program of achieving higher tertiary participation rates, especially in the emerging information economy.

USQ Wide Bay's ICT technology transfer infrastructure works in collaboration with Telstra (Australia's Telecommunications and Information Services Company). USQ Wide Bay Campus is connected to the University of Queensland (UQ) St Lucia via a 3 Mb/s ATM service provided by Telstra. There are two redundant links from St Lucia to Toowoomba - a 3 Mb/s Telstra ATM service, and a 20 Mb/s combined fibre-optic/microwave service, which runs through the Gatton Campus of University of Queensland.

As part of an Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet) initiative, USQ Wide Bay was to be provided with an improved service as part of the solution which provided James Cook University and Central Queensland University with 1 Gb/s fibre-optic solutions. This has not occurred, and negotiations are currently taking place for Telstra to provide a 50 Mb/s service between USQ Wide Bay and UQ St Lucia. The St Lucia to Toowoomba link is being upgraded to a 1 Gb/s service, which should be in place by the end of CY2005.

6.3.1 Human and Financial Resources Management

The USQ Human Resources Policy Manual (Part C Code of Conduct) states that professional conduct and behaviour behaviour should show a commitment to professional standards in teaching, research, administration and community involvement.

Currently there is no official training given to staff with regional responsibilities. Staff are encouraged to participate in regional engagement, not for financial gain but for their duty to ensure that their work enhances the good name of the institution and the profession to which they belong. Community involvement is one of the criteria for promotion for most levels of academic staff.

6.3.2 Creating a New Organisational Culture

There are no significant cultural obstacles to adopting greater regional engagement within the institution – other than that stronger links must be developed and maintained with the Wide Bay community. Most USQ Wide Bay staff already interact strongly with the local community and are positive to the concept of establishing greater regional engagement.

Regional engagement is part of USQ Wide Bay's mission. It is USQ Wide Bay's goal to contribute to the community by developing a University City built on community partnerships, service and engagement. As regional engagement is a relatively new addition to the USQ Wide Bay's mission, USQ Wide Bay have not sufficient time to comment of its influences in mainstream teaching and research.

6.4 Institutional Capacity Building for Regional Involvement: USC

Regional engagement has been at the heart of the University's Mission since its inception:

To be the major catalyst for the innovative and sustainable economic, cultural and educational advancement of the region, through the pursuit of international standards in teaching and research.

and is one of two strategic themes for the University's future development – Sustainability and Regional Engagement – articulated in the University's Strategic Plan.

Regional engagement is also one of eight strategic goals for the University, under which the following broadly stated strategies have been developed to further USC's regional engagement agenda:

- Inform and lead discussion and decision making about alternative futures for the region
- Advance the sustainability of the region through concentrated research effort, teaching programs, scholarly activities, strategic partnerships, consultancies, and educational initiatives
- Produce graduates who contribute to the achievement of regional economic, social, cultural and environmental priorities

- Lead in initiatives designed to foster economic and social development, including the development of the Knowledge Precinct and associated Technology Park, and shared infrastructure such as the Health Precinct, sporting facilities, and the proposed Cultural Centre
- Provide direct input to regional economic and infrastructure planning, including the proposed Sippy Downs township
- Enhance relationships with governments and their agencies, other education providers, and public and private partners for the benefit of the region and
- Participate in regional governance through close links with local government.

At a national level, in the Department of Education, Science and Training report *Engaging Universities and Regions* (Garlick 2000), USC is rated as one of four Australian regional university campuses with the strongest connections to their regions.

In short, the University's approach to regional engagement is:

The University is committed to working in partnership with both internal and external constituencies to continue its development and impact locally, nationally and internationally. The University must develop a symbiotic relationship with its wider community within and beyond the immediate region.

In furthering that commitment, the Vice-Chancellor established in 2005 the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Committee, which is charged with the responsibility to:

- Coordinate and share information on initiatives from across the University designed to foster regional economic and social development
- Provide input and coordinate a university wide response to regional infrastructure planning and the economic and strategic plans of key stakeholders such as the Councils, SUNROC, the Department of State Development, CSIT, etc
- Develop a regional engagement strategy for the University, which recognises communities of interest across the region
- Monitor and provide advice to the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor on regional initiatives and the progress of the University's regional engagement strategy against the indicators of success and benchmarks provided in the Strategic Plan
- Articulate and disseminate information and outcomes concerning regional engagement to the community in conjunction with assistance from Marketing and Communications.

The Committee has strong representation from across the University and is Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in the current absence of the substantive Chair, Professor Deborah Ralston, Dean, Faculty of Business. The Committee's key activity for the remainder of 2005 is the development of the University's Regional Engagement Strategy.

Ultimate responsibility for regional engagement has traditionally and continues to rest with the Vice-Chancellor, who is responsible for the coordination of regional engagement activities across campus.

As the University has grown, however, this arrangement has become impractical, and it is partly in response to this that the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Committee was established.

The development of a Regional Engagement Strategy is a high priority for the Committee for 2005 and into 2006. As part of this strategy, an audit of current activity is being undertaken, with a view to systematising the University's approach to regional engagement.

The Regional Engagement Strategy will be based on the broad strategies outlined in the strategic plan, and its framework will include:

- Policy and governance
- Communication
- Research
- Teaching and learning
- Infrastructure
- Innovation and enterprise
- Internationalisation and
- Sustainable and accessible campus and place.

Like other elements of the Regional Engagement Strategy, communication between the University and the region will be imbued with principles of mutuality. Until now, communication arrangements between the University and the Region have emphasised cross membership of University and regional decision making bodies, as outlined earlier in this chapter.

With regard to formal agreements arising out of these relationships, USC currently has 108 registered Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with regional agencies, businesses and other educational providers, including with all major agencies within the Sunshine Coast region relevant to teaching cooperation, research agreements, internships programs and general cooperation.

To date, funding for regional engagement activities has been drawn from a range of budget allocations (eg VC's contingency, capital funds, faculty funds). From 2006, however, a formal budget line will be put in place.

6.4.1   Regional IT Infrastructure/IT in Management Structures

The University of the Sunshine Coast is part of the Queensland Research and Education Network (QREN) and currently connects to the AREN via the hub based at the University of Queensland using a Telstra managed 4Mb ATM connection. The QREN is an advanced fibre network designed to meet the accelerating bandwidth needs of the Queensland research and education sectors for the next 20 years or more. The University of the Sunshine Coast has supported both the QREN Stage 1 and QREN Interim Stage 2 proposals that have been successful in receiving support with ARENAC funding.

The Stage 1 proposal has successfully delivered gigabit bandwidth to James Cook University in Townsville and Central Queensland University in Rockhampton and will allow for future development of these networks in central and northern Queensland. The Interim Stage 2 proposal will provide an extension to Stage 1, including a stop-gap solution for James Cook University (Cairns) and Central Queensland University (Mackay, Gladstone). This proposal originally included a micro-wave based solution to connect the University of the Sunshine Coast to the AREN. However, this proposal was not satisfactory and now the University expects to implement a short-term strategy to upgrade its current bandwidth to 50Mb using the Telstra managed GWIP technology. A Final Stage 2 proposal is intended to deliver longer-term solutions for James Cook University and Central Queensland University through the delivery of a fibre-based solution.

There seems to be no expectation that the Final Stage 2 proposal will be able to provide a fibre solution for the University of the Sunshine Coast. USC has recently sought Queensland Ministerial assistance to explore how this might be achieved. It is thought that the hospital initiative and the education precinct presents yet another reason for the Sippy Downs precinct to gain access to State managed infrastructure at an acceptably affordable rate. USC has also been assured that the Federal government would respond favourably by complementing any State funded initiative. To what extent remains to be seen.

The lack of dark fibre to the University is seen as a major constraint to the potential for eResearch at the University. In addition, affordable fibre is required to service the needs of the broader Sippy Downs Health, Education and Knowledge precinct.

6.4.2 Human and Financial Resources Management

Although it might seem logical for USC to seek to give preference in human resource and financial management decisions to those from within the region, it is constrained by merit and equity considerations, and by purchasing and competition policies of the State and Commonwealth Government.

Human Resources

Notwithstanding, key HR policies such as the *Promotion Policy for Teaching and Research Staff*, emphasise the regional dimension. The policy was amended in August 2005 to, in part, increase the emphasis on regional engagement or 'service' as the third area of achievement relevant to promotion.

The policy states:

> *The University's Mission in relation to community service is to use specialist knowledge for the benefit of the community. Community service is a scholarly practice through which T and R [academic] staff apply their discipline knowledge and skills to consequential problems in the world beyond the University.*

The University has also used a combination of substantive, adjunct and visiting appointments to build capacity. This year, Professor Steve Garlick was appointed as Coordinator, Regional Engagement within the Faculty of Science, Health and Engineering, and Professor Guy West was appointed Professor of Regional and Economic Development within SCRIBE.

USC also recognises outstanding individuals from within the region through the conferral of honorary awards. The award of Honorary Senior Fellow is made each year to an individual or individuals in recognition of their significant and sustained contribution to the development of the University or of the Sunshine Coast region.

USC is a member of the Sunshine Coast Human Resources Network, and meets regularly with public and private sector organisations from across the region to discuss HR matters, share information and provide advice and support.

The University's HR Unit have also organised internships at local organisations for a number of USC third year HR students, which provides an important linkage between the University and the community.

Financial Resources

The management of financial resources at USC is centralised, which is not illogical given the early stage of the University's development and the fact that most activity is undertaken at the main Sippy Downs campus.

At this point, no planning is underway for financial decentralisation within the institution. There is, however, a plan for the ongoing 'roll out' of the financial elements of the PeopleSoft management information system to client areas.

Aside from specific allocations from the Commonwealth including regional loading, funding for additional growth places, and equity funds, new resources for regional engagement activity are largely generated on a project basis.

A good example is the Technology Park project, where funding was sought and received from Commonwealth, State and local governments for an initiative to advance the development of a knowledge economy on the Coast.

New regional funding streams are emerging from:

- the Commonwealth Government (eg the Regional Partnerships Scheme, administered by the Department of Transport and Regional Services or DOTARS http://www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au/)
- the Queensland Government (eg the 'Smart State' initiatives such as the Regional Business Development Scheme)
- local government (eg funding through the Maroochy Economic Development Advisory Board or MEDAB)
- regional partners for joint projects (eg Education Queensland and Chancellor State College) and
- private/public companies, including sponsorships (eg Telstra Country Wide).

The University's new Chief Financial Officer (newly created position) has been allocated the task of identifying and maximising funding from such sources.

6.4.3   *Organisational Culture*

In the pre establishment and early operating years of the University, the organisational culture was strongly influenced by the CEO, Professor Paul Thomas, first as Planning President and then as Inaugural Vice-Chancellor. This was particularly true of the emphasis on regional engagement.

From the very earliest days, the University's Planning Committee, established in late 1993, and with Professor Thomas as Planning President, focussed on engagement with the region.

Planning for the University was undertaken in three stages. First the Planning Committee identified and analysed demographic data and higher education demand patterns. Initial data revealed:

- Average annual household income was low
- Employment and hence income subject to good times-bad times cycles
- High unemployment rates
- Low skills labour force
- Emerging social problems especially amongst alienated youth

- Drain of talented young people in the 15-24 year old category from the region
- Lacked a sense of place as a region
- High transient population
- Dire need for new clever industry, technological innovation and more outward looking, expansive business
- Poor transport system and
- Shallow set of cultural and career horizons possessed by people of all ages.

One of the key findings was that the persistent 'lure' of the beauty, attractiveness and leisurely lifestyle meant that migration into the region was high.

By contrast, between 5000 and 7000 people annually were contemplating higher education and subsequent careers in 1994 and left the region for universities elsewhere. Most never returned. This predominance of out-migration was exacerbated by the fact that none of the occupations or careers on the Coast was capable of holding this gifted group of people.

To compensate, it was envisaged that the University would develop its capacity to attract mature age students, who were more likely to remain on the Coast than school leavers, and who combined rich life experience with a strong commitment to study.

The second stage involved engaging in a program of community consultation and gain media exposure to heighten awareness of the possibilities and the importance of community support. Some 150 organisations were involved in a consultation process designed to establish their expectations of the new university. This data was fed into the University's first strategic planning process, which reflects a mission and values that are still in operation.

The third stage involved the conduct of seminars with invited scholars of international standing from major Australian universities, along with local experts, on the implications for course development of the regional data, community expectations, and recent developments in higher education internationally.

From this process was distilled a conceputalisation of a 'community university' and a community resource to catalyse educational, economic and cultural activity. The University's academic program would emphasise:

- Courses based on needs associated with regional advancement
- Innovative and niche approaches to program development
- Strong interdisciplinary work to address real work issues (eg the environment)
- Practical as well as theoretical elements including problem solving, work experience internships as features
- A core program to deal with increasing student indecision and learning/interpersonal imperatives in a range of professions
- Student needs (market driven in early years)
- Maximising graduate employability prospects
- Emphasising IT including encouraging independent and lifelong learning
- Receptiveness to mixed modes of study during degree programs
- Inclusiveness with respect to a range of community groups (eg U3A)

Physical infrastructure would be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner, with the University campus to be viewed as an 'architectural laboratory' for sub tropical public buildings.

Emphasis was also placed on developing multi purpose buildings for the University and for use as a community resource, and developing a Grounds and Development Control Plan of benefit to both the University and the region.

Overall, infrastructure planning was envisaged that encompassed receptiveness to pursuing joint ventures on or near the site.

This 'vision' of the University has been consistently promulgated to staff, students and the community, and developments on campus have remained consistent with it. It must be said, however, that it is largely the energy, drive and enthusiasm of Paul Thomas that has carried the weight of the vision to this time.

There has been a general acknowledgement however that, as a result of its rapid development, the University is now at a point where the its regional engagement agenda needs to be systematised in order to retain momentum, and this is being undertaken through a range of initiatives:

- The establishment of the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Committee and the development of a Regional Engagement Strategy
- The amendment of the University's Strategic Plan to identify regional engagement, along with sustainability, as foci for University teaching and research activities
- The information gathered whilst compiling this report, which will help inform both internal and external stakeholders about the breadth and depth of engagement initiatives to date.
- The appointment of Ms Christine Buchanan of Robert Gordon University as a Visiting Fellow of the University to undertake an assessment of how the University can build improved graduate employment outcomes, including increased levels of graduate employment within the region
- Revisions to Academic Promotion Policy to emphasise 'service' as a criterion for promotion.

A great deal of internal discussion has also centred around the importance of both internal and external communication. This was also identified as a key issue for regional stakeholders during the consultation process for this project, many of which have been unaware of the extent of engagement initiatives undertaken by the University of the potential for them to be involved or to benefit. A project is currently being undertaken to assess elements of current internal communication (including IT related mechanisms and communication with students) and develop an overarching strategy, which should be brought to finalisation in 2006.

The main impediment to continued promulgation of a culture that values regional engagement lies in perceptions: Perceptions that anything regional is 'inferior' or 'irrelevant', particularly in research terms. Perceptions that, whilst regional engagement activities are recognised and rewarded at USC, this will not necessarily be the case when staff try to further their careers at other institutions. Perceptions that the term 'regional' somehow implies a lack of sophistication.

Perceptions are slow to change, however organisational culture literature would suggest that a combination of strong leadership, appropriate policy infrastructure, and particularly recognition and rewards for desired behaviour might prove the strongest mechanisms for preserving a culture which values regional engagement.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS
MOVING BEYOND THE SELF EVALUATION

7.1   Lessons From the Self Evaluation Process

Early in this project, there was debate amongst stakeholders about the validity of defining the Sunshine-Fraser Coast as a single region. By its conclusion, however, and despite acknowledging that the 'region' was an artificial creation established solely for the purpose of this project, many saw the potential for collaboration and cooperation extending beyond existing administrative boundaries.

Stakeholders agreed that the following factors served to provide a platform for building such cooperation and collaboration:

- There is already a commitment to engagement on the part of the universities and on the part of regional stakeholders, along with significant goodwill, which can be built upon – in the case of USC, this commitment is the essence of its Mission
- This project was timely in the sense that both universities, but particularly USC, are ramping up their commitment to regional engagement
- Regional stakeholders, and particularly local councils on the Sunshine Coast, are seeking solutions to common issues, including a shared 'identity' for the region for development and marketing purposes, enhanced lobbying power (eg through the Sunshine Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (SunROC)), and concerted activity in fostering economic development, and particularly, the development of the knowledge economy (eg SunROC's *Regional Economic Development Strategy* (REDS) and the companion *Knowledge Economy Strategy*)
- There is a broad acknowledgement amongst stakeholders that the impact of both campuses on the region goes well beyond their 'traditional' teaching and research activities, and includes their impact on the development of regional infrastructure, regional governance and visioning for a successful future.

Both in discussion with regional stakeholders, and during meetings of the Regional Steering Committee, it became obvious that a view was emerging whereby this Project could act as a catalyst for striking new, and enhancing existing relationships between the universities and key regional stakeholders, and also between the two universities.

This latter relationship was seen as critical, particularly in the context of program development. Specifically, there was an expectation that the universities jointly have the capacity to develop an enhanced range of programs, and particularly professional programs, without unnecessary duplication, and with an emphasis on programs that would yield the best graduate outcomes possible. These outcomes would not be restricted to employment, but should also include opportunities for postgraduate study.

It was also agreed that simply offering students the kinds of programs they want and that would lead to a job on completion was not enough, unless combined with an equal commitment to retain human capital developed in the region. Stakeholders felt that regional business needed to 'step up to the plate' and take a much stronger role in forging relationships with the universities with a view to enhancing opportunities for students to undertake placements during their studies, and for graduates to find fulfilling work within the region.

7.2   The Region's Perspective

This Project also provided the opportunity, taken up with alacrity, to open lines of communication between the universities and stakeholders across the Sunshine-Fraser Coast. Interactions between them were overwhelmingly positive and have already uncovered opportunities for collaborative research activities and cooperative problem solving.

It should also be said that a number of issues of concern were raised, particularly in discussions between stakeholders and the International Peer Review Team. This, however, was seen as a positive development. The presence of an unbiased third party allowed issues to be raised that might otherwise have remained unaddressed as a source of friction between the parties. Instead, these newly opened lines of discussion have already, in most cases, been followed up, and resolutions sought in good faith.

In essence, the views expressed within the region can be summed up as follows:

- There is strong support on the part of key regional stakeholders for the presence and continued growth of their universities
- In the early days of both campuses, some stakeholders had inflated perceptions of what a new university campus was able to provide. Now, however, stakeholders are increasingly sophisticated in their understanding of both institutions, and this, combined with the strong growth trajectory, particularly of USC, means that an increasing range of expectations are likely to be met
- A strong emphasis should be on the universities providing the kind of programs that support business and industry within the region and, particularly in the case of the Sunshine Coast, the development of a knowledge economy.

One particular issue, which emerged repeatedly in discussions with regional stakeholders, was the need for business to engage more concertedly with the universities – especially micro and small businesses – with a view to becoming increasingly involved with students and graduates. It may be that the character of such involvement will be a phased process, beginning with engaging volunteers, moving to offering internships and other placements for students, and then to the employment of graduates.

Stakeholders were strongly of the view that retaining human capital in the form of students educated within the region was critical to the region's future.

There was also a pervasive desire, expressed by all parts of the region, for physical as opposed to virtual campus infrastructure to be located within their communities.

7.3   The University Perspective

Both USQ Wide Bay and USC have expressed a strong, clear and continuing commitment to regional engagement.

This commitment derives from the Strategic Plan in the case of USQ Wide Bay and from the Mission Statement in the case of USC.

Both institutions agree that there is significant potential for regional partnerships in research, and increased involvement of business and industry in program development. They also agree that it is absolutely critical that the universities offer programs which:

- Yield the best possible graduate outcomes

- Address the needs of existing business and industry within the region
- Develop the human capital necessary to attract new business and industry, particularly knowledge based business and industry, to the region and
- Address the need for a wider range of postgraduate programs and opportunities for regional students.

Both institutions have an ongoing commitment to addressing disadvantage in educational opportunity within the region, particularly in terms of participation rates for members of disadvantaged groups.

7.3.1   *USQ Wide Bay Perspective*

USQ Wide Bay has tremendous potential for growth yet at the same time, it faces enormous challenges in a region that has a low socio-economic status and a disappointing record of involvement in higher education. Part of the challenge, therefore, is to provide opportunities and support for people who would not otherwise be able to study at university. There are also viable opportunities for developing an international market. USQ Wide Bay's campus, has a heavy emphasis on relationships and support, and is situated in one of the most impressive coastal regions in Australia. It has the potential to attract increasing numbers of students from overseas. This is essential, as USQ Wide Bay needs to increase student numbers significantly in order to provide a vibrant atmosphere on campus and a critical mass of students to ensure a range of programs at a realistic cost.

USQ Wide Bay, as part of USQ as a whole, must continue to be inextricably linked to USQ's vision and major strategic purpose. The brand platform needs to apply the University as a whole. There are, however, some unique features and attributes at the Wide Bay campus that provide a significant opportunity to improve the quality of the core business and to expand upon it.

The small size gives scope to take relationships to new heights, while the location yields opportunities that may be different from USQ Toowoomba. For example, USQ Wide Bay has an expansive engagement with the community, one that may lead to decisions about programs that are particularly relevant to this region. Thus, the strong affiliation to Toowoomba and the unique opportunities a small, regional campus afford, combine to promote a type of organisation that will provoke and sustain growth. What is needed is an operation where the key actors know the local situation intimately, are able to make decisions based on the special situation at this campus, and yet have the ability to draw on the expertise and quality at Toowoomba.

In looking forward, USQ Wide Bay sees the following as key issues:

- Opening an income generating centre for the provision of short courses and consultancy for the community in order to meet the regional community's needs for learning and advancement
- Appointing staff to take responsibility for regional and international activity
- Developing a Wide Bay campus research unit to be the first port of call for any community member or organisation interested in research. The unit will further research and scholarship and will have a major impact on USQ Wide Bay's regional communities
- Providing relevant research and consultancy services that promote sustainable regional and community development
- Establishing Wide Bay awards for teaching excellence
- Exploring and recommending appropriate mechanisms to Wide Bay campus for implementing University and campus learning and teaching plans
- Developing more appropriate support systems for inter-campus teaching.

7.3.2 USC Perspective

The *South East Queensland Regional* Plan (2005), identifies Sippy Downs, where USC is headquartered, as a 'Knowledge Hub', with the expectation that it will evolve into a 'Major or Principal Activity Centre' by 2026. Sippy Downs will, according to the Plan, provide the focus for a major emerging community, as the site of key concentrations of economic, social and cultural activity, and as a preferred location for major health, education and transport infrastructure and services (Queensland Government 2004, 37).

The rate of growth witnessed at USC over the last nine years, which is unparalleled in Australian higher education history, has been a key driver in the development of both Sippy Downs and the Sunshine Coast more broadly.

Four important categories of expenditure by USC contribute to economic benefit within the Sunshine Coast, as evidenced by data from 2004:

1. Spending by the university itself for salaries and benefits ($25.1M), operating supplies and expanses, and other budgeted expenditures (Non wage expenditure = $12.6M)
2. Spending by the university for capital (construction) projects ($6.9M, included in non wage expenditure)
3. Spending by staff and students (including international students) who attend the university (around 75% of USC students are from within the region and a conservative estimate of student expenditure in the region is 47%) and
4. Enhanced alumni earnings translated to spending power where graduates remain within the region (the average tertiary undergraduate generates a net economic benefit of around $184K and $254K for the average tertiary postgraduate – the ratio of benefits to costs is conservatively estimated at 3.7 for an undergraduate degree. (Access Economics 2005, 3)).

USC's expenditures also provide a source of jobs and income for residents that ripple through the community. These expenditures create an economic multiplier effect, which is a combination of direct, indirect and induced impacts on the regional economy. USC's data suggests that the multiplier effect is somewhere between 1.4 and 1.5 – that is, every $1 we spend is worth between $1.40 and $1.50 in the community.

In addition, around 60 people are currently employed by client and tenant companies of the University's small business incubator, the Innovation Centre.

According to Steve Garlick (1998, 1999), however, economic measures of university impact are 'passive', and give no insight as to the value of local linkages and how well embedded they are. Qualitative effects such as these are crucial economic drivers, although there are currently few tools to examine the interface between these drivers and economic development.

For USC, embedded local linkages are of critical importance in its contribution to the region, and a number of key initiatives are underway in support of such linkages:

- Implementing initiatives outlined under the 'Regional Engagement' section of the revised Strategic Plan, approved by Council in December 2005
- Finalising and implementing the University's *Regional Engagement Plan*, currently being developed by the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Advisory Committee, in early 2006

- Negotiating new and building on existing communication structures, particularly those between the Vice-Chancellor and regional Mayors, and between University Executive and executive staff at the regional councils
- Continuing to work with SCORE and the Education Cluster in the development of a knowledge economy on the Sunshine Coast
- Continuing to take a leading role in infrastructure developments within the region such as the Technology Park Project, the proposed health and wellbeing centre, shared research infrastructure with the public and private hospitals to be developed at Sippy Downs, and shared performing arts infrastructure with Chancellor State College
- Continuing the development of a broader range of programs, in cooperation with business and industry, and with an emphasis on professional programs, and particularly those where there are current and anticipated skills shortages within the region, or which develop the human capital necessary for a move away from traditional industries (eg construction and tourism) towards knowledge based industries
- Continuing to work with other education providers, including through the Education Cluster, to enhance educational pathways within the region
- Continuing to explore options for flexible learning (including those consistent with the recently published draft E-learning Strategy) and the enhanced IT infrastructure necessary to allow students from all parts of the region to adopt them
- Exploring with regional stakeholders the potential for offering professional development programs
- Exploring with regional stakeholders the potential for greater connectivity with the arts community
- Finalising allocation of funding through the newly established budget line for Regional Engagement in 2006 (this is the first time an explicit line of funding has been made available for regional engagement initiatives)
- Implementing the recommendations of the recently completed review by Christine Buchanan of Robert Gordon University in relation to enhanced Graduate Outcomes for USC graduates (including new program development, support mechanisms for students and graduates, and business/industry participation in student placements and graduate employment)
- Continuing the development of new professional programs, particularly those in the areas of health and wellbeing and sports science, in support of health infrastructure developments anticipated in Sippy Downs (public and private hospital and health hub)
- Supporting the spread of curriculum elements relating to entrepreneurship from the Faculty of Business to the other two faculties and
- Continuing the review process for the operation of research institutes and centres with a strong emphasis on supporting research which relates to the two areas of strategic concentration outlined in the Strategic Plan – Sustainability and Regional Engagement.

7.4   Philosophy of Engagement

Put simply, the two universities see regional engagement as a core function, with an emphasis on connecting the intellectual and physical assets of the institution to public issues through partnerships.

In this, they share features of the conceptual framework advanced by Boyer and senior Carnegie Scholars such as Huber when they speak of the Scholarship of Engagement, whereby engagement:

- Is an overarching rather than an embedded principle
- Is not an 'add on' nor an extra activity
- Recognises diverse faculty interests and values multi disciplinary approaches and

- Is not just a new view of 'service'.

This, however, should not be taken to mean that 'regionality' implies a departure from international standards of teaching and research. Rather, that the universities can act as a conduit for global knowledge and information flows both to and from the region.

7.5   Increasing the Contribution that the Universities Make to the Region

Both the universities and regional stakeholders recognised that an important step in enhancing the contributions made by the universities to their region was to recognise the contributions they already make.

They agreed that the universities needed to keep a higher profile within the community, and to develop more effective ways of clearly articulating their achievements. By the same token, they acknowledged that the onus was then on the community to recognise these achievements and support the universities in their efforts.

Already, the universities are operating from a strong foundation of high level engaged behaviour on the part of USC, and extensive local relationships nurtured by USQ Wide Bay.

This point highlights the importance of ongoing dialogue between the universities, key regional stakeholders and the community at large, and emphasises the importance of channels of communication that are well known and can be easily accessed.

There are already a variety of partnership arrangements in place between the region and its universities, through which issues and problems of mutual concern can be addressed. These include Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), joint ventures, joint infrastructure developments, joint program initiatives (including cross sectoral initiatives such as articulation arrangements) and information sharing.

Both universities are currently mapping their regional engagement activities across their respective institutions, and it is anticipated that these 'audits' will provide the information necessary to focus and strengthen existing relationships established by staff and expose 'gaps'

In particular, both universities are keen to strengthen their relationships with business and industry, these relationships to be manifest in a variety of areas including program development, joint research, student placements, graduate employment, and the promulgation of targeted professional development programs.

USQ Wide Bay and USC are also committed to strengthening internal mechanisms in support of regional engagement activities and initiatives. Some examples include:

- Structural: The establishment of the Vice-Chancellor's Regional Engagement Advisory Committee at USC or the establishment of the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Engagement & Social Justice) and the associated establishment of a regional engagement portfolio (Regional Engagement Task Force) for USQ
- Policy: Revised promotion criteria at USC
- Governance: Increasing the number of regional representatives on University Council at USC or
- Budget related: The establishment of a direct budget line for regional engagement at USC.

7.6   The Way Forward: Visions for Future Policy

At the third meeting of the Regional Steering Committee, held in Gympie on 25 November 2005, members discussed in detail options for taking regional engagement forward on the Sunshine-Fraser Coast.

In that context, they raised a number of issues for consideration:

- Philosophy of engagement: Both universities agreed that, although regional engagement can be embedded in both teaching and research, there are regional engagement activities undertaken by universities that are neither teaching nor research. One example cited was the development of the Innovation Centre (small business incubator) at USC, which was aimed at catalysing knowledge based industry and employment within the region. In response, members agreed that this particular philosophy of engagement was consistent with community expectations within the region.
- Funding and commitment by government to university regional engagement: Members acknowledged that public funding for universities is largely connected, directly or indirectly, to learning and teaching, and research. There is no explicit funding with which to prosecute a regional engagement mission. Notwithstanding this lack of funding, regional engagement activities such as those undertaken by USC and USQ Wide Bay were critical to the universities achieving traction within their region. USC estimates that it has spent around $10M in the region on activities that are neither teaching nor research.
- The universities as regional 'assets' rather than 'threats: There was some concern that regional leaders, particularly local politicians, saw the universities (especially USC), as gaining funding and infrastructure at the cost of other regional centres. The importance of open dialogue between the executive staff of the universities and the councils was stressed, as was the need to make partnerships between the universities and regional stakeholders more 'visible' (e.g. through MOUs).

Having agreed on the importance of seeing the universities as assets, it then became a question of how those assets might best be utilised into the future. Before this could be addressed, however, a decision had to be made as to the nature of the 'region'.

As indicated at the start of this chapter, the Sunshine-Fraser Coast was an artificially created 'region', established only for the purpose of this study. Indeed, the Sunshine Coast and the Fraser Coast belong to different local government and statistical regions.

Therefore, any decisions about the way forward hinged on whether stakeholders agreed to continue to identify with the Sunshine-Fraser Coast 'region', or to retain existing administrative boundaries, albeit with enhanced relationships between the two areas. To add to the complexity of this question, the position of Cooloola Shire, caught between both areas, needed to be addressed.

There was some consideration given by the Regional Steering Committee to the fact that the Sunshine-Fraser Coast could 'evolve' into a region, independently of any action taken by them. Should this occur, there was a strong possibility that appropriate structures would not be in place to deal with it.

Members felt that it was important to communicate to the OECD Peer Review Team and to those reading this report that the project had given regional leaders their first opportunity to raise the possibility of redefining administrative boundaries for the purposes of university-region engagement.

As a result of what was seen as a fruitful discussion, members agreed to continue meeting after the conclusion of the Project, to discuss the potential for a 'federation of interests' to be established that preserves the integrity of the two areas whilst allowing them to act in concert on issues of mutual interest (eg where a common external threat requires a close alliance). This would involve putting in place appropriate structures for identification of issues and mobilisation of regional resources.

7.7   Conclusion

As indicated in the Project Aide Memoire provided by the OECD Working Group, the focus of this Project has been on collaboration between higher education institutions (HEIs) and their regional partners. That being the case, the fact that mechanisms established to 'manage' this Project have taken on a life of their own in establishing future directions for the region must be viewed as a sign of success.

The Project has not only given the universities an opportunity to reflect on their philosophy and management of regional engagement initiatives, but also to be recognised for their achievements to date, and given encouragement and support in moving forward.

From the point of view of the region, the Project has given unparalleled opportunities for communities of interest to interact directly with the universities, and to think about a vision for the future of the region and how all parties might contribute to it.

For all involved from within the region, it has provided the opportunity to interact with a team of internationally prominent reviewers, whose incisive questioning and willingness to share their experiences and knowledge was of inestimable value.