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Preface

The Australian Journal of University Community Engagement is a refereed journal published twice a year by the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance Inc. , a not for profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the engagement capabilities of staff and universities by developing expertise, fostering collaboration and building their communities across Australia.

The interests of the Journal include University Community Engagement in terms of social, environmental, economic and cultural development. Articles will be refereed by a peer selected Editorial Panel, with extensive experience in community engagement and higher education. Thus the Journal is designed to promote and develop the scholarship of community engagement.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Papers included in this volume of the e-Journal are philosophical essays and some project reports. It is pleasing to see that there are interesting projects which build in a research and evaluation aspect at the implementation stage. This is the most effective way to test results, ensure there is a strong story to share with others, and an evidence base to use for future decision making on Community Engagement.

I am very interested in the impact that engaged learning has both on the community partner s and on the students and staff engaged in the projects. The notion of partnerships which deliver mutual benefit is well covered in the language of Community Engagement, but it will be significant when we receive papers from both the Community and the University partners to an arrangement, discussing the benefits experienced by all. Part of this transition is the conceptual shift from a service mentality to one where there is a genuine recognition that members of a community have much to offer the University, that the University is not the holder of all knowledge and that the learning will be two way.

There is much talk in the University sector about diversity, often based on gender, socio-economic and other equity factors. Unfortunately there are sometimes negative connotations associated with the growing diversity in Universities, some suggesting a lowering of standards and rigour, My contention is that there has always been diversity, and only now are we giving sufficient attention to the quality of teaching and learning, which enables us to better teach those with diverse interests and needs. It can frequently be observed that students who are engaged are those who are most satisfied with their teaching, and who gain most from the learning experience. The academic who provides a learning environment which fosters this engagement is generally recognized as a good teacher. So it is timely that the opportunities provided by Community Engagement are acknowledged as an avenue for providing engaging and diverse learning experiences. Universities often acknowledge that their student population is diverse, but sometimes forget that the onus is on the University to provide diverse and relevant learning experiences for these students.

Professor Barbara van Ernst   Editor

BEYOND THE DIVIDE: UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, WILDLIFE AND RELATIONAL ETHICS

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ABSTRACT:

Post-colonial attitudes to nature in many parts of Australia and elsewhere have ensured the human/ native animal divide has remained strong among institutions charged with managing the way society interacts with the natural environment. Rules have taken over principles, and conservation (decisions about too many and too few), not welfare, has become the dominant discourse. Anthropocentric institutionalism has replaced moral geography and ethical understanding when it comes to the connection between native animals and communities.

While some of the blame for this situation results from power wielding institutional regulators, a failure to define and articulate a coherent ethical underpinning to animal welfare that is not anthropocentric has contributed to this situation more broadly. This has ensured that in an increasingly urbanised society, the psycho-emotional distance between humans and native animals, if anything, is increased locking-in a range of societal fears, encouraging vested interests, and enabling animal cruelty. There is a discussion to be had about the way geographic space is configured that includes animals and humans that has serious implications for issues of community fragmentation and its associated problems in a globalising world. This relational view about humans and native animals also has implications for animal welfare, where the discourse has been to maintain the separation, focus on 'rights', and differing anthropocentric views about distress. We argue such approaches miss the 'intrinsic' characteristics and mutual benefits that a co-habitation model built on respect can bring.

In this paper we discuss three interrelated engagement aspects with respect to the way we view the human/ native animal divide from an ethical perspective. First, we are concerned to address limitations in animal welfare discourse to ensure it is not suppressed by anthropocentric arguments and the conservation agenda. We articulate a relational ethic predicated on mutual understanding as a framework for achieving this. Second, there are implications for the design and occupation of community space to ensure fragmentation pressures are minimised. There is evidence around the world where human/ nature connections in urban living are being 're-invented'.

Third, because they are places of learning, are autonomous with a hoped for concern for the public good, and may have access to large areas of land, we can identify an engagement role for universities in meaningfully contributing to strengthening non-human engagement in communities. While some universities see their ethical contribution to the public good in relation to native animals in 'funding-conditional' terms, or in tinkering with animals for human benefit, at least one, which we report on in this

paper, sees it has a responsibility to the ethical treatment of the native animals that are a characteristic feature of its campus.

1. INTRODUCTION

It would be nice to begin this paper saying Australians have a deep affinity for their unique wildlife. However, apart from that which is intrinsic and special to Indigenous Australians we, generally, cannot.

"Australia already has the worst rate of mammal extinction in the world. Almost 40 per cent of mammal extinctions globally in the last 200 years have occurred in Australia. This incredible continent is losing species at an unprecedented rate and, as most species found here aren't found anywhere else, the loss of Australian species is a loss for the whole world "(WWF 2008). And

"...more than 104 million native mammals, birds and reptiles have died or will die as a result of the clearing of native vegetation approved in NSW alone between 1998 and 2005" (WWF 2007). This figure does not include the impact of illegal clearing, commercial harvesting and other legal and illegal shooting.

Why do we have an incongruity where Australia has the most diverse and richest wildlife on the planet and at the same time is racing at a pace, in the most diabolical ways, to ensure its extinction at a rate many times faster than any other country? What role does higher education and regional community engagement have in providing solutions in this area?

The human/nature divide is a western worldview based on the Aristotelian-Christian ethic which distinguishes human animals from non-human animals so as to locate human existence at the centre of a moral order. Aristotle regarded animals as existing for utilitarian purposes, simply to provide food and clothing for humans, and Augustine and Aquinas thought that animal existence was of no account (Atterton and Calarco 2004). In the present postcolonial neoliberal period the binary divide conceptualises humans as distinctive and oppositional rather than complementary and relational to animals and nature. The neat separation of nature into the biophysical world objectifies animals and nature to facilitate an anthropocentric view where animals and nature exist for the sole purpose of human utility (Soule and Lease 1995, Wolch and Emel 1998). This view of the divide has become institutionally entrenched in recent decades.

The most extensive critique of the binary divide is found in ecological feminism where it is argued that the dualism establishes a way of thinking that polarises as oppositional a condition that is in fact inseparable and relational (Plumwood 1993: Warren 1987). Parallel arguments are found in feminist critiques of science where modern science "seem to provide more precise and empirically compelling evidence of just where the boundaries between nature and culture are to be found" (Harding, 2006).

Institutions and their supporting scientists now have native animal 'management plans' to ensure the animal 'others' do not encroach on the spreading human domain. Nature has become a numbers perception game dressed up as 'conservation'. If we perceive there are too many, we should get rid of the 'excess', usually by barbaric means, called 'humane' so as to pander to societal 'fear' and soften community outrage. If we perceive there are too few, we should invest in preserving the remainder in the same way that economists might price according to marginal value concepts. An ethical approach to native animal welfare, based on close association with humans, does not rate

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institutionally in this received instrumental paradigm that separates and divides human and non-human animals.

In particular, we are stimulated in this paper to discuss the entrenched human/ animal divide from the perspective of an relational ethics of place and of learning, particularly university learning, where solutions to this entrenched divide can be found and then acted on, in a manner, which we term 'enterprising', rather than where right and wrong are merely ascribed instrumentally and left as statements according to certain moral values. In relation to the first of these, space, the rapid rate of 'progress' and the consequent disconnection of non-Indigenous humans in their everyday life from the land and sea and its many native animal inhabitants has contributed to a trend in community 'mixophobia' and fostered a 'clinical' homogeneity (Bauman 2007) of society. In this increasingly urbanised world, the psycho-emotional distance between humans and native animals, if anything, has locked-in a range of societal fears about wildlife, encouraging utilitarian vested interests, and enabling animal cruelty. Cruelty has become the 'new cool' in relation to the way we view our wildlife in these homogeneous communities.

The notion of a context-sensitive ethics of place (Smith 2001) provides part of the solution in building a stronger relation between the human and non-human. Through this, the idea of community as an embedded intimate relation that is reflexive of environmental and cultural diversity, Bauman's (2007) 'mixophilia', can be strengthened. We are concerned here with matters to do with behaviour, having an ethical concern for the other – or 'being for' in the Bauman (1995) sense, but going beyond having a simple 'concern' to the implementation of ethical practice and in so doing going beyond humanist assumptions that the 'other' resides entirely in human form (Derrida 2004).

Smith's (2001) relational view about humans and wildlife in geographic space and place has implications for how we ascribe meaning and practice to animal welfare, where the dominant discourse has been to maintain the separation and 'object-focus' towards animals – typically the perspective of 'conservation'. Animals, as 'objects', are not recognised as being 'place' connected. As a result we have tended to focus on other abstractions such as animal 'rights', and impose moral rules and ethical principles without questioning the location foundations of a relational life between humans and the other.

Second, education, and in particular for this paper higher education, has provided us with few learning resources through which we might interrogate more closely the relationship between humans and animals for mutual benefit in our places and communities. Indeed, we argue human education has failed animals, and as a result humans are failing themselves. Education has failed to provide a relational understanding of the interconnection of all planetary life and existence. It is clear from the role of the physical sciences in supporting tinkering with wildlife through so-called 'management plans', experimentation for human gain, and in supporting 'conservation', that little attention has been paid to the role of a range of non-physical science disciplines - the humanities, social sciences, ethics and futurism, in these debates.

As Orr (1991) suggests, education does not guarantee wisdom, welfare or indeed survival. It is not education that will save us, but education of a certain kind; one that emphasises hope, integrity and caring over theory, abstraction and efficiency. We do not want a learning environment that teaches the lessons of hypocrisy, cruelty and despair.

The work of Derrida (2004) is explored in the paper as a means of highlighting forms of education required to think differently in relation to the way humans and animals interact in particular spaces and locations. Following Derrida, learning is, for us, the second part of the solution in strengthening the connection between humans and non-humans. A relational ethic towards wildlife must have a dialectic, in our learning practice, that is oriented away from the 'other' being viewed as 'objects' and oriented more towards a comprehension of the way wildlife might view humans and as humans might comprehend the feelings of wildlife (happiness, grief, sadness, fear), aspirations (such as having off-

spring), and their skills and knowledge in disciplines we ordinarily take for granted or disregard.

By considering and combining the role of place, space and learning we are naturally drawn to the new engagement role of universities for finding a way forward that reduces the divide in communities, not only in a teaching and learning sense, but in a place-based practical (or 'enterprising') sense, which elsewhere (Garlick and Palmer 2007, 2008) we have termed 'sp-ethics'. We focus on the engagement role of universities for two reasons. First, the university's responsibility for human capital generation, hopefully free of the usual captured entity constraints of institutions and corporations and free of a 'consequent' approach to ethics. Second, universities in particular have the independence, global links and focus on knowledge and learning to better engage with place-oriented communities and their connection with the non-human than any other institution. For engagement to occur in such learning situations, the community must desire to encourage internal diversity.

2.   HUMAN - NATURE / NATURE AND COMMUNITY

The philosophical and historical tendency to separate humans and non-human nature in academic discourse is recently being challenged. Theorising relationships in terms of flows and connections between human and non-human elements of networks and cultures help to transcend previous conceptions of a human-nature divide, and enable understanding of relationships and connections in terms of hybrid forms and interconnected essences (Braun 2004, Latour 1993, Whatmore 2002, Lease 1995, Wolch and Emel 1998). Complexity, interaction, change, flows, connections and critical reflexivity is present in events, processes and relationships (Howitt 2001). These more recent geographical insights into a world of liquid knowledge can be applied and extended to relationships with the non-human other.

"Social inclusion is absolutely central to human morality, commonly cast in terms of how we should or should not behave ….human morality may indeed be an extension of general primate patterns of social integration, and of the adjustment required of each member in order to fit in. If so, the broadest definition …. would be as an investigation into how the social environment shapes and constrains individual behaviour" (de Waal 2003:123).

Animal geographies range across a diversity of human-nature studies (Wolch and Emel 1998, Wolch 1998). Some highlight the centrality of 'wild' animals or align wildness with rurality while cities are argued to house tame animals. Others question the wild/tame distinction on the basis that it perpetuates dualisms between city (tameness/ domestic) and country (wildness, nature), and particularly excludes hybrid forms of human-animal interaction.

Such separations and similarities in the human-nature discourse are also increasingly the subject of empirical investigation. In Colorado, for example, a zoological tourism development proposal engendered community resistance and the eventual enactment of a local government bylaw against the proposal. Residents felt that the caging of wild animals, particularly when authentic animal forms existed freely in the nearby wildness of Yellowstone National Park, was a stain on their community character and identity. Their resistance invoked ethical dilemmas and

"the inevitable conceptual stickiness which results when humans attempt to define the animal world in terms of 'wild' and 'domestic', 'good' and 'bad'" (Wondrak 2002:72).

Sustainability discourse claims to integrate social, environmental and economic paradigms, yet, Wolch (1998) notes that sustainability is rarely defined from the animal's perspective. Environmental planning and management, and the conservation sciences, exacerbate the debates and imagined separations between the value of wild versus domestic animals. Planning controls the use of geographic space for human benefit:

granting 'amenity' to residents or real estate through covenants that prohibit domestic animals or demand wildlife corridors but simultaneously legitimise urban expansion into wild areas (Wolch 1998). Wildlife reserves:

"are "out there", remote from urban life, reserves can do nothing to alter entrenched modes of economic organization and associated consumption practices that hinge on continual growth and make reserves necessary in the first place." (Wolch 1998:124).

Such separatist approaches privilege some non-human forms, such as mountains and tigers, at the expense of others, for example, by trivialising the welfare of chickens or lambs and domesticated nature (Anderson 1997). Some animals such as pets or livestock are ignored and others become embedded in anthropocentric conceptions of the environment (Wolch 1998), although Franklin, very optimistically, argues that this trend may be marginally changing, mostly aligned with the animal rights movement:

"Australia is among those post-colonial countries in which there is a distinct biopolitical tension between native and introduced species. Although nativism (a totemic, pro-native stance) is pronounced and evident in a range of data collected in this survey, it is also true that a more generic animal rights trend can be detected both in terms of questions related to moral equivalence with humans and product testing and in terms of organizational support and membership" (Anderson 1997:26).

However, there remains a tendency to view human-nature from an anthropocentric gaze or to indulge in anthropomorphism, the ascription onto animals of human traits. Despite attempted paradigmatic shifts the contemporary anthropocentrism present in much allied literature perpetuates the human-nature divide. Howell (2006) suggests combining anthropomorphism with scientific rigour, rather than anthropo-denial (avoiding anthropomorphism), which is no more objective. He argues that a naïve or self-referential anthropocentrism reflects a poor knowledge of animals. A more animal-centric anthropomorphism works with accepted ecological knowledge yet enables researchers to interpret observations in recognition of animal subjectivities. He maintains that animal-centric anthropomorphism avoids human-nature dualisms and notes the similarity between human and non-human animals (counter intuitively demonstrated by the need to experiment on animals for human benefit!).

When humans place the laws of nature as a foremost principle in all ways of thinking then planning, conservation, sustainability, urbanism and urban design, development and everyday practice and activity can more increasingly be attuned to the inequities presented by anthropocentric perspectives and their inability to transcend the human-nature divide (Smith 2001). Part of the necessary shift is to encourage and design human-nature interactive space and place.

3.   THE DESIGN AND OCCUPATION OF SPACE AND A RELATIONAL ETHIC

Smith (2001) explores how an ethics of place connects individuals, nature and culture in a moral and physical space. It gives humans the tools and the location to engage in a genuine dialectic, rather than have their ethic constrained by an anthropocentric bias toward production and environmental antinomianism and quantification, institutionally stifled by instrumental rules and regulations. His ethics of place acknowledges the agency of nature and takes account of the importance of situation and context.

There is no particular historical precedent or clear cut logic underpinning the separationism of human-nature as certain animals were historically included while others were excluded from urban areas. The acceptability of human-nature interactions within urban space was to some extent dependent on class and gender and in turn influenced both government and community responses to human and non-human interaction (Gaynor 2007).

Yet, animals enhance social capital, networks and experiences of community (Wood et al 2007). Franklin (2007) records a contemporary spatial shift of domestic animals, who increasingly occupy indoor spaces and furniture, and nurture unique attachments that ground their place in new hybridized families. That research further revealed a concomitant rising concern over the commercial production of animals and denial of their rights, yet increasing globalism, urbanism and economies of scale mitigate against these concerns for animals.

Anderson (1997) calls for more animal-inclusive landscapes that will transform sociospatial relations but warns against simply reproducing zoos or controlled care environments (protected areas) that prohibit alternative models or imaginings of the human-nature connection. Wolch's (1999) trans-species framework is designed toward this end, to anthropocentrism yet remain grounded in urbanism, nature-culture, ecology and environmental action. She stresses that cities are considered as human rather than animal habitat which

"ignores the lives and living spaces of the large number and variety of animals who dwell in cities." (1998:121).

Her zoöpolis model proposes urban spaces that have been renaturalized to provide local, situated, everyday knowledge of animal life. These shared urban spaces provide opportunities to engage in animal-centric anthropomorphism, rather than scientistic or anthropocentric standpoints, to explore human-nature kinship and diversity. She argues that increased understandings of the non-human other will impact and transform our ways of landscaping, development design, eating habits (e.g. non-commercially produced foods) and entire institutional, ethical and political practice in ways that acknowledge animal subjectivity. Shared urban spaces permit critiques, observation, experimental ecology, and similar modes of learning to be complemented with ethnographic accounts of animals and other anthropomorphic enquiry. They can also help to amalgamate the conservationist and rights-based movements (see Regan 2003, Singer 2003), which are often deeply opposed in their perspectives, and build the situated ethics ascribed to above.

More recently, some conservation bodies have recognised the benefit to humans and animals by blurring the divide in cities. The World Conservation Union (IUCN 2003) proceedings about how protected areas can build stronger constituencies for nature conservation in large cities provides a number of case study examples of large city initiatives seeking to bring nature back to the centre for mutual benefit.

As Smith (2001) has observed, our values emerge not only from our relations with the social environment we occupy, but with the natural environment. "Nature is an active participant in the production of self, society and our ethical values." (Smith 2001:212). Thus spaces designed for human nature interaction help shape human values and ways of being as much as they protect wildlife and the natural environment in a relational ethic.

Bauman's (1995) ideal 'forms of togetherness' are also important in considering a relational ethic between humans and non-humans in space of the kind proffered by Wolch (1999). Bauman's 'being-for' ethic provides the glue for building a sense of "...a community woven together from sharing and mutual care." (Bauman 2001:150).

"The being-for I propose, means an emotional engagement with the Other before it is committed (and before it can be, conceivably committed) to a specific course of action regarding the Other" (Bauman 1995:62).

Clearly, a resistance to objectification of the other is invoked in our relational and hybrid communities.

Like Smith (2001), these forms of togetherness acknowledge our varied spatial experiences and are fundamental to us contributing these attributes to redesigned

communities (Davidson 2000). The resulting community diversity from this mutuality is what Bauman (2007) terms 'mixophilia'. The opposing more usual trend in the global neoliberal world of today is 'mixophobia' where the trend in community living by humans is toward homogeneity and exclusion, where relations are more akin to Bauman's 'being-aside'. Ironically, as Bauman (2007) observes:

"The drive towards a 'community of similarity' ('mixophobia') is a sign of withdrawal, not just from the otherness outside, but also from commitment to the lively yet turbulent, invigorating yet cumbersome interaction inside." (Bauman 2007:87).

The battleground in cities between the self-reinforcing, sterile and growing anxiety of 'mixophobia' (sameness) and the abundant, somewhat chaotic, opportunities spawned by encouraging difference ('mixophilia') will vary from place to place depending on a range of considerations. While governments, planners, architects, property marketers and institutional regulators are doing their best to feed mixophobia, a re-evaluation of the human/ nature divide in space will do much to foster "...the propagation of open, inviting and hospital public spaces, which all categories of urban residents would be tempted to attend regularly and knowingly and willingly share" (Bauman 2007:91).

The classification of urban centres based around criteria about engaging otherness in a relational way as it involves wildlife, is an area of further research to be undertaken.

4   ANIMALS, PHILOSPOHY, EDUCATION

"Everybody knows what terrifying and intolerable picture a realist painting could give to the industrial mechanical, chemical, hormonal, and genetic violence to which man has been submitting animal life for the past two centuries. Everybody knows what the production, breeding, transport, and slaughter these animals has become." (Derrida 2004:120).

In this section we discuss the failure of dominant Western philosophical traditions and Western education systems to address or expand ethical questions concerning the treatment of animals. We consider what it means for education that knowledge derives from a form of comprehension that enshrines the view that human-beings are morally ascendant, superior and the categorical antithesis of all other beings. This view is notable since social theory has of late been preoccupied to the point of obsession with alterity in relation to human others, and post-humanist philosophers have incessantly pondered the question of the 'the human', the 'inhuman' and the 'post-human'. It is remarkable then that philosophy and education have managed to remain untouched and uninterested in ethical questions raised by the proximate otherness represented by animal-beings.

Western philosophy has failed animals. Few philosophers have challenged the profound and violent anthropocentrism of western metaphysical thinking, a view that since Descartes identifies human subjectivity as comprising a unique form of existence that is superior and privileged in relation to all other forms of being. While few contemporary humanist or post-humanist philosophers would subscribe to the Cartesian view that non-humans are mechanical automations that function according to their internal biological impulses, or that animals have only sensation because they lack the distinctive human capacity to reason and to speak, none have gone so far as Derrida to undermine the human/animal binary and demonstrate 'a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living' (Derrida 2004:124). Derrida does not seek to obscure the differences between animal and humans, or to establish an essential continuity between them, rather he demonstrates the multiplications and complications of ways of being that are obscured in binary divisions which draw on singular or essential human/animal differences (Calarco 2002).

In disrupting forms of thinking that set 'human-being' over and above 'animal-being', Derrida (2004) prompts consideration of what forms of thinking might follow, or come after the binary divide. Current conceptions involve tacit acceptance that human ethical and material priorities take precedence over all others and that the destruction of non-

human others though systematic and institutionalised violence is ethically acceptable. Current conceptions justify colonisation by identifying non-European cultures as bestial, savage and uncivilised; cultures which importantly accommodated different understandings of the relationship between humans, environments and animals (Huggan and Tiffin 2008). The place of native animals in the spiritual culture of the Australian Aboriginal is a case in point here.

However, what follows in Derrida's view need not sustain complicity and intellectual closure but locate 'conceptual possibilities for a material transformation of the world' (Huggan and Tiffin 2008:10). What follows might challenge and pave the way to re-imagining alternative ways of being human in the world.

Derrida observes that highlighting the lack of cogitative sophistication of animal-beings in comparison to the human capacity to reason disregards the question of whether they are able to address us. If addressing and being addressed are modes of communication and responsibility, then to acknowledge that we can be observed by an animal-other is to:

". . . see, who I am- and who I am (following) at the moment, when caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of an animal, for example the eyes of cat". (Derrida 2004:113). And

. . . - it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have done more to make me think through this absolute alterity of the neighbour than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of cat." (Derrida 2004:117).

For Derrida, the animal question is not about whether or not 'animal-being' can be defined and characterised as comprising this or that type or species, or this or that level of similarity or distinction from 'human-being'. The capacity to be like us, to reason, to speak, to worry, to feel stress 'is the thesis, position or presupposition maintained from Aristotle to Heidegger, from Descarte to Kant, Levinas and Lacan'(Derrida 2004:121). The 'first and decisive question' is an ethical one and was raised by Jeremy Bentham 200 years ago. It is to know whether animals *can suffer* (Derrida 2004:121). This question throws into relief the anthropocentrism of ethics itself which is silent in face of the known violence and unprecedented proportions of animal subjection. The violence is at the same time material and symbolic (Derrida 2004). We establish a binary division that prevents us from thinking relationally about ourselves as living creatures and as animals, and then we reaffirm the symbolic distinction between 'us'/human and 'them'/animal others in disavowals and dissimulation that prevent us from seeing or thinking through our carnivorous, cruel and exploitative practices (Wood 2004).

Education has also failed animals. We have failed to educate about and for animals, and in doing so, education has failed itself. We know a great deal about animals in terms of their biology, behaviour and habitat; their use-value to us and even how we might care and show them compassion, but education has not prepared us to think about ourselves in relation to the animal-others and is no guarantee of decency, prudence or wisdom. More of the same kind of education is likely to compound rather than solve our problems (Orr 1991). For Orr (1991) solutions are not to be found in education that promotes any old form of knowledge. They are not located in technological solutions; untrammelled belief in human goodness; the assumption that Western culture represents the 'pinnacle of human achievement'; the assumption that the things we have destroyed can simply be fixed; and current instrumentalist views of education as simply a means of securing economic advantage and social mobility. Rethinking education must involve knowledge of the natural world, of 'personhood' responsibility and the effects of our actions and power over others.

How might universities become the places of learning that, following Derrida (1983), raise new questions about the principles of reason that enable us to see and say so little? How might they 'awaken or resituate a responsibility' (p14)? One small step

forward is to ground responsibility in institutional, structural, pedagogical and curricular changes; to engage universities with their communities of people, animals and environments.

5. UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE 'OTHER' AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

Neoliberalism has brought with it the threat to the ethical citizenry purpose of universities, where the public good is central to higher education scholarship (Dewey 1956 and 1961, Boyer 1996, Benson and Harkavy 2002) - emboldened in a "…larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction in the national life." (Boyer 1996: 20). As we have seen, neoliberalism has also brought with it a threat to the kinds of communities and types of associations universities might care to engage with in pursuing this greater public good – particularly as it relates to the non-human other.

Where can an engaged university stand in a liquid world where humans are regarded as fundamentally and unequivocally divided from nature and animals? We want to argue that universities can contribute to the public good through a relational ethic with its community in terms of the 'other' even when, as we have seen, the pressure is for communities to be more homogeneous and exclusionary and where the financial pressure is on universities to be only consequentially ethical at best? Elsewhere we have argued that the notion of 'sp-ethics' might provide a vehicle to assist (Garlick and Palmer 2008). We argue a spatial context, local circumstances and needs, including those of the non-human, can provide the frame for mutuality in scholarship. But this scholarship, as we have said earlier, must also have a capacity to view things from the 'other than human' perspective. This represents an interesting challenge for universities in the values they embed in pedagogy, research, innovation and consultancy. There are instances where a culture of animal cruelty, institutional dishonesty and general community apathy towards the non-human other can be traced to a failure by universities to engage in their learning processes with knowledge about animals.

The scholarship of university engagement with communities in their broadest sense we are talking about here embraces Boyer's (1996) concepts of discovery, integration, knowledge sharing, and on-the-ground application. A key instrument for universities in this is the creation of the kind of human capital that not only appreciates the significance of the wildlife other in helping to create heterogeneous and ethically-oriented communities, but, importantly, has the 'enterprising' skills to work with communities to achieve these outcomes (Garlick and Palmer 2007, 2008).

Here we are mainly referring to the human capital role of the university in equipping individuals with an understanding of the environment they are a part of (social and natural), the processes of change impacting on this environment, and the ways they might effect change through a relational ethic. But we are also referring to the entire gamut of technical knowledge of universities through research, innovation and consultancy; institutional mission and values and the impacts on estate management and staff recognition and reward; and policy advice and local leadership roles. Indeed, in some cases we can argue universities are engaging in brutality in their learning and the non-human other.

6. UNIVERSITIES IN PRACTICE

By way of postscript, we would like to say that universities are already engaging with their communities in ways that exhibit an ethical concern for the wildlife other, but we cannot. Indeed, our attention has been drawn to universities that have put the 'development' of their campus estates above the interests of the wildlife inhabitants that are located there and brought harm to them as a result. Our attention has also been drawn to learning disciplines advocating wildlife 'management' in the form of eradication practices on perceived quantitative grounds, and processes that preference only human benefit in animal experimentation and that value animals as a free good to be discarded when the experiment is completed.

The ethical treatment or otherwise by universities of wildlife, either through estate management, learning and research programs, animal experimentation and the provision of other technical and consultancy advice will be the subject of further analysis by the authors as an engagement mechanism to build more resilient and heterogeneous communities and greater respect for our unique wildlife. Our sense is that there is a considerable way to go in this area of university and community engagement.

The University of the Sunshine Coast campus occupies a site of around 110 hectares, including remnant bushland and waterways that provide habitat for a variety of mammals, birds and reptiles. Of particular note is the population of eastern grey kangaroos that have become a visual feature of the campus and attraction for students and visitors. While the campus zone of the University has been designated a wildlife reserve and corridor, it is now seeking to become a wildlife sanctuary and to tailor its campus development plans around the habitat needs of the animals that reside there. It is designing wildlife friendly underpasses, fencing, and vegetation plantings and is seeking to give greater campus centrality to the various learning and research programs that have wildlife as a focus. It is enrolling the social sciences and humanities in this wildlife focus as well. It also wants to engage, through this work on wildlife, with the surrounding urban community to build greater levels of appreciation for our unique nature. It is this desire that offers a unique opportunity to create a truly engaged university, one that offers ethical learning perspectives and practices about the human-nature connection that is cognizant of the relational aspects of such a connection and their dependence on their unique geographical place.

7.   CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have been concerned to emphasise the growing human/ native animal divide in many communities as an unfortunate consequence of post colonial neoliberalism and entrenched institutionalism and instrumentalism. We have suggested there is an important role for universities in engaging with their communities in reducing this divide and building stronger diverse communities and enhancing a respectful relational ethic between humans and native animals. We have argued the two interrelated pillars for university engagement action in this area refers to intimately knowing the space (social and natural) and place in which the university and its community, including wildlife, are located, and giving focus to the learning, research, consultancy, mission, policy and leadership roles of the university. The other charge that can be laid against universities is that by failing to engage ethically in their scholarship in relation to the non-human other they risk engaging in brutality in relation to wildlife.

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The Challenge of Benchmarking Community Engagement:

The AUCEA Pilot Project

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Abstract:

In an environment increasingly driven by the need for an evidence base and accountability, there is pressure to identify measures of university community engagement. The Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance(AUCEA) recognised the need for the development of national and international benchmarks for engagement activity, the inclusion of engagement as a part of institutional profile assessments by government and as part of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) assessment regime.

The AUCEA Benchmarking Pilot Project has collaboratively developed definitions, rationale and a set of goals, strategies and measures as a basis for benchmarking university community engagement. As the project enters a pilot phase where participating universities will populate the indicators using their own internal processes and a shared partner perception survey, many challenges will be faced.. This paper outlines the process undertaken by the AUCEA Benchmarking Pilot Project and the outcomes so far.

Key words: benchmarking, community engagement,

Introduction

"Engaged universities are essential for Australia's economic and social future. Whilst universities interact with their communities in a range of ways, university-community engagement specifically implies collaborative relationships leading to productive partnerships that yield mutually beneficial outcomes" (AUCEA, 2006).

In 2005 the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) identified a need to encourage the development of national and international benchmarks for engagement activity, the inclusion of engagement as a part of institutional profile assessments by government and as part of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) assessment regime.

AUCEA recognised the need to development benchmarks in an environment where there was an emerging discussion about a third stream role for and potential funding of universities, and the Research Quality Framework sought to understand impact increasingly driven by the need for accountability and an evidence base.

For the AUCEA, community engagement by universities is underpinned by two factors. First, that some portion of academic goals is best achieved through collaborative knowledge-based relationships with the local and regional community in which they are located. Second, universities as publicly funded, autonomous, and geographically distributed institutions of learning and knowledge, have a responsibility through the creation of human capital and the research and innovation they carry out to ethically contribute to the 'public good' big issues of the world that resonate in their local and regional communities (Boyer 1996, Garlick and Palmer 2007 and 2008). Quadrant I in

the schematic Figure 1 best represents the AUCEA approach to this sphere of university activity.

Figure 1: **University purpose and community focus**
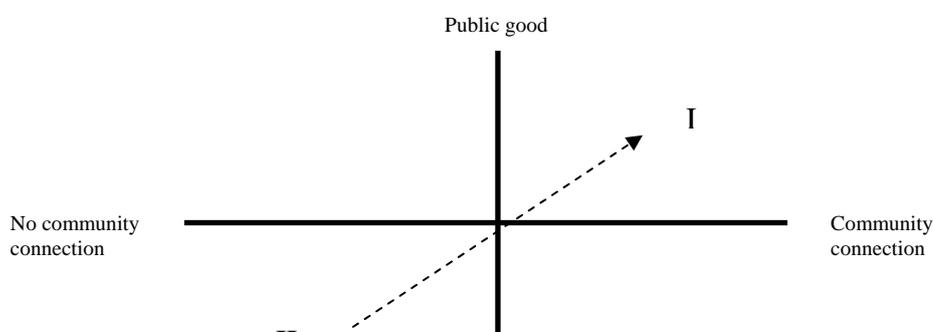
However, measuring community engagement is not an easy task. A scan of international approaches (for example: Charles & Benneworth, 2002; Gelmon et al., 2001; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Ramaley, 2005; 2006) demonstrate three broad types of assessment that are undertaken by universities in assessing their community, or in some cases regional engagement. They are either a guided self-evaluation assessment with expert peer review and iterative agreement; a metric assessment based on an agreed schedule of measures; or a combination of both. Often the focus is on the process of engagement rather than the outcomes of engagement because of the necessarily longitudinal nature of many of these outcomes. If, for example, it is hypothesised that university community engagement will produce more engaged citizens, when and how will universities and communities measure this outcome?   In an age of accountability and short political timelines it is easy to be seduced by the easily measured. But are these measures an indication of what really matters and is the process enabling universities to improve and progress?

The Journey

The AUCEA benchmarking discussion began at the AUCEA 2005 conference with a workshop that identified the disparate understanding and approaches to engagement amongst participating universities. In 2006 a discussion paper, *Assessing University Community Engagement* (Garlick & Langworthy, 2006), was prepared for the AUCEA Conference held in Western Australia in July 2006. At this workshop twenty-eight AUCEA member universities registered interest in the Benchmarking Project and the development of the pilot was delegated to a smaller working group. The working group met twice in August 2006 and April/May 2007 for two-day workshops to develop the framework and indicators to be used as a basis for the pilot benchmarking exercise.

The July 2007 AUCEA conference in Alice Springs hosted another workshop that commenced the pilot project with participating universities. The pilot project was designed to test the framework, populate the indicators and trial the institutional questionnaire and partner perception survey.

Subsequently two workshops have been held with participating university representatives, one to finalise the pilot framework and benchmarking instruments and one to reflect on the process and develop recommendations to be presented at the July 2008 AUCEA conference at Sunshine Coast.

Developing the Framework and Indicators

The initial benchmarking paper identified drivers for engagement and proposed a hybrid approach involving self-evaluation, assessment by the community and the university in

partnership, and metric assessment based on agreed quantitative measures. The paper recommended the incorporation of short and long term assessment considerations that recognise the need to both report to stakeholder groups on a regular basis and the need for a long term view of the way university knowledge contributes to meaningful outcomes for society and the environment locally, regionally and nationally. It was also acknowledged that there is a need for agreed measures and targets that address both the process of partnership and the progression toward the intended outcomes (Garlick & Langworthy, 2006).

The working group, consisting of representatives from Charles Darwin, Curtin, Edith Cowan, Macquarie, Monash, Newcastle, QUT, RMIT, Sunshine Coast, Swinburne, Western Sydney and Wollongong Universities and the University of South Australia, deliberated on the reasons why institutions would seek to measure engagement, issues of continuous improvement and identified measures currently used in Australian Universities.

Benchmarking principles

Based on member consultation and the literature, the following two principles guided the construction of the benchmarking framework:

- that it assist the university and its community partners improve their contribution to society and the environment through mutual knowledge exchange and action; and

- the process of engagement between universities and their communities is a learning process where all participants see themselves as learners.

Ambitious criteria for the benchmarking process were identified: benchmarking must be simple, relevant, timely and cost effective; benchmarks will need to link to higher order objectives, perhaps as typified by the national research priorities, and be applicable to and comparable across the whole sector; measures must be based on well defined, reliable, available data that can be tracked over time; measures need to link to the strategic plan of the institution; the framework must be robust and flexible; structural, process, input and outcome indicators must be balanced; and measures of external perception must be captured.

The process for developing the final draft framework to be piloted involved synthesising the feedback and, where possible, ensuring that links to international benchmarks measures are possible. To that end, the Talloires Network Inventory Tool for Higher Education Civic Engagement and the Carnegie Framework for Elective Classification, Community Engagement Foundation Indicators were used for comparison. A process to refine and filter the indicators was developed and eleven questions used to assess the suite of indicators as a whole. (Table 1)

Table 1: Indicator Filter

Questions	Score (1-5)	Comments
Is it valid (a logical measure)?		
Is the indicator likely to give us information about the future?		
Is the indicator likely to link to other indicators in a clear way?		
Can the indicator be presented in a way that can be easily understood?		
Can the indicator be represented as a picture, graph or on a map?		

Is the indicator comparable between all universities?		
Can this indicator be easily measured?		
Can we measure it again and have confidence in the result?		
Is the indicator able to show trends over time?		
Does the indicator apply equitably to all universities		
Is this indicator able to be measured in a cost effective way?		
Total Score:		

The initial process identified a framework based on six goals or domains, 24 strategies and over 150 indicators. Feedback was sought from a number of institutions and stakeholders.

The complete suite check asked: Is there a balance between subjective and objective measures?; Is there a balance between process and outcome measures?; Is there sector wide applicability?; Are the benchmarks transparent and auditable?; Is there international comparison for a proportion of the measures?; Is the process practical, "do-able" and affordable?; Can the measures be easily incorporated as part of AUQA existing processes?; Can the measures be easily replicated?; Does the suite contribute to higher order objectives (national prorities); and Are community perceptions well incorporated?

The Framework

The framework comprises an institutional questionnaire, a partner perceptions survey and a 'good practice' template. The benchmarking process is supported also by a paper defining the terms used. The framework is designed to assist universities and their community partners improve their contribution to society and the environment through mutual knowledge exchange, learning and enterprising action.

The draft framework has been crafted around five university community engagement goals deemed to be common to all universities committed to community engagement. It is noted that in each university additional goals, strategies and measures will be developed as appropriate to the local environment.

Overarching goals

TO FACILITATE AND ENCOURAGE INFORMED DIALOGUE AND PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS COMMUNITY ON ISSUES OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL IMPORTANCE.

TO ENSURE UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES SUPPORT EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

TO ENSURE THE UNIVERSITY IS ACCESSIBLE, OUTWARD REACHING AND RESPONSIVE TO ITS COMMUNITIES.

TO INCREASE THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF RESEARCH TO THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

TO DESIGN AND DELIVER HIGH QUALITY LEARNING AND TEACHING THAT RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND FULFILS THE UNIVERSITY'S STATED GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES.

The strategies and measures identified for each of these goals are included as an appendix.

Partner Perception Survey

Initially, the partner perception survey was designed to test the importance of and assess performance in six areas: accessibility (for example, staff, students, infrastructure, services); communication (for example, responsiveness, effectiveness, appropriateness); stewardship (for example, consistency, periodic evaluation); involvement and participation (for example, advisory boards, access to events etc); relevance (for example, of students - as work ready and civic minded - and outcomes of University activities); leadership (for example, dissemination of research that is community relevant, new knowledge and the university as a facilitator of dialogue).

The instrument was reworked at the third workshop and tested with University of Western Sydney community partners. The survey used in the pilot asked the partners to identify the type of organisation they represented and their position in that organisation as well as the length of association with the university and the main areas of contact. It tested the importance of and assessed performance of the university in three main areas: accessibility; working in partnership and providing assistance to the community/region; and student learning and research. It also asked partners to rate specific benefits and overall satisfaction with the relationship with the university. Ethics approval for the AUCEA Benchmarking University Community Engagement Pilot Project was granted by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in November 2007. Each university was asked to nominate 15 community partners who could complete an anonymous questionnaire in hard copy or on-line about the nature of their engagement relationship. Surveying was undertaken in the period from December 2007 until April 2008.

'Good' practice case examples

Each university was asked to complete a 'good practice' template for what they considered to be examples of their three best community partnerships. The template asks for a description of the project, its benefits, the role of partners, communication strategies, lessons learned, quantitative and qualitative performance measures, and success factors.

Challenges

The AUCEA benchmarking approach aims to further the understanding of the contribution of the university to community and community to university, to assess progress and to promote institutional efficiency. It does not aim to create a "league ladder" or promote competition between universities. Whilst the project offers an opportunity for participants to explore the practicalities of using the framework and measures and to get some sense of their performance in relation to other universities, it will also require continued and thoughtful dialogue.

An issue for resolution is how institutional and community diversity should be reflected and allowed for in benchmarking comparisons and how structural categorisations such as institutional age, size and location can be analysed through time.

Definitions need to be sharpened and methodologies developed and refined. Many questions are still to be answered. Are we measuring engagement to drive appropriate behaviours or developing a suite of consensus built measures? How do we respond to political drivers? How do we categorise universities and partnerships so that benchmarking is truly meaningful? Have we truly captured measures of student involvement? How do we account for longitudinal measures of student outcomes and related improvements in the community? How do we link to other developments relating to quality frameworks and measures of impact?

Another challenge has been to balance the short-term performance assessment reporting required by regulatory and funding agencies with the long-term need to contribute to better outcomes globally and locally. The pilot process has demonstrated that universities do not have the systems in place to capture and monitor information related to their community engagement. Some data required by the pilot institutional questionnaire have simply been too difficult to obtain because the information is not currently required for existing reporting within universities.

Universities are not accustomed to seeking feedback from community partners in the same way they seek student feedback and data related to graduate and research outcomes. Already the partner survey has highlighted the difficulty of university-centric systems and thinking coming to terms with understanding the reciprocal nature of partnership and a perspective that looks beyond the university as a provider of services. How do we capture not only what the university provides to the community but what the community provides to the university? In terms of the learning experience within the university, it is likely that a more qualitative approach will be necessary to supplement any benchmarks around partner perception and partner satisfaction.

The final instruments will need to consider the option for the identification and description of good practice and potentially the addition of a toolkit for adaption to local contexts. The protocols are being refined and will need to be further developed as a result of the learning from the pilot project, reporting formats will need to be developed and funding is limited.

The challenges are significant but the project is characterised by generosity, commitment and goodwill possibly because those working in this space recognise the need to measure what matters.

Conclusion

The process of distilling less than ten key benchmarks for university community engagement from a comprehensive and somewhat aspirational suite of measures has involved much learning. The outcomes from the pilot project and the resulting benchmarks will be presented to the July 2008 AUCEA conference. These benchmarks and accompanying tool kit will assist universities to maximise the impact of their community engagement and expand the capacity of the sector to direct the energy of learning and teaching and research activities to address the critical issues for the future, locally and globally.

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Appendix: Strategies and Measures

Strategies	Measures
1.1 The university executive, staff and students are strongly linked to and engaged in regular and mutual dialogue with the community and community leaders on agreed priority issues.	1.1 Number of fora, workshops or other events or issues of community importance that are the product of joint planning and implementation between the university and the community Number of invitations to the university from the community to participate in community forums and/ or boards and committees.
1.2 University planning documents articulate the university's commitment to community engagement.	1.2 Engagement included in: ▪ Vision ▪ Mission ▪ Institutional strategic plans and their derivative plans including implementation and functional plans and reporting progress against all goals and strategies ▪ University engagement strategies evaluated as effective by community partners ▪ Graduate attributes
1.3 The university supports capacity building for engagement by its staff, students and community members.	1.3 ▪ Dedicated staff development - regular program ▪ Attendance by university executive members academic staff and general staff (percentage/number) at Forums relevant to their discipline or area of expertise ▪ Career progression, number of promotions based on community engagement achievements ▪ Number Faculty/Division led engagement forums ▪ Opportunities provided on campus (or even off-campus) for students to participate in skill development for community participation and leadership
2.1 Demonstrated community connection to the University's governance.	2.1 ▪ Percentage of community leaders on university council and committees ▪ Induction and selection processes have been developed for community representatives on council and committees

2.2	The university policy and processes support effective community engagement and institutional capacity to work with diverse communities	2.2	University community engagement is a criterion in: ■ Recruitment ■ Performance ■ Staff development ■ Promotion ■ Course accreditation and review ■ Student reward and recognition ■ Staff reward and recognition
2.3	The university effectively resources an identified engagement strategy that resources and supports all faculty, staff, students and wider community, and documents progress/outcomes.	2.3	$ budget allocated to engagement (dedicated positions and operating expenses) as a proportion of total university operating budget
2.4	Effective mechanisms to capture and record engagement activities.	2.4	Systems in place to capture and record engagement activities.
2.5	The institution has executive leadership and co-ordinating infrastructure or dedicated community engagement team established within the university.	2.5	Existence of a dedicated strategic manager and integrated community relationship management (community building/engagement) system.
3.1	Community access to university resources i.e. facilities, grounds, services, education and training facilities and provision of community education	3.1	Key community activities initiated by the university as an engagement opportunity. ■ Use of facilities ■ Development of specialised/shared infrastructure ■ Ease of access to university staff and facilities as rated by community partners ■ Specialised services to meet civic and related objectives
3.2	Engagement opportunities and activities are effectively	3.2	Existence of engagement in communication strategy plan; and evidence of implementation in university publications, web sites and other public material

	communicated		
3.3	Community contact and relationship management	3.3	Partner perceptions of: ■ ease of contacting the university ■ communication ■ responsiveness ■ relationships management
4.1	Ensure communities are engaged as part of national and international research ▪ drawing on community expertise and knowledge ▪ developing formal partnerships ▪ sharing information ▪ encouraging active participation of community members ▪ acknowledging community contribution	4.1	■ Numbers of publications or presentations where partners are co-authors or acknowledged as a percentage of all publications and presentations ■ Numbers of externally funded collaborative grants as a proportion of all research grants ■ Numbers of internally funded collaborative grants as a proportion of all internally funded grants... ■ Partner perception of the value of research ■ Publication of research outcomes on website, newsletters and media
4.2	Ensure that innovation, research and consultancy have relevance to and impact upon the community	4.2	■ Number of grants and consultancy funds received for projects undertaken in collaboration with industry and community partners as a percentage of all funded projects ■ Partner perception of relevance and impact of research including research outcomes implemented.
5.1	Ensuring that skills for active citizenship are integral to high quality teaching and learning	5.1	■ Community engagement is explicit in the graduate attributes ■ Number of courses that contain an engaged perspective on indigenous, international communities or cultures as a proportion of all courses
5.2	Building in course elements to all programs that enhance student skills in achieving beneficial outcomes for students	5.2	■ Number and type of courses providing experiential learning in the community e.g. – practical placements – work related projects

in the community	- community problem solving - service learning - field trips - international projects - opportunities for student volunteering - student leadership ▪ Number of students who participate in experiential learning as a percentage of all students ▪ Partner assessment of the capacity of university graduates to contribute as ethical engaged citizens
5.3 Pursue learning pathways with other educational providers to ensure the best community outcomes	5.3 Number of formal agreements with other educational providers relating to facilitating learning pathways

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Translational Research and Community Engagement:

Emerging Opportunities

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The familiar concept of applied research is undergoing a makeover. Translational research is emerging and those experienced in engagement have a very significant role to play in guiding efforts toward effective practices in translational research.

Translational research is not what the term implies. The term does not, for example, refer to research that investigates the process of translation. Instead, translational research is research that combines the examination of root causes with an emphasis on ensuring that scientific discoveries are translated into usable information. Translational research sidesteps the familiar but false divide between basic and applied research by integrating the best of both basic and applied research and placing an equal emphasis on internal and external validity.

Translational research and engagement are deeply linked: researchers must be engaged in their communities if they are to understand which research issues are the most pressing and of most immediate concern. Those in universities who have long been at the forefront of engagement understand the complexities of bringing diverse groups including researchers and community leaders together if needs and interests are to be meshed. They understand how engaged scholarship encompasses translational research.

In the US, the movement toward translational research is rapidly growing. Many funding agencies have begun directing research dollars toward this focus. They see translational research as an antidote to the problems in past research where research results, however rigorously produced, did not find their way beyond peer-reviewed journals and had little impact on the problems that the funding agencies sought to ameliorate.

The Need for Translational Research

When the prodigious amounts of published research are compared against actual usefulness, yawning gaps are apparent. This ubiquitous problem of research going unused has been called the "loading dock" problem (Cash, Borck, and Patt, 2006). In this analogy, the production of university research, when carried out in an isolated, unengaged fashion, is not unlike assembly lines in which products are created and moved to a loading dock with the hope that someone outside the plant will use them. But as Cash, Borck, and Patt point out, what is produced may not be what is needed, and it may be produced faster than the market can absorb. As a result, unused products stack up on the loading dock: researchers produce their research but the results are never used. There is value in partnerships in which researchers work with partners early in the knowledge-production cycle to identify those research questions of greatest interest. Translational research is intended to serve this purpose but will call for many changes in the research enterprise.

Compared to other kinds of research, translational research puts a premium on developing strategies for combining disciplinary perspectives. Translational research

requires that disciplines work together, not merely because the world's problems are inherently interdisciplinary but because conflicting advice is often the result when disciplines pursue a problem in isolation. Health researchers attempting to understand the obesity epidemic by examining in isolation urbanites' attitudes toward exercise will make little progress in understanding the full extent of the challenges to increasing exercise if they fail to consider the research by urban development specialists who are discovering how changes in the built environment are reducing opportunities for exercise. Similarly, if health researchers fail to carry out their work in collaboration with researchers in criminology, health investigators will not know the ways in which the level of street crime is an important predictor of levels of exercise. Without collaborations among disciplines, a full picture of the problem is unlikely to emerge. Successful translational research will depend on new alliances, new ways of framing issues, and new skills. And many of these skills are those that university leaders in community engagement have mastered.

Translational research also calls into question assumptions about the directionality of research. The traditional direction is assumed to go from basic research to its application. Before considering application, the researcher generates a basic research question and tests that hypothesis, and only then are the conclusions brought to the community. The community's primary role is as an audience for knowledge and not as a producer. In translational research, data collection is not begun without considering the prospects for application. The research process becomes iterative. Usefulness is considered at the conception of the research as well as at the end of the research. Researchers work with partners early in the knowledge-production cycle to identify those research questions of greatest interest. The community might identify the need for solving a certain kind of problem, and the researcher and the community work together to gather data that investigates the problem framed in terms of possible solutions.

Translational research also helps us see that the perceived dichotomy between engagement and research (a dichotomy that often figures in university evaluations of faculty) creates missed opportunities. Research should not be divorced from the kind of action that engagement represents. Engagement is far from just good works or merely a public relations activity. Effective engagement is deeply tied to the central knowledge function and core intellectual mission of universities. Translational research shows the ways that research can be integrated with engagement.

This perceived dichotomy between research and engagement also emerges in assumptions about people. It is frequently assumed that there are researchers on the one hand and there are engagement specialists on the other hand, and that these two groups are inevitably different individuals. Often they are not. Both sets of skills are needed and some people will have both; people with each set of skills will need to work together if translational research is to succeed.

The Many Ways that One University Approaches Translational Research

In the abstract, translational research is being touted as having many benefits. In actual practice, is this focus on translational research workable? At my home institution of University of Massachusetts Lowell, translational research has become an important way we combine research and engagement (Silka, 2007). Some examples suggest the promise and challenge and are included below.

Consider what we have learned in our collaborations with the nearby community of Lawrence, Massachusetts (Silka, Cleghorn, Grullon, and Tellez, in press). Lawrence is very poor and largely Latino. Residents in the city struggle with many respiratory problems, the causes of which remain unclear. These problems are perhaps exacerbated by poor indoor air quality in local housing, or they could be caused by jobs, with many people employed in low wage work that carries substantial health risks. The problems also could be made worse by the large number of waste incinerators that the state has placed in neighbourhoods in this poor community. Faculty from nearby research

universities have long regarded the problems Lawrence residents face as important opportunities for research exploitation. In the past, researchers have arrived in Lawrence with research plans in hand and without having entered into discussions with the community about the kinds of problems they see as most urgent to address. At UML we have been attempting a translational research approach to working in collaboration with the community on problems such as respiratory illnesses. The community has facilitated a process of developing a research protocol that will dictate how UML researchers and others enter into research with the community. The research questions that will be the focus of attention are generated jointly by researchers and the community, and the focus throughout is on seeing that the research enterprise is equally focused on interventions and publications.

Faculty teams from UML have also begun working with community partners to carry out research on other challenges, such as those that confront immigrant workers. For example, UML researchers are working with Boston's Vietnamese community to assess the health problems associated with nail salons and to identify safer alternatives to hazardous solvents so that the livelihood of nail salon workers will not be jeopardized (Roelofs, Azaroff, Holcroft, Nguyen, and Doan, in press). UML researchers are working throughout Massachusetts with the Brazilian low wage immigrant workers to understand the risks they face and to develop interventions that are responsive to community concerns (Siqueira and de Laurenco, 2006). And UML work with the Cambodian refugee community also reflects the need for translational research (Koch-Weser et al, 2004). In the Cambodian Community Health 2010 program the Cambodian community identified a heightened rate of cardiovascular disease and diabetes among Cambodian elders. The community then generated a research-action plan to understand and address these health problems. This community process shaped the direction that possible interventions would take. Research was then carried out to understand the depth of the problem but in ways that would ensure that the research would inform approaches to interventions.

UML research efforts have also shown just how diverse the problems are that might be better understood through an approach that emphasizes translational research. Consider UML work now being undertaken to examine the life experiences of elders. A project led by Psychology Department faculty member Andrew Hosteler has taken on the daunting task of surveying every one of the 15,000 elders in Lowell, Massachusetts. The context is the rapid increase in aging population, the many elders who are aging in place, and the limits of current knowledge of elder economics, health, and mental health. Researchers and practitioners have been brought together to create a diverse team to carry out this research-action project. Hostetler and his team will conduct the analysis of the data with an eye toward coming up with a continuing effort to help the elderly in Lowell and the Merrimack Valley. Hosteler notes that "It sets the stage for 10 or 20 years of research. It can lead to a lot of further studies, further research. This information won't end up in some sort of database here on campus or some file cabinet and never be used again."

Still other UML projects illustrate the challenges of bringing together many different disciplines in the service of translational research (Slatin, Galizzi, Melillo, and Mawn, 2004). A project investigating occupational health problems in the health care industry brought together economists, community health, ergonomics, and psychologists to do research that would speak to policy issues. Although these researchers began with shared interests, their different disciplinary perspectives meant that they did not approach the issues in the same way. Much discussion was required before common ground was found for the development of translational research that incorporated the strengths of all of the disciplines.

UML researchers are finding that intertwined issues also call for translational research, and these too are being investigated. Housing is an example of just such an issue that cannot be addressed without bringing in research on related topics. Housing is impacted

by demographics. Housing is also deeply tied to economic trends: the locations where jobs are being added and the types of jobs that are being added reflect economic conditions and the housing market is impacted by these economic trends. Housing is also linked to education. In Massachusetts, housing is costly (in part because of the scarcity of buildable land) and, for families to afford the expensive housing that is available, well-paying jobs are essential. But good jobs in our region generally require high levels of education. And the education systems in urban areas of Massachusetts are falling behind in preparing students to be competitive for higher education or for well-paying jobs. Any attempt to do research on any of these topics—research that is translatable into clear policies and practices—will require bringing together people from different disciplines who are adept at combining research and engagement. Our goal at UML has been to do exactly this kind of translational research. A community-university committee is working to identify housing issues in need of research. These same university leaders are working with local schools to identify the educational research needs that are linked to the economy. And these same university people, members of a department of regional economic and social development, are attempting to design programs of research in these areas that begin the community needs and go from there (Forrant and Silka, 2006).

Implications for University Change

What are the prospects for translational research becoming a routine approach in universities to research and engagement? Efforts to increase translational research need to take into account what universities expect of faculty in the way of research, publication, and external funding, and what translational research can contribute to the achievement of those goals. Because of its focus on research, this approach fits well within this current system. At the same time, this approach also has the potential to broaden university efforts by calling attention to the fact that at present little emphasis is placed on how and when research is used for engagement.

One must also be prepared for pushback from some faculty. What might such objections look like? Some objections are merely reactive and take the form of comments such as 'we didn't do it that way in the past.' But other faculty objections to translational research go to the very heart of the research enterprise. Faculty members sometimes object to translational research, with its emphasis on collaboration, because such an approach is regarded as undercutting professional training (e.g., 'I worked so hard during my doctoral work to perfect my research skills. I know what should be done in research.') Commonly heard comments also reflect perceptions of limitations of the community's capacity for research (e.g., 'The community is incapable of understanding research design. The compromises that occur when nonresearchers are involved inevitably result in poorly done, sloppy research.'). It is also easy for critics to claim that, 'those academics who do research of this sort do so because they lack the intellectual skills to do basic research.' But it is remains likely that the faculty who are experienced in doing this form of research collaboration are more likely than their peers to understand the complexities of research.

The Challenges Ahead

And challenges remain. Questions yet to be answered include: What kinds of university structures are needed if translational research is to prosper? Is a particular kind of university office (e.g., a community service office, an engagement office, research-focused centers) crucial? Who will be important contributors to strengthening translational research? Administrators? Faculty? Students? Engagement specialists? Should this kind of work be undertaken by new faculty or should junior faculty avoid it, given the competing demands on their time. Perhaps only senior faculty should pursue initiatives of this sort where the rewards may be long in coming? And if new faculty are to be prepared to do translational research, what changes in graduate training would be needed? What is the role for AUCEA and other influential national and international

organizations focused on community-university collaborations? In the US, the national Carnegie Foundation is buttressing this work by promoting new indicators and benchmarks for engagement. Universities can apply for this designation, just as they have been able to apply for Carnegie designations such a 'research-intensive university.' Achieving the designation then accrues a competitive advantage on those campuses so honoured.

We in engagement have much to share with our colleagues from our experiences of being at the forefront of work that brings universities together with their communities. We can facilitate the deliberations of how translational research might be begun in our local settings.   And we can link this with examples of community-engaged research from around the world based on our shared knowledge of each others' work. We can describe the work of Swedish researchers who have begun calling attention on their campuses to "third mission" of engagement. We can point out Great Britain's burgeoning work on community-engaged research.   We can draw on David Watson's work at England's University of Brighton, for example, where he and his colleagues have begun to teach participatory research that introduces the concepts of participatory research to students in the University's School of Applied Social Science to prepare them for professional situations where they will be partnered with communities and implementing policies using these approaches.   We can call attention to the leadership of Debbie Bell of Canada's Simon Fraser University who reminds us to attend to what is not working in community university partnerships, which has implications for how approaches to translational research should be crafted.   Bell points out that communities have been "researched to death" and that university researchers often take the only thing that communities have left, which are their stories, yet rarely involve community members in analysis.   And we can point to organizations, such as Community-Campus Partnerships for Health in Canada and the US, that have already begun the hard work of developing community-approved models for translational research.

In short, we have much that we can bring to our university colleagues as they look towards linking research and engagement. Translational research holds great promise for enabling universities as knowledge institutions to move towards a better integration of their various roles and responsibilities in a more complex future.

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Human capital, innovation and the productive ageing: The role of the HEI in stimulating growth in the 'lifestyle region through learning in a senior population

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Abstract:

This paper examines how low relative economic growth and high service and infrastructure costs in non-metropolitan regions that are increasingly attractive to lifestyle-seeking seniors, can be offset by focussing more positively on the human capital dimension of this cohort through closer engagement with higher education learning and innovation.

The paper reports on research work underway in two Australian regions with rapid population growth. These regions have the highest proportion of their population aged 55 and over. The project will have important policy and practice benefits as it relates to the increasing spatial incidence of an ageing population, stimulating regional economic growth, and processes of regional innovation and learning through HEI engagement, institutional planning and labour market programs.

At present, many senior-aged persons attracted to 'lifestyle' locations are allowed to let their knowledge, networks and skills ossify through a lack of engagement with processes of learning and innovation and institutional impediments of a structural and attitudinal nature. It represents poor return on sunk investment in human capital, has cost impacts on enabling health and community services and infrastructure and does not contribute as positively as it could to regional growth outcomes through productivity gains.

The spatial impact of this will exacerbate as the demographic profile continues to age. Higher education in these places could be a key instrument in the learning and innovation required to realise the greater productivity gains from senior-aged human capital and the consequential growth and health outcomes at the local and regional scale.

Keywords: The Productive Ageing, Human Capital, Regional Growth and Productivity, Engaging Higher Education.

Setting the scene

According to the World Health Organisation, the global population over the age of 60 is increasing faster than any other cohort (WHO 2002). Education and learning are regarded importantly by seniors as assisting them to more fully engage in a rapidly changing society (Cameron, et al 2001). Seniors being actively engaged has positive health benefits (Butler 2002, Boulton-Laws, et al 2006). Cruikshank (2003) argues that one of the ways older people can self-reinvent themselves is through education and learning, but that institutions are not yet particularly supportive in terms of the provision of access to technology and modes of education despite the rhetoric of life-long learning.

An Australian study identified six barriers facing older workers in obtaining and benefiting from education and training: These were: the absence of paid work; a decline with age in the capacity to learn; particular education and occupational characteristics of the current older age cohort; a policy environment that encourages early retirement; discrimination by employers, and; older persons' self perceptions about the lack of value in undertaking further training (Wooden, VandenHeuvel, Cully and Curtain, 2001). The report suggests

the need to raise public awareness through legislation and at the workplace level, by promoting lifelong learning; and improving access to training for older unemployed persons.

However while education and learning are viewed importantly by many older people, a connection between their desire to take up more education and learning and the impact it can have on the stock of human capital as a determinant of economic growth is not yet made in the literature. In this paper we are interested in how active seniors, as human capital, can download their knowledge within a framework of engagement with higher education and innovation to generate increased productivity outcomes.

In particular, we are interested in the spatial aspects of an ageing population as the impacts of it are viewed most acutely in small regional locations where there is a certain 'attractiveness' for living because of 'more favourable climate', relatively lower living costs, connectivity with the community, and access to relevant services (Salt 2003, National Economics 2003). We are also interested in the spatial aspects of senior-aged human capital generation because of the increased concentration of regional growth and decline (Garlick et al 2007) and the regionalisation of higher education in certain locations that has occurred over the past two decades (Garlick 2000).

Recent studies and reports into the spatial economic implications of an ageing population in Australia have generally focussed on two areas. First, the disproportionate negative cost impact of providing enabling local community and health services and infrastructure. Second, there is an apparent correlation between high levels of senior in-migration driven population growth in some regions and their poor economic growth performance. This point is argued on the basis of the cumulative impact of reduced per capita consumption expenditure from fixed incomes, low non-housing investment expenditure and the low realised productivity of this cohort (National Economics 2006).

Thus, the spatial incidence of an ageing population in economic terms is at risk of being seen only in a negative way, or at best as unpaid volunteerism. This view sees the regional economy with a high concentration of senior aged people, only in service support terms rather than as a potential source of high value-added production and professional skills, and it sees no worth in further realising the tacit knowledge of years of sunk investment in human capital. The only ameliorative policy suggestions for the spatial economic impact of an ageing population relate to the subsidisation of local service provision in high senior-aged migration areas (National Economics 2003), or boosting regional economic growth in these areas through initiatives that seek to offset the so-called 'negative spatial effect' of this growing cohort (National Economics 2006).

These negative views about the impact of an ageing population are not new as Lloyd-Sherlock (2004) has outlined. The World Bank (1994) has stated:

> "The world is approaching an old age crisis...The proportion of the population that is old is expanding rapidly, swelling the potential economic burden on the young." [in Lloyd-Sherlock, p.5]

In this paper we argue a different position in relation to the 'productive ageing' that sees their spatial incidence in terms of: (a) extending the human capital return on accumulated tacit knowledge in ways that enhance 'knowledge economy' outcomes in the region, and; (b) viewing the engagement of higher education as the vehicle for realising this human capital through learning and innovation. In presenting this case we focus on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions of Queensland (refer Fig 1), two of the fastest senior-aged population growth regions in Australia. We also report on research into the opinions of stakeholders that were gathered in several focus groups and structured workshops over the past two years.

Spatial dimensions

Using GIS technology, the spatial location of 1946-64 born baby boomers in Queensland and their migration over time were mapped and analysed based on the census data of 1991 and 2001. This is shown in Figure 1 for Queensland as a whole and for South East Queensland (Liu and Soar 2005).

This data analysis supports popularly-held perceptions that boomers are reducing in numbers in the far west, far north and central Queensland regions and increasing in numbers in coastal regions in the south east.

Figure 2 shows the projected rate of population growth in the two case study regions and the projected age structure breakdown. The figures show that the rapid population growth in the region is driven by growth in older ages.
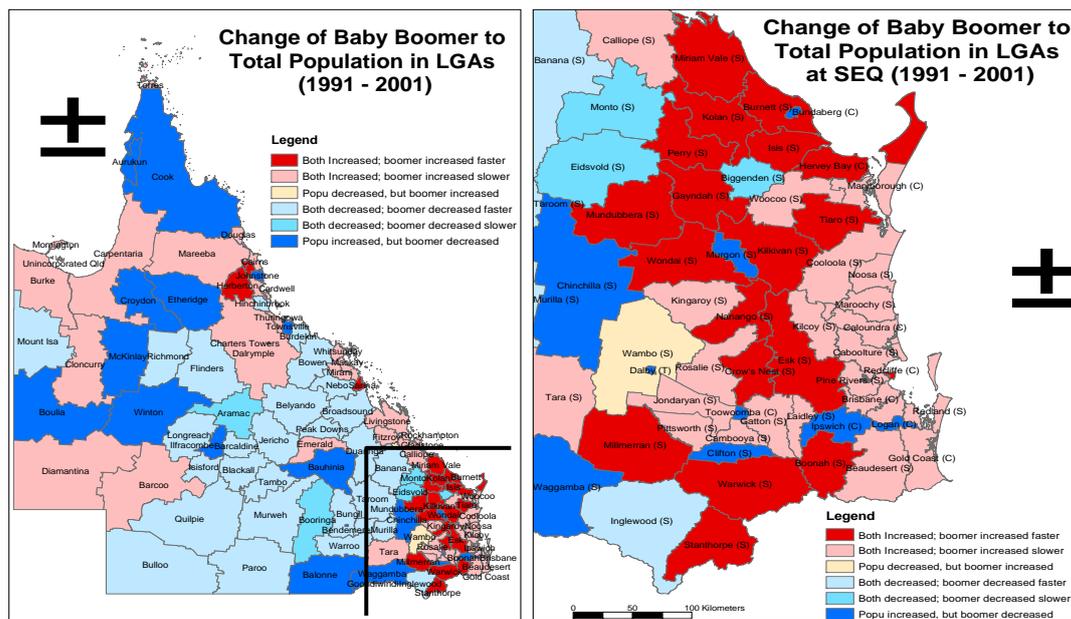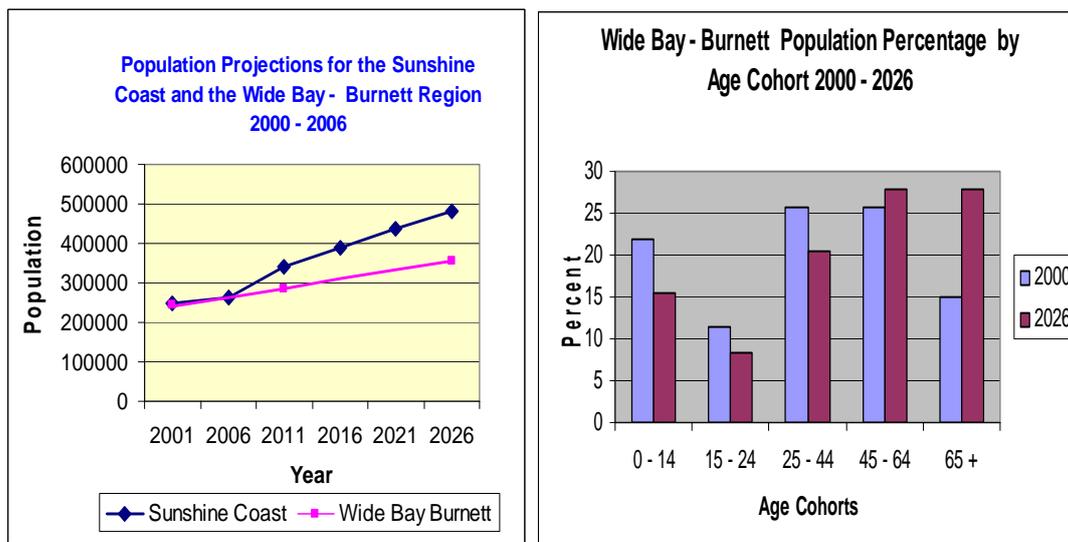
Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Literature themes

The extent of the spatial incidence of an ageing population is identified in a number of sources including the *State of the Regions* report (National Economics, 2003) and Salt (2003). These reports highlight so-called 'life-style' regions that have more than 25 percent of their population aged 55 years and over, compared to a national average in this age cohort of 22 percent. Regions with the highest concentrations, averaging around 30 percent of their population aged 55 and over, include Wide Bay-Burnett and the Sunshine Coast regions in Queensland; the Central Coast, Mid-North Coast and Richmond-Tweed regions in New South Wales, and the Central Adelaide region in South Australia.

The Commonwealth, states, many local councils and non-government organisations have now developed strategic plans that attempt to recognise issues relating to an aging population. Embedded in these plans is recognition that apart from issues to do with health and well-being, financial and physical security and access and mobility, there are matters to do with future economic development.

The Commonwealth Government's *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia Challenges and Opportunities for all* (2001) talks about opportunities for Australians to make a lifetime contribution to society and the economy, including through training and professional development, and 'lifelong learning for mature age workers and learners (p.2). The *Strategy* says that for Australia to "…achieve sustained economic growth there will have to be a continuation of current productivity growth and better utilisation of the skills and experiences of mature-age workers." (p.13). In the main however there is little discussion about how this will occur or what the role of the higher education institution might take in relation to lifelong learning.

At a state level, for example, the Queensland Department of Community Services issued a 1999 policy document *Our Shared Future: Queensland Framework for Ageing 2000-2004,* that specifies five principles and strategies that seek to improve a coordinated approach to the design and delivery of aged services. The policy paper recognises the contribution seniors can make through knowledge and learning to society, culture and the economy of their communities.

At a local government level, where there are relatively high concentrations of older ages, many councils are attempting to put strategic plans in place. For example, the Caloundra City Council on the Sunshine Coast, with 33 percent of its population aged 55 and over and estimated to be 45 percent by 2026, says in its 2007 strategy plan (*Positively Ageing in Caloundra City 2007 to 2017*) that it wants to develop a learning environment and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge of older people with younger people in the City.

In their study of ageing and the economy of the Wide Bay Burnett region, National Economics (2006) conclude that the only way the regional economy can boost its productivity levels is to balance the current ageing population growth with working-aged population growth and skilled migrant growth (p12). Such a conclusion assumes population growth as a driver for regional growth and assumes away the sunk investment in education and knowledge in endogenous senior aged human capital and the possibility that this can be realised through stronger engagement with higher education.

Regional growth

A study of the patterns and determinants of economic growth in 94 Australian regions between1984 and 2002 by Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) suggests population change is not a determinant of regional growth. It also suggests nearness to demand, business links, the power of the large corporation and access to information are not significant regional economic growth drivers. Human capital (based on education qualifications) has the most significant contribution to regional growth. Other positive determinants of regional growth are industry specialisation and technological change.

Together, in their various combinations, these three positive determinants have a significant contribution to economic growth in all regions.

Regions with a relatively high proportion of population of senior ages have low economic growth due to the low level of human capital compared to the average for all regions. This low level of human capital in regions of low relative economic growth manifests in a brain drain of young graduates, underemployment of skills, sometimes a relatively high out-commuting workforce, and, importantly for this paper, the non-engagement of senior-age knowledge.

Any strategy for regional growth in high senior-aged migration regions therefore should, among other priorities, focus on the way human capital is engaged. Our argument is that given the sunk investment in the human capital of the older age cohort, those regions that naturally tend to attract a high concentration of older ages should seek to harness this knowledge within a learning and innovation framework.

Based on Garlick et al 2007 modelling, Table 1 shows the ranking, out of 94 regions Australia-wide, for local areas in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett in relation to long run economic growth, and the performance of the three significant positive determinants of regional growth (human capital, industry specialisation and technological change).

The data show those regions with a high proportion of senior-aged population rank very poorly in terms of relative regional economic growth over the period 1994 to 2002, and that poor human capital is strongly related to these regional growth outcomes. The other significant determinants of regional growth (industry specialisation and technological change) are less strongly related to economic growth in these high senior-aged population regions. The pattern in other high senior-aged population regions in New South Wales (eg Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Nowra, etc), and in other states, not shown in the table, in relation to economic growth and human capital is similar.

Any strategy for regional development in these places therefore should focus on the way human capital, and in particular senior-aged human capital, is engaged in the growth transmission process.,

Table 1. Growth and determinants in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett regions 1984 to 2002 (rank out of 94 regions)*

Local area	Percent of population 55 years and over**	Economic growth	Human capital	Industry specialisation	Technological change
Hervey Bay	36.1	93	94	70	71
Maryborough	28.5	83	80	38	42
Bundaberg	27.2	86	88	34	47
Caloundra	37.9	87	86	80	32
Maroochydore	36.6	88	90	80	38
Gympie	26.3	89	91	24	56

*   Calculated from Garlick et al 2007.

** CalCalculated using 2001 Census data, ABS.

Enterprising human capital

Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) introduce the concept of 'enterprising human capital' as those people who have the education and learning skills to create on-the-ground outcomes of practical value in the regional communities in which they are located. They:

> "...understand the way markets operate; can access finance; see an opportunity; understand risk management without necessarily being risk- takers; and can mobilise resources, particularly teams, to good effect." (p.33).

Our argument is that many in the productive ageing cohort, identified as having unrealised human capital, are seeking an outlet to be enterprising in the communities in which they are located. The absence of an enterprising human capital culture in regions is an impediment to stronger economic growth outcomes in Australia (Garlick et al, 2007)

We argue however that such human capital is being held back by a range of institutional and personal barriers of a structural and behavioural nature, the relative significance of which we are currently exploring through a study of the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions in Queensland.

Ranzijn and Grbich (2001) have identified, generically, a number of practical and psychological barriers to greater productive involvement by seniors. We are particularly interested in those barriers of a structural and behavioural nature that specifically relate to senior-aged people becoming actively engaged in processes of learning and innovation in the higher education system at the regional scale.

Barriers to senior learning and innovation in the higher education environment

The last decade has seen a regionalisation of higher education in Australia (Garlick 2000) to the extent that most regional areas now have access to a higher education campus. However, HEI engagement with their regional community to enhance endogenous human capital is patchy and approaches to lifelong learning, while an objective of the regional community, is not embedded in the HEI.

Despite the general ageing of the population, HEIs still have a strong prescriptive orientation in their program design and delivery towards school leavers. In course design, there is little opportunity to encourage the downloading of tacit knowledge by senior-aged people within a framework of education that emphasises an 'enterprising' approach which focuses on real world application. Course marketing tends not to focus on the productive ageing cohort as potential students or contributors to regional innovation system processes. Senior-aged people are not actively encouraged and, structurally, universities can be confronting places to those with no prior university education experience. As Cruikshank (2003) has observed, the education system does not always welcome older persons.

Behavioural barriers relate to issues such as perceptions that higher education and innovation is for young people and that older people undertaking higher education take institutional places from young people. There is a perception that older people's capability to handle learning is hampered by their mental and physical limitations (Boulton-Lewis et al, 2006).There is also a perception that older people's interest in higher education is in the area of simple 'life pursuits' for self-satisfaction, rather than in areas of significance to wider society. They are often directed to U3A as the default solution to their education desires. Older aged people feel confronted in a learning environment populated with school leaver age people. As Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say, motivation and confidence are big factors for older people taking up learning (p.273).

Informatics, technology and senior health

Technologies offer the potential to better enable seniors to access education and innovation and better equip them to participate productively in economic activity. Many Australian and overseas universities provide much of their teaching through distance

education enabled by the Internet. U3A also provides on-line educational resources for seniors. These allow students to study at their own convenience and pace.

There is a need for research to identify opportunities to better enable seniors to access education services. Issues might include access to high-speed broadband telecommunications which are usually more available in major cities than in less populous areas. There may be a need to assist seniors in feeling more comfortable with accessing goods and services through the Internet. Younger generations happily use on-line environments such as YouTube, MySpace, Second Life, online games and e-commerce solutions. Most of these innovations have largely by-passed seniors and there is a risk that they might be further disadvantaged in accessing other innovations in on-line services that could provide them with benefits. There has been a recent surge of interest in providing 'mental gymnastics' by electronic game companies with an expected demand from seniors. The marketing of these services might increase awareness and interest from seniors in other electronic services.

High-speed broadband communication links are rapidly becoming an essential infrastructure for business and it will be increasingly difficult to operate in areas without these services. This will be an issue in retirement regions as the provision of such services may be some years away if ever. Strategies of local, state and federal governments to provide better telecommunications links will need to be reviewed to ensure the roll-out to older-age communities is appropriate.

Healthcare services in most developed countries have strategies to better manage information. These usually include better access for consumers. In some areas such as Queensland there has been a significant investment in tele-health infrastructure that may have further potential benefits for seniors in regions.

Other innovations include 'smart homes' wired with sensors and intelligent systems that will care for their occupants. These include sensors linked to software that will know our care regimes, provide reminders and prompts, learn and understand our behaviours, and provide alerts of adverse events such as falls or wandering (Soar et al, in press). A requirement for smart homes is similarly broadband communication links that would also provide access for learning and innovation.

Research

Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say there is little research that explores what older people themselves want and need to learn, and that most of the research is based on what others believe is necessary (p.273). The research we are beginning in the Wide Bay-Burnett and Sunshine Coast regions is very much along the lines of what older people say they need.

A series of focus groups and workshops with stakeholders concerned about these issues has been conducted over the past 18 months in the Wide Bay Burnett region. Participants were drawn from Divisions of General Practice, aged services providers, tertiary education providers, municipal government, and local offices of state and federal government agencies.

The workshops identified the following issues:

HARNESSING THE IDEAS, KNOWLEDGE,AND ENTERPRISING CAPABILITIES OF THE REGION'S SENIORS;

DESIGNING A LEARNING AND INNOVATION INCUBATION PROCESS FOR SENIORS AT THE REGIONAL SCALE, WITH LINKS TO UNIVERSITIES, THAT WILL GENERATE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF PRACTICAL BENEFIT TO THE REGION, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE UNIVERSITIES;

DISSEMINATION OF 'GOOD PRACTICE' IN RELATION TO REGIONAL APPROACHES TO THE PRODUCTIVE AGEING; AND

MODELS OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS AND METHODS TO ENHANCE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE AGED

Proposals for specific projects included:

1. KNOWLEDGE AUDIT OF SENIORS
2. COMMUNITY INFORMATION PORTAL
3. DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR PRODUCTIVE AGEING
4. MODELS FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY
5. PATIENT DATA SYSTEMS THAT CAN BE HELD BY THE CLIENT AND SHARED (E-HEALTH AND ALLIED MATTERS)
6. RFID TAGS FOR MEDICATION FOR AGED AND MENTAL HEALTH
7. TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION CENTRE
8. "HOMEMAKER CENTRE" FOR TECHNOLOGY
9. DEMONSTRATION/INFORMATION SESSIONS WITH HANDS-ON, SELF-SERVICE ACCESS, USER-FRIENDLY, MULTICULTURAL, SPECIALTY GROUPS
10. DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR HOME MONITORING
11. FALLS PREVENTION/MANAGEMENT
12. MONITORING
13. MEDICATION MONITORING/MANAGEMENT

This research is continuing with further workshops to scope and evaluate achievable projects that have a high chance of enhancing the productive participation of the region's seniors. This research will seek to explore the structural and behavioural aspects associated with increased senior participation in university education, research and innovation, including course design and delivery methods.

Conclusions

Whilst ageing is a concern to governments around the world, including Australia's federal, state and local governments the impacts are likely to be felt much more strongly in regional communities that have much higher concentrations of this population cohort. Without innovative forward planning the economic outcomes for some regional communities will be bleak. An approach proposed in this paper is to view seniors as a potentially positive asset through providing means for enterprise. Essential infrastructure is access to education, high-speed internet access and creating a culture of innovation. Universities with campuses in regional areas have a key role to play and communities will look to them for leadership. Developing an approach in consultation with seniors and their community organisations will enhance the sustainability of the universities of the regions as a whole.

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*Community Engagement in Australian Higher Education:

A Brief Report on the Thematic Analysis of AUQA Audit Reports

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* This paper was first delivered at the AUCEA conference in Alice Springs, 2007. It will shortly be published in a report by AUQA

1. Background

From time to time, AUQA carries out or commissions analyses of its audit reports to gain an overview of the information arising from the institutional audits. These analyses give institutions, their governing bodies, senior management, staff, students, and other stakeholders useful information on the issues that emerge out of the institutional audits. This document is one such thematic analysis, presenting information regarding community engagement in the Australian higher education sector. It covers the 38 audit reports of the Australian universities that were in the public domain by June 2007.

AUQA's central responsibility is to carry out "audits of QA arrangements relating to the activities of Australian universities" (and certain other organisations) (Quotation from AUQA's Objective 1 for the period 2001-2007). Therefore, part of the attention to community engagement in the AUQA audits arises from the traditional goals of higher education that have a significant place for community engagement.

While this report has a specific focus on community engagement, some of the earlier reports carried out or commissioned by AUQA have also commented on community engagement but as a part of their broader remit/brief. This report starts with a brief note on what has emerged in those earlier analyses and then explains the context for this report (section 2).

In the section that follows that (section 3), issues commented on by the audit panels in the 38 audit reports are presented under various themes. This report has considered the observations found throughout the audit reports as well as the major audit conclusions related to community engagement. However, acknowledging the increasing tendency in the sector to analyse the major audit conclusions alone, say recommendations, this report highlights how that focussed analysis has to be interpreted with caution (section 4).

As a quality enhancement strategy, AUQA has a Good Practice Database (GPDB) where the commendations that have a high transferability value to other organisational settings are published. In a way, it serves as an acknowledgement to good practices of the sector validated by the audit panels. This report briefly presents what has been published in the GPDB regarding community engagement and also draws attention to a range of good practices that are found only in the text of the audit reports (section 5).,

AUQA and its auditees do not see the audit as a 'once in six year event'. Attention to quality is a continuous process in the Australian higher education sector, and, to support that attention, AUQA asks the auditees to give progress reports 18 months after the publication of the audit report. This has resulted in many institutional actions and this report briefly analyses those actions as well (section 6).

2. Earlier Analyses

Community engagement has been one of the major themes investigated by the audit panels, to varying extent, right from the first set of institutional audits. The following analyses have commented on how AUQA audit reports cover community engagement aspects.

2.1. Dr Anne Martin's Analysis

AUQA started its first institutional audits in 2002 and the Board of AUQA commissioned Dr. Anne Martin early in 2003 to prepare a thematic summary of those audit reports. At the time of commissioning, eight audit reports had been published. Dr. Anne Martin's report presented an analytic overview of themes and issues emerging from the audit reports. Among the 71 issues presented in the report (39 key issues and 32 other issues) under 12 themes, 'Community Engagement and Partnerships' emerged as one of the key issues.

Dr Anne Martin's report revealed that community engagement was considerably less thoroughly covered in the fist eight Audit Reports than were teaching and research, however, perhaps because it is an area in which QA systems are difficult to construct and therefore difficult for AUQA to assess. The audits found that the institutions' engagement with the community often revolved around particular initiatives such as the establishment of research parks or campus-based learning or cultural activities. These are generally, but not always, entrepreneurial in nature. Collaboration with industry or with other educational providers – generally through strategic alliances with local TAFE institutes – was commended at several institutions.

Those reports that commented on the 'town/gown' interface found that the institutions had good relations with their communities, and often strong support. Several were praised for their commitment to serving local or regional constituencies. There was some evidence that the value of community support was not always recognised by the institutions, which do not capitalise on their public reputation. In one instance, an institution was criticised by AUQA for not taking sufficient account of external perceptions of the institution's strengths and weaknesses in its planning. Another was felt to be missing opportunities by not capitalising on its location.

While the audits found evidence of numerous examples of institutional-level community relations activities, few institutions had clear organisational structures to provide leadership for their community interface. Most commonly, individual staff take the lead in external engagement such as through the provision of expert opinions in the media.

2.2. Prof. Ray Cooksey's Analysis

By September 2003 when AUQA had conducted three trial audits (one agency and two SAIs – reports were not published) and published 10 formal audit reports, Professor Ray W Cooksey carried out an analysis of the commendations and recommendations that AUQA Audit Panels produce across different universities. Among other things, the analysis recognized the potential for learning from the commendations and recommendations certain consistent themes that can be identified as emerging across universities. These themes can point to more general problem areas in the sector as well as to areas where the sector appears to be doing well.

All commendations and recommendations from the ten AUQA audit reports published as at 30 September 2003 and recommendations from the trial audit of the University of New South Wales were considered for the analysis. To carry out the analysis, ten major macro themes were identified. Under these ten macro themes, 83 micro themes were identified and all the commendations and recommendations were coded under these themes.

To highlight emergent patterns, Professor Ray Cooksey identified 'more prevalent micro sub-themes' and 'highly prevalent micro-themes'. Although AUQA discourages anyone from seeing the number of commendations or recommendations in an audit report as some sort of 'quality index', it might be possible to derive some cautious conclusions based on the numbers that emerge in relation to sub-themes. Based on this consideration, Professor Ray Cooksey's report identifies the more prevalent micro sub-themes in each macro category based on a very rough criterion of containing five or more coded instances. Highly prevalent micro-themes are based on a very rough criterion of containing ten or more coded instances.

The analysis revealed that in commending universities on aspects of their functioning, AUQA found the main areas of achievements to be 'External & Partner Relations', 'Management, Staff & Student Support Systems', 'Management & Structure' and 'Quality Assurance'. It also indicated that virtually all of the `prevalent micro-themes' for commendation, with the exception of facilities & learning environment, were also `prevalent micro themes' for recommendations, some of them highly so (e.g., mission-vision-strategy focus, QA framework, planning & monitoring). Within the macro category namely, 'External & Partner Relations', that covers community, industry & external relationships and multi- or off-campus operations and support, the analysis found that 'community, industry & external relationships' was noted as the highly prevalent micro-themes indicating that AUQA tends to focus on this aspect.

2.3. Professor Susan Holland's Analysis

In September 2004, Professor Susan Holland was commissioned by the AUQA Board to undertake a meta-analysis of the institutional reports published to date. By then a total of 19 institutional audits (more or less the half-way mark in the first audit cycle) had been completed and the respective reports publicly released. The main purpose of the meta-analysis was to analyse the reports for coverage of aspects relevant to academic activities and the general aspects of consistency or lack thereof between the reports. The report was written in confidence for the Board rather than for public release.

Professor Susan Holland reported that Community-related forms of activity appear to be the less well-defined at an institutional level in comparison to other core activities. While many actions and characteristics concerning Community Engagement and Partnerships are commended the nature of the future action outlined in the Recommendations suggests that AUQA, at least, regards this activity as less mature in a policy, planning and strategic sense. The report also pointed out that there were either no, or hardly any citations directly concerned with outcomes in Community Engagement and Partnerships.

2.4. Context of this report

Considering these earlier analyses that covered community engagement as a part of their broad analyses, this report has a specific focus on community engagement as commented by audit panels in the audit reports of AUQA that were in the public domain by June 2007. To be more precise, this report covers all the audit reports of the Australian universities with just one exception of the Australian National University which is the last one to be audited in Cycle 1. At the time of publication of this report the portfolio of the Australian National University had been received at AUQA and the audit program was in progress.

This report should be read in the context of the following three points: starting point of AUQA audit which is the objectives of the auditee, time span of the audit reports considered for this analysis, and the interpretation of the term 'community engagement'.

Firstly, AUQA accepts an auditee's objectives as the starting point of the audit and it is explicitly the responsibility of the auditee to devise a systematic process for evaluating its objectives with respect to criteria which may include relevance, desirability, feasibility, distinctiveness, measurability, etc. As each auditee will have systems that are relevant to its own objectives and character, the actual procedures used and the way they are implemented vary from auditee to auditee. Amid this variety, AUQA's anchor point for drawing conclusions on quality is always the objectives of the auditee, together with any externally set objectives. In order to check its own policies, procedures and practices, to learn whether it is achieving its objectives, and to determine how to improve its performance, an institution must have in place appropriate quantitative and qualitative targets and strategies. Therefore, the audit panels do not investigate the absolute value of these strategies but to the extent they support the auditee in achieving its objectives.

Secondly, the audit reports considered for this analysis have been published over a period of about five years – October 2002 to June 2007. In a rapidly changing higher education

sector this time span makes generalizations difficult. This report only highlights how certain aspects of community engagement have been attempted by the Australian universities and how the panels have commented on them. It does not describe the present scenario of community engagement in the Australian higher education sector. In fact, institutions that have completed 18 months after the audit have submitted progress reports. The progress reports indicate that institutions have taken action on almost all recommendations; they have also experimented many new strategies and consolidated the ones that worked well. Consequently, the current scenario is much different from what the panels saw during the audits and in fact the current situation might be a much improved one. It should be noted that it is not within the remit of AUQA to validate the progress reports and the actions taken by the institutions. However, it is reasonable to derive that significant institutional efforts have gone into better and more effective ways of community engagement and that there has been significant cross institutional sharing of experience and learning from each other.

Thirdly, 'community engagement' in this report includes engagement with various constituents of the external community such as the industry, government, alumni, and other education sectors. It also includes the attention to issues that are significant to the community such as Indigenous issues, and equity issues. However, it does not include linkages with international partners and international education.

3. What do the audit reports indicate?

This report is not about how institutions should engage with their communities; neither does it suggest that some form of community engagement is the only way to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with the community. However, this report recognises that attention to community engagement is increasing in the higher education sector and institutions have an obligation to engage with the community in a meaningful manner. This version of the analysis presents what emerges from the 38 AUQA audit reports very briefly. The forthcoming AUQA publication on this topic will provide more details.

Traditional academic goals

Part of the attention and contribution to community engagement arises from the traditional academic goals of higher education institutions. Courses such as nursing, teacher education, psychology, social sciences and youth studies, specifically focus on the needs of the community. There are courses that include elective or compulsory units in which students engage in learning activities in a community setting including internships and practicums. In some institutions students have to work in community service organisations for certain number of hours. In addition, many research activities focus on providing a contribution to the community. While contributing to community needs has been well in place in the higher education sector, what is new is the attention to the two-way interaction between the sector and the community.

Genuine desire

The interface of the institutions with their external community, variously described in terms of 'service', 'engagement', or 'partnerships', is traditionally one of the three core concerns of universities. Different institutions handle differently the matter of external relations with the communities or constituencies they serve. For some institutions, it is a key focus and a defining part of their mission and founding legislation. For some, it is one of a number of strong aspects of their identity. For others, the community is simply contextual. Whatever is the level of community orientation, it is evident from the reports that the universities have a genuine desire to continue to work in close collaboration with its communities, for mutual benefit.

Varying interpretations

The concept of engaging with the community means different things to different parts of the universities. To an extent, the panels found that given the emerging attention to

community engagement, this is entirely appropriate and that there is no doubt that the general intent is widely supported and encouraged.

The institutions have interpreted the terms 'community service' and 'community engagement' variously and in general as encompassing activities such as consultancy, links with secondary schools, staff involvement in public talks, and membership of staff in external committees, boards and advisory groups. The need to develop a clearer definition of community service activities has been recommended in many audit reports. The panels also noticed the use of different terms by different groups but not with a purposefully different meaning. Since systematic efforts and plans have been recent adoptions in many institutions, the need to develop a shared understanding amongst staff of what is intended by community engagement and ensuring that this understanding is embedded in appropriate policies and position descriptions, has been noted in many reports.

University-wide policies and co-ordinated approach

Many community engagement initiatives are largely ad hoc, which is more typical in institutions where the community link is less central. Even in institutions where there is a good deal of excellent activity occurring with communities, there is a fragmentation of activities across the institution. A lack of coordination means that people active in communities are not aware of each others' activities. So the same community can be serviced independently by several different activities without co-ordination. It would be worth institutions further reflecting on arrangements for the coordination of their community engagement activities, as the practical details of what is involved in visiting, supporting, and encouraging people in communities need to be fully embraced.

Institutions have recognised that a more co-ordinated approach to community service activities is required. For example, one of the auditees indicated in its portfolio that it was trying to develop a coordinated approach to community engagement "through greater management, direction, support and reward of good practice". To address this, it had plans to undertake an audit of its community-related activities and to develop a university-wide policy and framework for community service.

Some institutions have very general statements of principles for community engagement, rather than plans or strategies for community engagement. The panels have supported the universities' intentions to develop university-wide policies and frameworks.

Advisory structures

Institutions have established advisory bodies involving the community members to get advice on matters relating to the universities' community engagement activities. It is evident that the community representatives in these bodies value the opportunities they get to learn more about university activities, to provide comment on these and to develop relationships with other community members. Several panels have commented that there is additional scope to use these bodies as active participants in the identification of ways the universities can contribute to these communities.

Individual initiatives & rewarding good practice

Many audit reports give the impression that the existing partnerships are very much a product of individual's initiatives by staff members. As an example, in one of the institutions, a highly regarded internship program which places undergraduates in State parliamentary offices is run by a single energetic individual as a part time arrangement. The panel has commented that this program has the potential for expanding politicians' understanding of the university and the issues it confronts.

There are many instances where staff do not always feel that they are adequately supported or that their achievements are sufficiently recognised in terms of career progression. The audit panels felt that the introduction of excellence awards for community service or community engagement could further assist the universities to acknowledge and celebrate good practice in community relations. The promotion policy

for academic staff in some institutions includes service to the community and/or the discipline as one criterion to ensure that these activities are given some prominence.

Need for a higher profile

The need to encourage the involvement of more people, particularly Heads of units, in the overall community outreach strategy, in terms of seeking their input as to how community outreach may be beneficially pursued has been noted. The universities have been asked to give consideration to how community outreach leadership is assigned and exercised within the campus. Whereas the other two core functions – teaching and research – both benefit from explicitly dedicated executive responsibility, in many institutions, community engagement may not.

Some institutions are at the early stages of giving practical effect to their community engagement strategies. As they are implemented, it will be important to ensure that activities are appropriately championed at a senior level. The panels have commented on the need to give a higher profile for community engagement strategies of the universities. In some institutions, the involvement of senior executives is evident. In one of the auditees, the Vice-Chancellor sits on the regional development committee, demonstrating top-level commitment to the region. The panel has commented that an improved approach would include, at least, a dedicated senior executive and a comprehensive community engagement plan. The establishment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor positions are regarded by the members of the communities as tangible signals of the universities' commitment to sustain regional character. These appointments have been very positively received, particularly by members of the community, to where appropriate outreach activities extend.

From 'community service' to 'community engagement'

Redefining the relationship with communities from the concept of community service to community engagement is emerging. Community Engagement is seen as being less uni-directional, and representing a more interactive and collaborative relationship between the institution and each of its communities. The audit panels found that this conceptual shift is supported by members of professional bodies and the community who consider that the relationship is of a collaborative nature with benefits flowing both ways. However, institution-wide understanding of this change in emphasis was lacking. There are panel comments that indicate that community engagement does not infuse all aspects of activity and that it is important to ensure that the set of performance indicators on community engagement include indicators of the development of community engagement down to course level.

Relationship with the region

Commitment to the region has taken a number of different forms of expression. Those institutions that have developed some strong relations with the regional community attract a large per cent of domestic commencing students from within its catchment area. A significant portion of these students are the first in their families to attend university. In response to this, institutions have produced a number of information leaflets for first year students and their parents intended to ease their transition to university life.

Facilities, such as the library and art gallery, are in general open to the community. The adjunct staff both provide community input to the universities and act as ambassadors for the universities. Social invitations and consultations are common. Community members interviewed by the panels were generally positive about their experience of the universities, albeit with a few complaints.

During the audit visits, the panels had opportunities to hear from a cross-section of staff involved in community relations activities and had discussions with a range of external stakeholders. Interviewees share the conviction that that the community-outreach dimension of their work means that their institutions' educational mission is intrinsically

valuable, contributes something of extrinsic worth to the Region, or local community, and opens up possibilities for commercial consultancy opportunities.

A number of multidisciplinary community partnership projects were observed that are intended to foster opportunities for teaching, learning and research. One example is the provision of environmental education and training programs to the community and to primary and secondary school students.

Tracking and measuring

The institutional units have established links with various communities. As a result of self-assessment, universities themselves have identified that they could benefit from developing a method of registering the level of engagement of schools and individual staff with the region and its communities. The panels have supported this view. Such an approach would require a university-wide register or database of activities and community interactions.

In some instances, community people wishing to approach the university with a project have found difficulty identifying the appropriate point of contact and some felt that the university could do more to showcase the expertise and skills available. Consideration could be given to the development of an externally available expertise register or a similar mechanism that would allow greater access into the university for people seeking information or advice and may also increase, more generally, the university's public profile.

One of the auditees has developed a Register of Professional Activities to record the participation of staff in professional boards and local community boards and councils. It notes that: "while these [community engagement] goals are considered to be important by the University, the responsibility for achieving them tends to be dissipated and diffused within the University, with the outcome being that it is often difficult to catalogue, document and analyse the University's contribution to regional engagement". It recognises that further work is required to develop the compilation and analysis of staff contributions that support its regional engagement objectives.

The universities have acknowledged that more work is required to develop indicators that measure the community engagement activities and their impact on the communities.

Building productive partnerships

There are many institutional efforts to provide, or to promote, education and development programs that are particularly tailored to the needs of commercial organisations, government, professional associations and industry groups. The panels saw a number of different examples of the ways in which the universities are building productive partnerships with government, business, and the professions.

The universities have initiatives such as Research Parks and Technology Parks variously named that are successful in attracting university and commercial tenants and serve as a platform for more collaboration and spin-off companies created collaboratively by staff and students. Several institutions have been commended for these successful initiatives.

There are recommendations that an examination of the opportunities for joint course offerings, resource sharing, applied research projects and full-fee short courses could be beneficial for all parties concerned and would further the achievement of the universities' objective for strong relations with other educational sectors.

The continuing education units of the universities offering a range of courses aimed at community and business customers as well as staff and students such as language courses, community courses, professional development, Year 12 revision and English language programs etc could be seen.

Alumni

Several audit reports have commented on the good relations the institutions have with their alumni. Maintaining regular contact by newsletters and email, making good use of the alumni as initial contacts for assisting students to find suitable employment upon graduation could be noted.

The universities have recognised the need to develop links with alumni in a systematic manner to ensure long-term sustainability. In developing the alumni engagement plan, the panels have suggested that it will be important to work closely with alumni in identifying ways in which connections may be mutually beneficial.

Efforts to foster connections with the graduates are emerging. The audit panels have commented that services to alumni are still reasonably limited. The universities are still in the early stages of developing an effective and active alumni relationship and they appear to be taking appropriate steps to address this issue.

School liaison

Many institutions have secondary school liaison activities which are very positive community engagement activities. For example, one of the auidtees was actively reaching out to high schools, with the aim of having a Memorandum of Cooperation with each of the 20 urban secondary schools and possibly with another 20 remote Indigenous community schools and it had created Secondary school liaison positions. In the case of another auditee that has a good image with secondary schools in its catchment area, the interest and effort the staff make including participation in a range of targeted activities related to student recruitment, transition to university and careers selection are strongly appreciated.

Some universities have been criticised that they take elite students from private schools and not care for regional students. Universities recognise that they need to expend further effort in changing this perception by highlighting their interactions with a range of less-affluent schools.

Strategy and Leadership

Members of the external community met by the panels were mostly supportive of the universities and the manner in which the universities have actively reached out to the communities. Overall, the audit panels felt that the universities are successful in pursuing their special community relations mission. In some cases, it was due in no small part to the commitment that external members of the Councils have made by nurturing these links.

In several institutions, the establishment of the senior portfolio in community engagement is relatively new and regarded positively by many parts of the universities and by many of its external stakeholders as a signal of the importance that the universities attaches to engaging with the communities. To support these positions institutions have established office structures with specific accountabilities. For example, at one institution, the Office of Community Partnerships has a number of specific objectives to strategically and systematically strengthen the University's existing links with its communities. It has been tasked with promoting the University externally and to scan issues of current concern to the community and identify those to which the University can make a contribution.

Research

Most academic staff met by the panels could point to ways in which their individual research intersects with local communities. However, defining measures to assess not only activity but also impact was a challenge.

Attention to establish linkages with business and industry for transfer of knowledge derived from research has been well in place and there is a strong 'community benefit' component in those efforts. Linkages with a range of community and social organisations

to benefit society and culture from the transfer of knowledge derived from research across the universities have also been commented favourably by the panels.

The audit panels have observed some excellent examples of research activity based upon linkages with external communities nationally and internationally. Whereas some of these are facilitated through linkage grants, others are more a result of the universities' own efforts and networks.

There is still an opportunity for the universities to gain better leverage from their regional presence to develop regionally-relevant research programs. Thus far, the University's regional efforts have focused predominantly on teaching activities. A strong desire for the substance of the regional linkages to be more steeped in research opportunities and research application focused on the needs of these communities could be noted in a few institutions. This is not only in terms of promoting the universities' research to the region, but also in terms of the region having channels whereby it may raise research possibilities with the universities. Universities need to think how to assist with creating and stimulating these channels.

Meeting expectations

Commitment to communities brings with it a tension between community needs and the universities' capacity to respond to these needs. While there is clearly evidence of good relationships with the community on many levels, the panels' discussions with members of the external community suggested that they would like to see greater opportunities for interaction and involvement with the university. Notwithstanding the success stories, many believed more could be done. In particular, there is a desire not only to become more involved in terms of funding and revenue support, but also to provide feedback on course quality and relevance. There is a feeling that universities have not developed the number and strength of links that their locations allow.

Projecting the CE image

The universities have been promoting themselves to the various communities they serve on a number of fronts. Conducting formal needs analysis surveys with community leaders could be observed. Institutions have conducted surveys to assess the perceptions of the community of the ways in which the universities relates to the community.

Hosting of events as part of community engagement that also brings the community on campus is found. One of the auditees indicated that it would soon "formalise an annual program of public events on its campuses to strengthen the partnerships between the university and its local communities" and the panel endorsed this. Many reports indicate that the 'town-gown' relationship is very good. Some community members have praised the institutions for their responsiveness, good communication, good graduates (especially teachers) and could identify very little they wished to improve.

However, many audit reports note that the universities need to be more proactive in communicating their achievements in relation to research activities and their benefits to the communities they serve.

4. Audit conclusions

4.1. Interpreting them with caution

Throughout the audit reports one can find observations that relate to community engagement. However, some readers pay attention only to the major audit conclusions, namely, Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations (CARs). While this serves certain purposes, it also provides some misleading signals, if taken out of context.

The audit panels investigate the institution's activities taking the goals and objectives as the starting point. The panel comments that make to the major audit conculsions are, most probably, the ones that have a very significant bearing on progress towards those goals and objectives. Therefore, if community engagement finds a notable mention in the

CARs of one auditee, say recommendations, that does not necessarily mean that the auditee is weak in that aspect. It might mean that for the goals and objectives of that auditee, community engagement requires further attention.

At the same time, AUQA audit considers certain external reference points as well and the audit panels investigate how well the auditees perform against those reference points. Amidst diversity, Australian universities have embraced certain common elements and have made commitments to various guidelines, codes of practice, and external requirements. In other words, irrespective of the diversity in goals and objectives, all Australian universities have made a commitment to promote the Indigenous cause, engage with the community, ensure certain levels of student support etc. This gives the anchoring point for the audit panels to look at common patterns. Therefore, signals from CARs have to eb interpreted considering these two points.

4.2. Signals from CARs

Each audit report contains a summary of findings together with lists of commendations, affirmations and recommendations. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. Where such matters have already been identified by the University, with evidence, they are termed 'affirmations'. It is acknowledged that recommendations in the audit reports may have resource implications, and that they can pose difficulties for the universities. Accordingly, AUQA does not prioritise the recommendations, and recognises that it is the responsibility of the institutions to respond in a manner consistent with their context.

There are about (more than) 90 commendations that explicitly relate to community engagement. They are around the following themes:

1.   Commitment to community engagement

2.   Support to Indigenous issues

3.   Attention to equity issues

4.   Community orientation in research

5.   Course offerings and customisation to meet community needs

6.   Linkage with industry partners

7.   Linkage with the government

8.   Mutually beneficial relationship with the local community

9.   Effective school liaison

10.   Fostering access to students from disadvantaged groups

11.   Articulation arrangements and pathways for students

12.   Support structures and functioning of advisory committees

13.   Recognition for staff contribution to community service

14.   Student engagement in community service

There are about 20 affirmations and they are around the following themes:

1.   Review and restrucrure of strategies to maintain commitment to   communities

2.   Senior level leadership to steer community engagement

3. Engaging in research that is of value to the community

4. Measuring and tracking community engagement

5. Monitoring QA arrangements in community engagement

6. Improving advisory committees

7. Strengthening linkage with alumni

8. Strengthening linkage with industry

9. Recognition to community engagement activities by staff

10. Support to students from disadvantaged communities

The fact that these are affirmations indicate that institutions have already noted the need to address these issues.

There are about 35 recommendations and they are around the following themes:

1. Communication with the communities

2. Strategic approach to community engagement

3. Leadership, co-ordination and university-wide understanding

4. Indigenous issues

5. Research relevant to local communities

6. Consulting external communities

7. Measuring, tracking and monitoring community engagement

8. Resourcing and support to staff (infrastructure, time, money and staff)

9. Articulation arrangements

4.3. Observations in the text

There are audit reports that have very favourable comments as well as recommendations that closely relate to community engagement but those comments did not become major audit conclusions for various reasons. Some favourable comments did not become major audit conclusions due to reasons such as newness of the activity, lack of evidence to demonstrate the sustainability and benefits of those efforts, and the activity not being very significant to the strategic priorities of the institution.

There are audit reports where the CAR might have been worded in general terms and a reading of the full report and the observations in the text make the context clear. It should be noted that some CARs are in very general terms. For example, one of the audit reports mention in the text that the auditee has done well in establishing partnerships and linkages with the industry and other community partners. The panel found that these linkages help in promoting commercialisation opportunities for research. However, the commendation has been worded in general terms as 'AUQA commends the University for developing an organisational culture and administrative systems conducive to its research commercialisation goals', without an explicit mention on linkage with partners.

Another auditee has been appreciated for its Environment Policy, the KPIs it had to monitor its performance, and the range of environmental programs and initiatives. The text of the report mentions these aspects. However, what the institution does in the external community get only a passing reference but what the auditee does in the campus to improve environmental sustainability has been elaborated. The report has a general commendation that 'AUQA commends the University for its environmental programs, the implementation of which is supported by effective organisational structures.' In other words, to understand what evidence supports these commendations one has to read the full text of the audit report.

5. Good practices validated by AUQA

As a quality enhancement strategy AUQA administers a searchable collection of good practices. A good practice is a system or activity that has been commended through national audit processes by AUQA as adding value for the auditee and its stakeholders, and that can be adapted and transferred to other organisational settings. Only the commendations are considered for the GPDB. With the permission of the auditees, these good practices are made freely available via the GPDB website. Since the launch of the GPDB on 27 November 2003, individual good practices have been accessed over 53,000 times. Today, the GPDB has become a key resource for higher education practitioners and managers as it provides the collection of good practices across the spectrum of activities carried out by auditees.

Of the more than 90 commendations that explictly relate to some aspect of community engagement, 36 have been included in the GPDB. The full list is appended. Good parctices are classified under thirteen topics and 'community and industry engagement' and 'Indigenous' are among them. A survey conducted in 2005 on the usefulness of the GPDB indicated that it has been referred to when developing new policy and practice and when reviewing/updating existing policy and practice.

As mentioned earlier, the audit reports have made positive observations throughout the reports and a reading of the full report is necessary to identify some of the good practices appreciated by the audit panel. It should also be noted that not all commendations are selected for the GPDB. Only the ones that have high transferability value to other organisational settings are considered for the GPDB. A closer reading of the audit reports indicate that in several institutions there are good initiatives that are effective and appropriate to those institutional contexts but may be difficult to generalise or transfer to other settings.

Again, some of practices that had the potential for commendations were very new at the time of the audit. For example, at the time of audit, one of the auditees had formed a working group to consider the criteria for benchmarking and performance measurement of community engagement. Some scoping work for this project had been undertaken but it was at a very preliminary stage. The audit panel endorsed the University's efforts to address the difficult question of performance measurement in community engagement. The Cycle 2 audit might show how well the institution has progressed on this initiative.

6. Progress made after the audits

6.1. Progress reports

As mentioned earlier, the audit reports have been published over a period of five years – October 2002 to June 2007. Institutions that have completed 18 months after the publication of their audit reports have submitted progress reports (PRs). The progress reports indicate that institutions have taken action on almost all recommendations recorded in the audit reports, or have developed plans to do so.

PRs mostly address action taken on recommendations and affirmations. Some institutions have covered the other suggestions for improvement noted by the panels in the text of the audit reports. In general, the PRs indicate how well institutions have progressed in areas that needed improvement at the time of audit.

Although AUQA does not encourage investigating only CARs, to keep the PR requirement non-intrusive, AUQA expects the institutions to report on affirmations and recommendations (ARs) at the minimum. AUQA assumes that the auditee will consider the audit report in totality and integrate appropriate actions with its other planned activities. It is left to the institutions to include action taken on other observations in the progress reports. As a result, some institutions reported in an exhaustive manner including commendations and observations while some others reported only on ARs. Therefore, this section looks at only the actions against ARs as reported in PRs.

6.2. Acting on the reports

Of the 38 reports considered, 35 received CARs that relate to community engagement. In the case of the other three institutions, the audit panels have either made observations on community engagement in the text of the report without making them into a major audit conclusion or used general terms that encompass community engagement.

Out of the 35 auditees that received CARs, eight institutions received only commendations and positive observations about their community engagement initiatives. Out of the remaining 27 that received a combination of affirmations and or recommendations in addition to commendation(s), the progress report was received for 17 institutions. One of those reports was yet to be approved by AUQA and the other 16 progress reports that had been finalised were considered for this report.

A range of institutional actions have been reported and they will be discussed in the forthcoming AUQA publication. Overall, institutions have invested significant resources to act on the community engagement related areas.

6.4. Impact on the institutions

A reading of the progress reports reveals that clearly a good deal of work has gone into maintaining the momentum generated through the preparation for the AUQA audit. An analysis of the institutional actions done by AUQA in 2006 indicated that auditees that have submitted progress reports have reported an average of over 50 improvement actions per institution. It is reasonable to generalise that to improvement aspects with specific reference to community engagement.

It is also true that in some universities, the progress statements made against the recommendations on community engagement are statements of intent rather than results of action. A couple of PRs justify why no action has been taken. A few others have explained the delays in acting on the recommendations due to external factors. In another case, the community engagement aspect was clubbed with a few other aspects of the recommendation and the PR reports on the aspects other than community engagement. These instances are only a few and AUQA has some further interaction in the unsatisfactory cases to ensure that institutions take more firm actions. However, AUQA goes by the paper trail and does not validate those actions.

It should also be noted that these progress reports were produced 18 months after the publication of the report; during the time that followed, institutions might have taken many more actions. Given that Cycle 2 will investigate how institutions have acted on the recommendations and affirmations, one can hope that more positive actions will be taken by the time the institutions undergo the Cycle 2 audits.

7. Conclusion

The picture that emerges is that of consolidation and further development. While policies and strategies still seem to be developing in some institutions, many others have consolidated the plans and shown tangible outcomes. A lot of action has been taken to enhance the visibility of community engagement and a higher profile seems to be emerging. Tracking and measuring community engagement needs further attention. The fact that the number of commendations were significantly more in number than the recommendations implies that, in general, AUQA has found the Australian universities to be strong in their community engagement activities. Also, the fact that there are 36 good practices related to community engagement in the GPDB indicates that Australian universities have many exemplar practices in community engagement that are transferable across institutional contexts. Overall, it is an encouraging scenario, with some areas requiring attention and the institutions have been acting on those areas.

Skills and knowledge for the future: why universities must engage with their communities

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Abstract

Since the mid-1970s nearly all OECD member countries, including Australia, have experienced fundamental economic and social change which is manifested in a variety of ways, including rapid technological change, freeing up of capital markets and increasing overseas trade. Labour market changes have also been striking. In addition to increased part-time work and jobs that involve varying hours of work there has been an increase in casual employment. Over the last decade the Australian labour market (and that of most OECD nations) has experienced persistent levels of skill mismatches between employees and jobs or employers and persistent levels of skill shortages in many occupations and particular industries (OECD, 2004; AIG, 2004). These mismatches have impacted heavily on regions around Australia.

Whilst the literature paints a clear picture of a workforce that will need and is acquiring increasing skills, knowledge and qualifications, the picture in relation to skill shortages is less clear and there are definitional issues. Some industries are growing in importance and rapid developments in technology mean that skills and knowledge required will not be readily found in the resident population. Demographic factors including an ageing population, the looming problem of men not in the workforce and the work preferences of generation Y will increasingly influence the labour market.

This paper looks at a study of regional skills and knowledge based on the occupations of residents, undertaken in an Australian peri-urban region, which highlights the challenges to Higher Education Institutions in meeting regional skills and knowledge needs for the future.

Education and training is essential to the development of skills and knowledge for the long term and the benefits of investing in the development of skills and knowledge in the resident workforce go beyond the economic and can be seen to be essential for the sustainability of communities.

Key Words: Skills and Knowledge; higher education; regional sustainability

Introduction

Since the mid-1970s nearly all OECD member countries, including Australia, have experienced fundamental economic and social change which is manifested in a variety of ways, including rapid technological change, freeing up of capital markets and increasing overseas trade. Labour market changes have also been striking. In addition to increased part-time work and jobs that involve varying hours of work there has been an increase in casual employment. Over the last decade the Australian labour market (and that of most OECD nations) has experienced persistent levels of skill mismatches between employees and jobs or employers and persistent levels of skill shortages in many occupations and particular industries (OECD, 2004; The Allen Consulting group, 2004). These mismatches have impacted heavily on regions around Australia.

In common with many Australian peri-urban and rural regions, Outer Eastern Melbourne is characterised by a population which tends to be homogenous, demonstrating

negligible growth, ageing with pockets of socio-economic disadvantage; a dominance of small and micro business rather than large industry; and a net migration for work.

Sustainability indicators have been developed for the region (Langworthy & Brunt, 2005) and these show progress towards sustainability overall but several areas including the regional economy have been highlighted for action by the three local governments, Swinburne University and other regional stakeholders. Skill shortages in the areas of manufacturing, ICT, building and construction, hospitality, automotive, health and community service industries were identified by the Area Consultative Council in 2001. More recently the Office of Training and Tertiary Education has based training priorities on employment growth forecasts (Access Economics 2005) and the Outer East Local Learning and Employment Network has identified areas of skill shortage/opportunity. This was the impetus behind undertaking a comprehensive skills audit for the region.

The need for a skills audit occurs in the context that today's dynamic workplace is characterized by technological advances, new management techniques and other changes which spell shifting requirements for workers, businesses and the community at large. In this changing occupational landscape, informed decision-making requires employees, employers, and policy makers to consider occupational requirements in a new way, which requires a closer focus on skills. Skills are the measurable variables that allow us to link human capital requirements in the workplace, individual capacities, and the education and training programs that can bridge the gap.

The project, conducted during 2007, was designed to use both quantitative and qualitative data. Occupational Information Network (O*NET) data and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Journey to Work data were used to map present and emerging skills in the region based on the occupations of residents. This process used O*Net classifications of worker competencies, assigning these to Australian employment data (ASCO 4-digit level) derived from Census data 1991-2006. Measures of knowledge and skill were used to analyse changes in the composition of employment for Melbourne (SD) and the Outer East. An analysis of ten areas of knowledge, and seven areas of skill was used to determine how the skills and knowledge requirements of jobs for Melbourne (SD) and the Outer East have changed between 1991 and 2006.

Qualitative data was obtained through industry interviews and focus groups. Thirty-four businesses participated in the project; 25 in interviews and nine attending the two focus groups. Interviewees and focus group participants were business owners, managers or people responsible for employment within the organisation. The number of employees of the businesses represented ranged from 15 to 1200.

The importance of Skills and Knowledge

A scan of the literature immediately reveals the prominence of skills as a contemporary social and economic issue, globally and locally. In common with the rest of the developed world, Australia faces the demographic challenges related to an ageing population, the population shift from rural and regional areas to urban areas and the emerging characteristics of Generation Y. Industry demand for a more skill and knowledge intensive workforce capable of adjusting to rapid technological change and competitive pressure in an increasingly deregulated marketplace also throws skills issues into focus which in turn has repercussions for education and training.

An increasing amount of research into skills has mounted over the last decade. Evidence of the interest of global organisations in the issue can be found in recent reports and studies commissioned by the United Nations European Union and the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (Smith, 2000; OECD, 1996; OECD, 2006). Similarly State and Federal Governments (for example reports by DVC, DET, DEET, DOI, DEWR, DIIRD, & DOTARS) and Industry organisations (for example, Australian Industry Group, Business Council of Australia, Industry and Higher Education Council, Australian Chamber

of Commerce, Agri-foods Skills Council, Construction and Property Services Industry, Service Skills Australia) have demonstrated strong interest.

Addressing Skills Shortages

It is important to note that defining skill shortages can be complex. In a report prepared for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Richardson suggests a series of levels to classify skill shortage. For Richardson, a Level 1 Shortage exists when there a few people who have the essential technical skills and there is a long training time required for others to obtain the skills. A level 2 Shortage exists when there a few people who have the skills but there is a short training time for others to acquire the skills. A skills mismatch occurs where there are an adequate number of people with the required skill but they choose not to find employment that uses the skill under current conditions. Employers, who look for qualities beyond the technical capacities required to undertake the job tasks and tend to develop high expectations when the labour supply is abundant, may identify a skill shortage when the labour market is tighter and they are forced to accept workers with lesser qualities. This is perhaps best described as a quality gap rather than a skill shortage (Richardson, 2007).

The classification of a skill shortage is helpful in determining a strategy to address the shortage or indeed whether an intervening strategy is required at all since the labour market usually deals with many types of shortage. Intervention is especially relevant when the specific skills are relevant to the future of work.

The findings from the interviews and focus groups in Knox and Yarra Ranges were consistent with a range of reports and current literature in relation to skill needs and shortages. Employers valued employees who were multi-skilled, team-work orientated, highly computer literate and able to deal with a appreciate people from diverse walks of life (DEST, 2002; The Allen Consulting Group, 2004; Peter D. Hart Research, 2006; BIHECC 2007) and others.

Skills shortages, often better identified as skills mismatches, were identified in every industry sector represented in the sample and across all levels of skill including: casual hospitality workers; labourers; sales and customer service staff; process and routine workers; warehouse staff; drivers; technicians; fitters; electricians die-setters; joiners; wood machinists; carpenters; boiler makers; diesel mechanics; powder coaters; health care professionals and workers; managers; and administrative staff.

Difficulties in recruiting professionals were noted particularly in those industries that required research and development and the health professions in general. Nearly every industry sector represented in interviews and focus groups was experiencing skill shortages at some level. Difficulty in sourcing people for some roles appeared to be exacerbated by the fact that the skills and knowledge needed was highly specific either to the industry or product produced. Unlike in other regions where skills shortage surveys have been undertaken (Department of Victorian Communities, 2006) a shortage of tradespeople in the Outer East was highlighted by only some local business interviews; for others the region was seen as a having a rich source of qualified tradespeople which would appear to be consistent with ABS census data that tell us the majority of qualified residents have trade qualifications.

Skilled migration

Level I Skill shortages are often addressed through skilled migration. Migrant workers have always made a significant contribution to the Australian Labour market and in recent history, the Australian Government migration polices have drawn more heavily on higher skilled migrant populations in order to help redress current labour needs and skill shortages. In terms of skilled labour, overseas workers currently contribute significantly to the Australian Labour market. In 2004-5, 44,443 skilled migrants entered Australia, which was considerably higher than the 30,000 net gain for skilled persons in 2000-2001. In 2004-5 the most significant increase by occupational group was for

professionals, where numbers more than doubled to 29,054 in 2004-5 (Birrell, Rapson & Smith, 2006).

Business interview feedback with regard to migrant workers was positive as has generally been the case in the literature. A recent report by the Learning and Skills Council in the UK (LSC, 2006) classified migrant workers into distinct groups - highly-skilled 'global' migrants who worked in professional roles, 'economic migrants' who were attracted by higher wages and worked in low-skilled roles in Western countries, and aspiring migrants who would work in lower-skilled positions while they took time to improve their English language skills. This situation was reflected for a local migrant employee who was a specialist in IT but who due to poor English skills had undertaken process work and subsequently moved on to an appropriate position in his field. The generally positive and favourable attitudes employers expressed with regard to migrant employees, as diligent and enthusiastic workers was also reported by the Skills Council (2006).

It was apparent from the business interviews and previous research that migrant workers could face considerable barriers due to both language difficulties and their qualifications not being properly recognised in Australia. Even in this small sample of business interviews revealed that migrant employees sometimes, as a result of these hurdles, ended up in positions for which they were over-qualified. It was interesting to note that the migrants which were employed in local businesses in the region consisted mainly of people from Western countries (for example, the UK, Canada, England). This is consistent with overall nature of the migrant population in the Outer East, the majority of whom are from Western or European countries.

The relatively homogeneous nature of the population in the Outer East is likely to influence the number of migrants that are employed in local businesses. Firstly, there is less local migrant workers available and (as suggested by one business interviewed) and not such a pressing need to employ people from diverse backgrounds to best meet the needs of the local population.

In order to help facilitate the efficient use of migrant labour, skills-related immigration policies are becoming increasingly specific and targeted. Through targeted 'skills streams' immigrants with specific skills, or from specific occupational groups, for example, nurses, engineers and doctors (Shar & Burke, 2006) are encouraged to work in Australia. Recent overseas graduates who have studied at Australian Universities now have the opportunity to gain on-shore approval for permanent residency under the General Skilled Migration Program (GSM) (Birrell, Rapson & Smith, 2006) and therefore are also encouraged to remain in the country and integrate into the local labour market. Although business were open to employing migrants and people with disabilities there was low representation of these groups, particularly people with disabilities. The openness shown by some organisations with regard to employing people with disabilities is consistent with the increasing recognition of the need to draw from diverse working populations and a willingness by government to take measures to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce. Participant feedback and comments appear to indicate that this cohort are not necessarily applying for work in a variety of fields and that there may be some reservations on the part of employers about their capacity of people with disabilities to fulfil job and productivity requirements, particularly in non-routine or higher level roles.

The attitude expressed to older workers by employers was universally positive. Businesses were well aware of the reality of an aging population and were both worried about the effects of this (particularly in the manufacturing industry) and keen to capitalise on the experience and skill base of older workers. Although it was apparent from research that older workers still experience some discrimination (Lundberg & Marshallsay, 2007) the attitude of businesses in the sample was consistent with other research which indicates indicated that business are now more willing to employ older workers (Munnell, Sass & Soto, 2006).

The research highlighted a number of issues that were of concern to industry representatives in the region. A number of participants in Knox indicated that the expectations of highly-qualified young workers - with regard to immediate promotions and higher wages created tensions within the companies. It was the perception of some participants that younger workers wanted to be promoted without necessarily doing the time in their current job and demonstrating a well-developed work ethic.

Participant attitudes to apprentices were also mixed. Whilst some businesses employed a number of apprentices, others were unwilling to invest the time and energy in training young people or coping with a perceived poor work ethic.

Another issue highlighted by the interviewees was their inability to find skilled and proficient casual workers. A number of interviewees in the health sector spoke of the need to employ casual staff (particularly nurses) and the adverse impacts this had on continuity and quality of care. Although permanent workers are delivering the highest standard of care, the health sector is unable to source these employees locally and is attempting to recruit internationally.

Business interviews and focus group sessions highlighted real need in the areas of education and training and some inadequacy in the capacity of education and training providers to meet the needs of their business and employees. Whilst apprentices were employed by some of the interviewed business, barriers to employing apprentices and school leavers were identified and clearly business preferred to experienced, skilled workers who reside locally.

Skill and Knowledge Intensity

The O*NET approach to defining and measuring skill and knowledge

Developed by a consortium led by the US Department of Labor, the O*Net was was designed to replace the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and launched in 1998. An advantage of the O*NET is that it offers statistical information that can be applied to the Australian context to analyse labour market change.[1] It provides very detailed information on about 1,120 occupations and is continually updated to reflect the dynamic and ever-changing nature of employment. The framework that organises the O*NET data is called the Content Model (Peterson et al., 1999, p. 25). This classifies data into six domains that provide detailed information related to the attributes of occupations and to the characteristics required of people who actually do the job. It includes the specific domains and elements in the O*NET database that might be used to describe jobs. These components are based on psychological and job analysis research carried out by the Department of Labor and contain over 300 job- related descriptors. O*NET

O*NET Skills

The approach taken by the O*NET to define skill is that of Peterson et al. (1999). They define skill as a set of general procedures that underlie the effective acquisition and application of knowledge in different areas of endeavour (Ch. 3, p. 4). Peterson et al. provide a taxonomy of 46 O*NET skill descriptors encompassing two broad categories. The first are ten basic skills, and the second are 36 cross-functional skills. The ten *basic* skills are divided into two groups: content and process skills. The 36 *cross-functional* skills are further divided into five categories, namely social, problem solving, technological, systems, and resource management.

O*NET Knowledge

The O*NET defines knowledge as a collection of discrete but related facts, information and principles about a particular area of work. Knowledge is acquired through formal

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[1] For example, Esposto (2005) used the O*NET to analyse labour market change, while Sheehan and Esposto (2001) used it to study the characteristics of Australian jobs.

education and/or training or can be built upon a collection of a variety of experiences. In the O*NET taxonomy, the 33 knowledges can be regarded as belonging to general categories and are regarded as being essential elements in the successful performance of occupational tasks. Others are narrower and can only be applied to a fine range of occupational groups, while others can be seen as being occupation specific.

### Employment growth in Melbourne and the Outer East

In both Melbourne SD and Outer Eastern Melbourne employment has grown at a similar rate of almost 30 percent from 1991 to 2006. In line with the findings of research into the changing nature of work, part-time work is increasingly taking a more prominent share of employment and thus experiencing stronger growth than full-time work.

The employment experience of men and women differed. Part time work for men in Melbourne grew by almost 74 percent and in Maroondah 78 percent, Yarra Ranges 75 percent and Knox 55 percent between 1991 and 2006. Employment growth for women was stronger than men in Melbourne and the Outer East. Part time employment for women has experience an even more marked increase in the Outer East outstripping the growth in Melbourne almost fourfold.
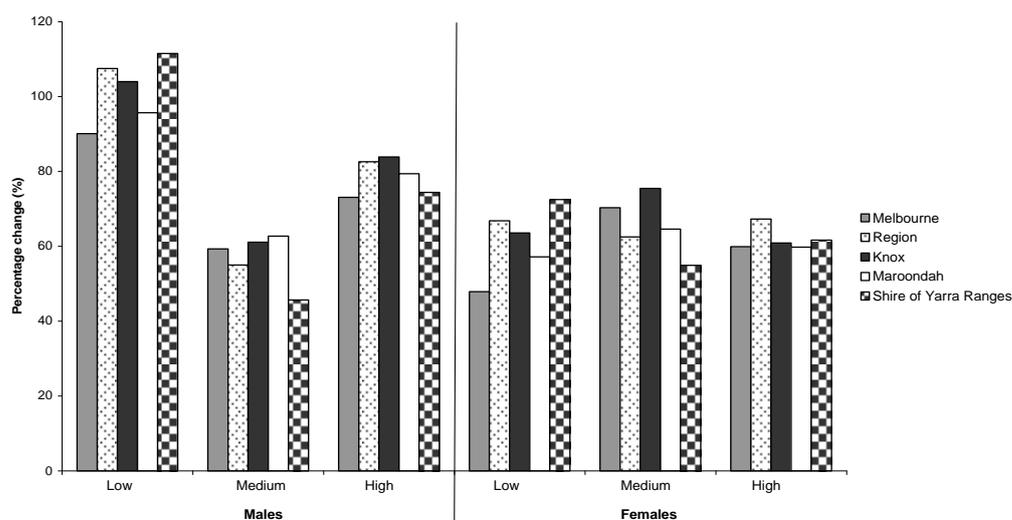
Skill intensity

Skill intensity is a key issue for the region. Whilst the skill intensity of jobs in Melbourne has grown over the period from 1991-2006, it has declined overall for Outer Eastern Melbourne residents. When the regional data are disaggregated into the Cities of Knox and Maroondah and the Shire of Yarra Ranges, a differing picture emerges. The skill intensity of both full and part-time jobs for men has declined with the Shire of Yarra Ranges experiencing the sharpest decline. However, Outer Eastern women are faring better than men; the skill intensity of full-time jobs of women has grown with the strongest growth experienced in Knox followed by Maroondah and then Yarra Ranges. The skill intensity of women's part-time work has increased in Knox but declined in Maroondah and more strongly in Yarra Ranges

Figures 1 and 2: Growth in male and female full time and part-time employment by skill category, 1991-2006

Growth in full time male and female employment by skill category 1991-2006
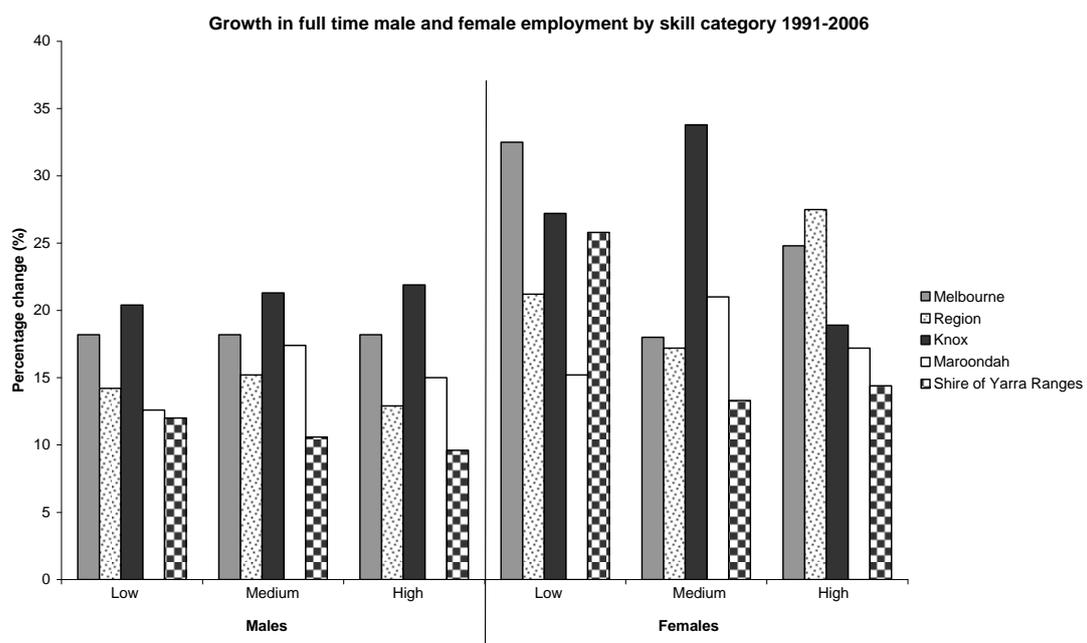
Growth in male and female part time employment by skill category 1991-2006


Categorising the skill intensity of jobs as requiring low, medium and high skills provides a more comprehensive picture of the change in employment composition. The skill intensity of jobs in all categories grew in both Melbourne and Outer Eastern Melbourne consistent with Australian trends. However, skill intensity growth for Outer Eastern men in full time employment was weaker in than Melbourne in all categories as demonstrated by Figures 1&2 above. Furthermore trends for Melbourne show an even growth across the three levels of skill intensity whilst OEM trends show slightly higher growth in the medium and low skill categories.

The Shire of the Yarra Ranges experienced the lowest growth of the three LGAs in both the medium and high skill intensity categories, and the second highest growth in full-time work for women in the low skill category. Over the 15 year period, these results can be interpreted as a shift in resident job creation from high and medium skilled occupations towards lower skilled occupations and men are increasingly being employed in occupations requiring lower skill intensive work. The City of Knox experienced the strongest growth by skill intensity in all categories for both men and women, with the strongest growth seen in the male high skill category.

An examination of the seven aggregated O*Net skill categories again shows that the experience for women contrasts to that of men as demonstrated by Figure 4 below. Although the growth is weaker than that experienced by residents of Melbourne, OEM women's occupations grew in intensity of content skills; process skills; social skills; resource management skills; problem solving skills; technical skills; systems skills and resource management skills.

Figure 4: Change in skill area requirement for women in full time employment, Melbourne (SD) and Region, 1991-2006.

Change in skill area requirement for women in full time employment
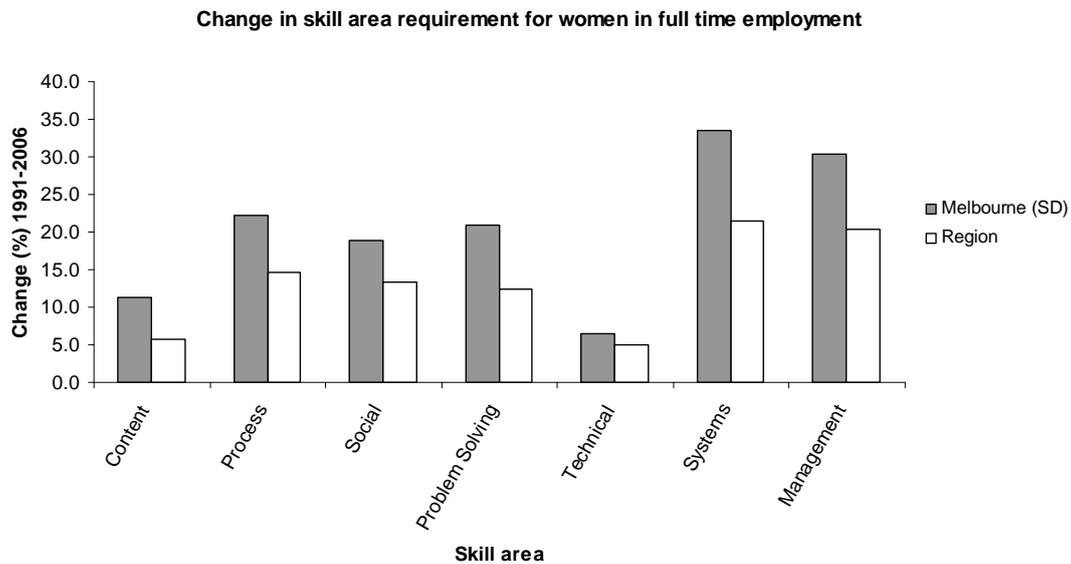
For men however the skill intensity of jobs declined in all areas except technical skills. When the data is disaggregated into the three municipalities increases in the skill areas of social skill and management skills are seen alongside the already observed increases in technical skills.

Figure 5: Change in skill area requirement for men in full time employment, Melbourne (SD) and Region, 1991-2006.

Change in skill area requirement for men in full time employment

Knowledge intensity

Knowledge is a precondition for the development and application of skills. Thus knowledge intensity is closely correlated to skill intensity but does not equate to skill intensity. Similar to Melbourne, the Outer East was more likely to experience growth in the low and high knowledge intensity categories than the medium category when the deciles are grouped. In Outer Eastern Melbourne knowledge intensity fell for men

employed full time compared to a small rise in the knowledge intensity of men employed in Melbourne SD for the same period whilst it increased for women.

When it comes to part-time work, the knowledge intensity of women's employment declined in the OEM in contrast to the experience of Melbourne women employed part-time although it should be noted that, when the data is disaggregated, a growth in the knowledge intensity of Knox women's part-time work can be seen. Both regions experienced a growth in the knowledge intensity of women's full-time work. Men employed part-time experienced a similar increase in the knowledge intensity of jobs as Melbourne residents.

Inspection of the knowledge intensity indices for men in 2006, indicates that the jobs created for the men who work full-time in the Shire of the Yarra Ranges require lower intensities of knowledge than those created for resident workers in Maroondah and Knox, but most concerning is the fact that the knowledge intensity of these occupations have declined at a faster rate. The performance of the OEM in terms of knowledge intensive work, is particularly concerning, not only because it declined, but because this trend contrasts to the experience of Melbourne (SD) and Australia.

For men the growth in employment was stronger for low knowledge intensive work, whereas for women the growth was concentrated in high knowledge intensive work creation. For women, the City of Maroondah showed a different trend. Growth was stronger in the medium knowledge intensive jobs, whereas for Knox and the Shire of the Yarra Ranges this growth was concentrated in the high and low knowledge intensive occupations.

Overall, the increases in the indices of skill and knowledge intensity for full-time employment for women show that that job growth in the labour market of the Melbourne (SD) is geared towards occupations that require higher levels of skill and knowledge intensity.

The OEM experienced declines in the knowledge and skill intensity of jobs, indicating lower skill and knowledge intensity of work in full-time work for men. Women, on the other hand, have fared better, showing increases in the indices of knowledge and skill intensity in all of the LGAs. This may be interpreted as a process of skill-bias towards occupations that require higher levels of skill and knowledge intensity for women, but not for men. In terms of part-time work, job creation appears to favour occupations that require lower levels of skill and knowledge intensity for both men and women in the OEM, but this is not the case in the Melbourne (SD).

In Knox, Maroondah and the Shire of the Yarra Ranges, the trends for male part-time knowledge intensive work creation are similar to those of the Melbourne (SD), namely stronger growth in low and high knowledge intensive work. For women, on the other hand, the knowledge intensive occupations grew by a larger magnitude in the middle of the distribution. These trends are consistent with those seen in job creation in terms of skill intensities.

Women's part-time work increased quite considerably also with more women than men working in part-time jobs. For the Cities of Knox and Maroondah, skill intensive employment growth was stronger in the medium skill intensive occupations than the low and high. In contrast, the Shire of the Yarra Ranges experienced stronger employment growth in the low skill intensive occupations, followed by medium skill intensive employment growth. Again the pattern that emerges of employment growth in the Shire of the Yarra Ranges concentrated in the low skill intensive work, whereas for the other two LGAs the growth is concentrated in middle and the top end of the skill intensive distribution.

Overall, OEM experienced less growth in the knowledge and skill intensity of jobs, than that experienced for Melbourne. The performance of the OEM in terms of knowledge intensive work is particularly concerning, not only because it declined, but because this

trend contrasts to the experience of Melbourne (SD) and Australia. Of concern also is the decline in skill intensity of men's occupations and a trend in part time work which tends to favour lower skill and knowledge intensity in OEM again in contrast to Melbourne. These results may indicate some disadvantage in terms of job creation for residents in OEM

Journey to Work

Overall, the majority of employed OEM residents find employment outside their immediate places of residence (LGA) with approximately 58,414 (31 percent) of all employed residents living and working in their municipality. Approximately 42.9 percent of the resident workforce journeys outside of the OEM for work. Significantly 27.5 percent (33,406) of regional jobs are performed by people who live outside the region. Thus OEM is a significant exporter of resident workers with a total regional employment capacity of 65 percent (121,625 jobs for 187,346 workers).

Geography appears to be influential in relation to the work destination of Outer Eastern residents. Yarra Ranges residents, who have the furthest distance to travel towards Melbourne, are most likely to be employed within the Outer Eastern region (38,330 or 56.9 percent) and in fact occupy the majority of jobs within the Yarra Ranges municipality 70.6 percent of these (23,303 or 70.6 percent).   In Maroondah 43.8 percent (21,181) of employed Maroondah residents work within OEM. Of the total number of jobs (employment capacity) in Maroondah, 38.2 percent (13,320) of the total number of jobs are performed by Maroondah residents. The City of Knox has the lowest percentage of employed residents working within the OEM (39.4 percent). Of the total jobs (employment capacity) in Knox, approximately 40.5 percent (21,701) of the total number of jobs are performed by Knox residents. Thus, the highest proportion of employed OEM residents travelling outside the region for work is found in Knox, followed by Maroondah and the Shire of the Yarra Ranges.

When work destination is correlated with the skill levels of workers, the data show that approximately 42 percent of workers at the highest skill level live and work within the region and 58 percent travel out of the region for work. This is in contrast to the lowest skill level, where a higher percentage of residents work within the region (60.6%) than work outside the region (39.4%). The stepwise progression from skill level I to skill level V shows an increasing percentage of workers for each category and indicates that the region provides more jobs that require low skill sets than requiring higher skilled capacities.

Significant regional sectors as destination for all workers in order of numbers employed regionally are: Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Health and Community Services, Property and Business, Education, Wholesale and Trade, Construction and Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants, Personal and Other Services and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. There is a net movement out of Yarra Ranges to work in all sectors except education, accommodation cafes and restaurants and agriculture.

The sectors demonstrating the highest skill levels of employees are the education sector followed by the property and business services, health and community services sector, agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries (46 percent) and Personal and other services sectors.

The retail sector and accommodation cafes and restaurants are dominated by lower skilled occupations.

Successful Regions

Local skills, local jobs and local knowledge are important to the sustainability of local communities.

An information paper produced by the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (2003) indicated that regions with highly diverse economies were exhibited more stable

economies and were less subject to volatile growth patterns. Other factors which influenced regional economic growth were the availability of facilities, remoteness, leadership as well as resource and the regional skill base. Regionally success breeds success and thus regions where the 'requisite skill and knowledge capacity are in place are more likely to attract viable and dynamic industries (NIEIR, 2004 cited in Langworthy & Brunt, 2005).

The creation of local jobs and the retention of the local working population has significant advantages for local communities and regional economies including: fostering an increasing sense of community; decreasing the costs of commuting and the resulting impacts of travel on the environment; maximising time spent with family and leisure time.

The skill and knowledge capacity of residents whilst essential for the local economy is also has wider benefits for the community. Many studies demonstrate the benefits of community member who have university education. Higher Education fosters democratic participation (Harper cited in Benson, Harkavy & Hartley 2005). Graduates more likely to participate and accept diversity in their communities and are over three times more likely to be a member of a voluntary organisation than non-graduates (Purcell et al., 2004) Not only are graduates more likely to participate in and accept diversity in their communities but they have better health and wellbeing (Hillman & McMillan, 2005; King, 1999; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; and others) and are less likely to be involved in crime (Chapman B, Weatherburn, Kapuscincki, Chilvers & Roussel, 2002). Degree holders are significantly more likely to hold positive attitudes to race and gender equality (Purcell et al., 2004).

In addition, graduates live healthier lifestyles: less likely to smoke, less likely to be obese, 40% less likely to suffer from depression and more likely to report "excellent" health (Wilberforce, 2005). Higher education qualifications are associated with less physical decline, depression, loneliness, social loss and positively associated with continuous growth in aging people (Steverink et al 2001; Miech & Shanahan 2001). The benefits of higher education are intergenerational. Graduates are more likely to take an interest in their own children's education and to be involved with their children's school, factors which are predictors of schooling success (Purcell et al., 2004)

The role of education and training

In order to meet the needs of a rapidly changing and increasingly skill intensive labour environment, it is clear that training programs need to be flexible, tailored and able to be responsive to industry needs (Allen Consulting Group, 2006; Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002). Thus the content of training courses needs to be constantly updated particularly to meet the needs borne out of technological advances. Increasingly the education and training system is facilitating the advancement and renewal of the skills of existing workers as well as providing the initial occupational training (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002).

In their 2005 report, Victoria's Workforce Participation taskforce identified that:

"the VET and post-compulsory sector and higher education sectors will play an increasingly important role in providing continual learning and up-skilling opportunities for the working age populations to maintain the competitiveness, adaptability and capacity of Victoria's workforce" (p.66).

Employers, particularly those associated with large enterprises, indicate that they regard a willingness and openness to engage in life-long learning, and continuous up-skilling as a key capacity of their employees (DEST,2002). The tendency for employers to encourage their staff to take increasing responsibility for their learning coincides with dwindling opportunities for on-the-job training due to the privatisation of public services and the increased tendency to contract work out as a means of accessing appropriate skills (DEST, 2002). Until recently, there appears to have been unwillingness on the part of some employers to significantly invest in training. For example, in 2005, Victorian

employers surveyed spent approximately 4-5% of annual turnover on up-skilling and training of employees. Significantly, the level of training investment has not increased since 1998 (Allen Consulting Group, 2006).

Despite this lack of investment by industry, the phenomenon of "skill deepening" in the workforce has become increasingly evident. In the decade 1995-2005 the number of people employed in Australia increased by 19.7 percent, however the number with qualifications increased by 44.7 percent (Shah and Burke, 2006). Based on current trends, by 2016 the proportion of employed people with qualifications is estimated to increase by just over 13 percent from 58 percent in 2006 to 71.2 percent in 2016. During the period 2001-2005 employment of those with higher education qualifications increased at a faster rate (4.8% per year) than those with lower level qualifications and this percentage likely to continue to increase The trend towards a more qualified workforce is supported by occupational class forecasts which show that the largest rates of occupational growth will be in professional and associate professional positions as well as intermediate sales and service workers. Between 2006 and 2016, approximately 4.3 million will need to gain some level of qualification, 2.25 million of whom will be new entrants to the workforce. (Shah & Burke, 2006).

Mismatches between graduates and the job market

The need for an increasingly qualified workforce is evident, particularly given the rapid growth of professional positions requiring degrees. However, coincident with the need for highly skilled and qualified employees, there is also a demand for workers to fill positions which are less skilled as can be seen in the growth of jobs for men in the Outer East. Although not immediately apparent in OEM, a 'skills mismatch' is evident in the relatively high number of university graduates (approximately half a million in Australia) who are either unemployed, or are currently in occupations, commonly, clerical, sales and service or labouring positions that do not normally require university qualifications. (Norton, 2007). Recent surveys also indicate that there is a significant portion of people who do not utilise skills and abilities developed in their degree in their current employment. This appears to be particularly the case for just under a fifth of bachelor degree qualified workers. Similar results were also revealed in an earlier study which indicated that only 19% of respondents with a university education considered only secondary school the highest level of education that would be necessary for their current position (Norton, 2007).

Whilst the literature paints a clear picture of a workforce that will need and is acquiring increasing skills, knowledge and qualifications, the picture in relation to skill shortages is less clear and there are definitional issues. Some industries are growing in importance and rapid developments in technology mean that skills and knowledge required will not be readily found in the resident population. Demographic factors including an ageing population, the looming problem of men not in the workforce and the work preferences of generation Y will increasingly influence the labour market.

Education and training is essential to the development of skills and knowledge for the long term and the benefits of investing in the development of skills and knowledge in the resident workforce go beyond the economic and can be seen to be essential for the sustainability of communities.

Conclusion

Outer Eastern Melbourne does not have the employment capacity to provide jobs for all regional resident workers. The fewest jobs are located in Yarra Ranges followed closely by Maroondah. Knox has a greater number of jobs but still significantly fewer than resident workers. The lack of local jobs presents a disadvantage to workers and to the local economy.

Overall the trend away from high skilled occupations towards lower skilled occupations is a concern for the region. The trend can be explained to a certain degree by the dominant

regional industries that tend to favour lower skilled occupations but the growth in the number of residents employed in lower skilled occupations throws into focus the issue of regional job creation. In particular the need for higher knowledge and skill intensive business is highlighted.

The study raises a number of questions for government, local government and education:

Why are we not seeing the creation of the more skill and knowledge intense jobs for residents?

What capacity does the region have for growing the employment base particularly innovative and skill and knowledge intense industry?

If we are able to build this employment base do we have the requisite skills and knowledge in the resident workforce?

How does the education sector respond to the education and training needs of existing business and work to build capacity of regional workers for the future?

How can the education sector be involved in bringing about desired changes in the resident workforce?

How do we maximize and further develop the skills and knowledge of mature age workers, particularly men given the decline in their workforce participation levels and the skill levels of current regional occupations?

How do we make the most of the creativity and work culture of the younger generation?

Business representatives involved in the study preferred experienced, skilled workers who reside locally and some were prepared to invest in up skilling current workers to fill skill shortages. The participating businesses represented employed from 15 to 1200 workers so the cohort was not representative of smaller and micro business. Thus the capacity of micro businesses is not represented in the study. Given the large number of these businesses in the region, this is an area that warrants further investigation.

Whilst the study highlights challenges facing the regional economy it also provides an opportunity for the community and university to focus efforts to improve the skills and knowledge of the resident workforce and assist in the creation of a sustainable regional economy.

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Book reviews

Hatherell, William, Challenging Boundaries: Perspectives on community-university engagement, (2007) Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

Although I have acknowledged Dr William Hatherell as the author of this publication, he has acknowledged a large number of contributors to the work. This is a well structured presentation, which approaches each topic from both the theoretical and the practical aspects. Each chapter outlines the significant debates and selected literature, plus case studies and other examples of achievements at Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

The six broad themes on which the chapters are based are:
1.   Building the Engaged University
2.   From Local to Global
3.   Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries
4.   Shaping Public Debate
5.   Transitions
6.   Future Directions

The message from the Vice Chancellor, Professor Peter Coaldrake, sums up the philosophical framework for the QUT approach   *"In our education and teaching, engagement must be embedded within curriculum design, and be seen as a catalyst that continuously renews the vitality of teaching and enlivens the learning of every QUT student "* and about research *" QUT's leadership in applied research is already well established, and the insights into the nexus between engagement and research, contained in this publication have the potential to take the University to a new level of leadership in high-impact engaged research"* (Foreword)

As an example of this approach, in Chapter 1, Building the Engaged University, the introductory essay provides a brief historical overview of the place of universities in their communities, some definitions and the shift to a more contemporary view which sees engagement as a partnership, challenging boundaries in both teaching and research. This is followed by a description of a project , *Partnerships for Indigenous education and communities,* some discussion on the nature of the institution and its predecessors and a section on rewarding engagement, including an anecdote on a personal promotion based on leadership of a university-community partnership.

A similar pattern follows in the remaining chapters. There is a conscious effort to move from the traditional service model, where university personnel are seen to be the experts, going out to the community to solve their problems. The shift to working in partnership with communities, identifying and together solving problems is commendable.

The publication is an important documentation (and incidentally a celebration) of the achievements of QUT in an outreach sense and on the comprehensive way they have addressed the campus spaces, the staff opportunities, and the contribution to the meaning of Community Engagement.

I was looking for some evidence from the partners on the mutual benefit derived from these projects. There are numerous examples of projects and engagement where, from the University's perspective the activities are highly beneficial. In a future publication it would be good to see some co-authored sections with partners (university and external)

reflecting on the impact that has resulted from the engagement, and the learning and the new knowledge which have accrued for both. A small example of this is the piece on the *Leg Club* (p38) where there is a statement from a partner on the powerful nature of University-Community partnerships.

In conclusion, this is a timely publication, which sets out an impressive approach to Community Engagement, shows support from the highest levels, provides opportunities for engaged learning and recognises the work of individuals. The reference list at the end of the publication also provides an interesting resource for others interested in Community

Andrews, Hans A.,(2006) Awards and Recognition for Exceptional Teachers K-12 and Community Colleges, Programs in the U.S.A., Canada and Other Countries,

Matilda Press, Ottawa, Illinois

This is an unlikely book to be reviewing in a Community Engagement journal. It is an American book which explores the notion of acknowledgement of excellent teachers through reward or other forms of recognition. It uses examples from K-12 schools and Community Colleges. It deliberately excludes Universities as "The recognition and awards for the university teachers come primarily from their research and publication efforts with far less emphasis on their teaching" (p222)

This has been largely the case in Australia until Universities realised that there were financial rewards for good teaching through the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and through a range of well funded awards under the Carrick Institute, (now the Australian Learning and Teaching Council - ALTC) This has encouraged Universities to place greater importance on quality teaching. The emergence of a more formal approach to Community Engagement has also shifted the focus to engaged learning (and research) and has the potential to enhance the learning experience for both students and academic staff.

One outcome of this refocus on quality teaching has been the need for Universities to measure student satisfaction with the teachers and other indicators such as data on student progression, retention and completion. There has been national debate on the merits of performance based pay in the school system and some Universities are currently considering introducing performance based reward for academic staff, based on excellence in teaching and research.

If one makes the link between engaged learning and teaching excellence, then those academics involved in working with communities are in a good position to demonstrate excellent teaching through excellent learning outcomes. That is where this book is interesting .It explores a number of the questions around the issue of intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards, whether recognition improves teaching, or whether it raises public awareness and respect though acknowledging excellent teachers. Interestingly, the author reports on the use of merit pay and found little evidence that such programs works. (p18) Conversely he reports that positive feedback and systemic support does more for improving teaching and retaining good teachers in the system.

Those academics who are focussing on the benefits of engaged learning, with the outcomes of effort being of mutual benefit to the community partners, the student, and the University, may find this an interesting publication. Learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and commitment to project completion are all evidence of excellent teaching, and of the impact of the University on its community. For those who need to

demonstrate evidence teaching excellence, Community Engagement places academics in a good space.

The book canvasses a number of philosophical positions on awards and recognition, lists many research projects on teacher and administrator perceptions, demolishes some myths and provides a detailed catalogue of what a number of institutions are doing to recognise exceptional teachers. Although it does not address Universities specifically, the discussion is relevant.

Barbara van Ernst

GUIDELINES for Authors

The Australasian Journal of University Community Engagement is a refereed journal published by the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA), which is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of efficient and effective engagement by universities with their communities. Submissions which fall within this scope are welcome.

Manuscripts should be emailed to:
The Editor,
Australian Journal of University Community Engagement Inc
Email: ed@aucea.net.au

The manuscript of **no more than 5000 words** should be typed single sided, double spaced and with ample margins. The paper should be ordered as follows:
1. Cover page with title of the paper, authors' names, email and addresses.
2. The text should start on page two with the title and abstract of 100-150 words. The abstract must stand alone and not contain underlined abbreviations or references. Authors' names should not appear (the refereeing process is double-blind). Footnotes should be avoided if possible.
3. Tables and figures must be emailed on separate sheets and not included as part of the main text. All tables and figures should be mentioned in the text and numbered by Arabic numerals. Captions and legends should be grouped together. Figures and line drawings should be of a quality suitable for printing and will not normally be redrawn by the publisher.
4. References should be indicated in the typescript by the author's name with year of publication in parentheses. Multiple publications by the same author in the same year should be appended by (a), (b), etc. Titles of journals should not be abbreviated. The references should be listed in full (including all authors) in alphabetical order at the end of the manuscript using the following formats:
   Evans, A.W. (1990) The assumption of equilibrium in the analysis of migration and interregional differences: a review of some recent research. *Journal of Regional Science,* 30(4), pp. 515-532
   Jensen, R.C., Mandeville, T.D and Karunaratne, N.D. (1979) *Regional Economic Planning*. Croom Helm: London.
   Putman, S.H. (1990) Equilibrium solutions and dynamics of integrated urban models. In L. Anselin and M. Madden (eds), *New Directions in Regional Analysis.* Belhaven: London.

If the paper is accepted for publication the paper will be emailed back to authors. They should be corrected and returned to the editors as soon as possible (within three days). The e- journal will be emailed to authors and more widely available at www.aucea.net.au.