



18 July 2018

Senator Chris Ketter
Chair
Senate Standing Committees on Economics – Economic References Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ketter

INQUIRY INTO THE INDICATORS OF, AND IMPACT OF REGIONAL INEQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA

On behalf of Charles Sturt University, I am pleased to respond to the Economic References Committee inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of regional inequality in Australia.

Charles Sturt University is Australia's largest regional university, with more than 43,000 students and approximately 2,100 FTE staff. Established in 1989, the University traces its origins to the formation of the Bathurst Experimental Farm and Wagga Wagga Experimental Farm in the 1890s. In one form or another, research, innovation and education has been integral to the University's character and mission for more than a century.

Charles Sturt University is a unique multi-campus institution with campuses at Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Canberra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Manly, Orange, Parramatta, Port Macquarie and Wagga Wagga, as well as various study centres located throughout regional and rural south-eastern Australia.

The University's commitment to the development and sustainability of rural and regional Australia is informed by the unique research focus undertaken, and the partnerships it has formed with each of its campus' local communities, local industry, and with the broader regions it serves.

Charles Sturt University offers a comprehensive suite of research and academic training programs that focus on addressing rural and regional labour market needs, growing regional economies, and preparing students for the jobs of the new economy through rural and regional Australia.

Over the last year or so, Charles Sturt University has provided extensive commentary and opinion by way of submission to a range of parliamentary and departmental inquiries, across the Australian, New South Wales and Victorian Governments relating to regional economies and the options available to strengthen the economic, social and environmental resilience of Australia's regional cities, rural towns and remote communities.

In many cases, the commentary provided in our submissions has examined the impact of regional inequality in Australia, including within regions, between regions and between regional Australia and our major metropolitan centres. Further, the recommendations we have put forward in our submissions have included many suggestions for addressing regional inequality and what indicators should be measured to ensure success in this endeavour.

All our submissions are founded on an extensive review of Australian and international literature, as well as our own comprehensive research across regional, rural and remote south-eastern Australia regarding the indicators of, and impact of regional inequality in Australia. Throughout these submissions our commentary and recommendations address:

- fiscal policies at federal, state and local government levels;
- improved co-ordination of federal, state and local government policies;
- regional development policies;
- infrastructure;
- education;
- building human capital;
- enhancing local workforce skills;
- employment arrangements;
- decentralisation policies;
- innovation;
- manufacturing; and,
- other related matters and considerations in the contest of regional, rural and remote southern New South Wales and northern Victoria.

I would like to draw the Committee's attention to 11 parliamentary and departmental submissions that Charles Sturt University has developed and prepared over the last year that provide recommendations either in full or part that examine economic indicators and regional inequality. These submissions are detailed below with full referencing for each submission and an extract of recommendations from each submission provided at Attachment 1 for the Committee's reference. I believe that the review of the following submissions by the Committee will be of value in during your inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of regional inequality in Australia:

- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment \(A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System\) Bill 2017, Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry, 8 June 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017 Inquiry, New South Wales Legislative Council - Standing Committee on State Development, 18 June 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Improving Completion, Retention and Success in Higher Education - Discussion Paper, June 2017, Higher Education Standards Panel, 7 July 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Inquiry into Perinatal Services in Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 14 July 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - School to Work Transition, Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 2 August 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Independent Review Regional, Rural and Remote Education, Australian Government, 29 August 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Reforms to Modernise Australia's Visa System, Australian Government - Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 15 September 2017.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Inquiry on the Impact of Technological and Other Change on the Future of Work and Workers in Australia, Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers, 20 February 2018.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University Submission – Advice on the Impacts of Professional Accreditation in Higher Education - Consultation on the Implementation of Recommendations from the Higher Education Standards Panel, 30 April 2018.](#)
- [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Closing the Gap – The Next Phase - Australian Government, 30 April 2018.](#)

In particular, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to Charles Sturt University's comprehensive submission on regional development and decentralisation that was prepared for the House of Representatives Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation in September last year, [Charles Sturt University – Submission - Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation, House of Representatives - Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation](#), 15 September 2017. The commentary and recommendations put forward in this Submission will be of value to the Committee in its inquiry into the indicators of, and impact of regional inequality in Australia. A summary of our regional development and decentralisation submission is provided herein.

Charles Sturt University's submission to the Select Committee, outlined the University's perspective of the opportunities for and challenges to regional development and decentralisation in Australia. While our specific commentary and recommendations in the Submission were drawn from our century-plus experience, research, knowledge and skills in development of regional, rural and remote communities in southern New South Wales and northern Victoria, our commentary and recommendations are directly applicable to the development of all non-metropolitan Australia.

Charles Sturt University's believe that genuine, bipartisan commitment across all tiers of government to the coordinating of the long-term strategies and actions of economic, social and environmental stakeholders in any given region, will deliver positive outcomes and great benefit for Australians living in regional, rural and remote communities, including:

- i. growing regional populations to ensure internationally competitive relevance, increased standard of living and improved quality of life;
- ii. sharing economic, social and environmental access and equity between regional and metropolitan Australia;
- iii. enabling world-class experiences, cutting-edge skills development and global-knowledge transfer for people living in the regions;
- iv. increasing participation and productivity rates in regional economies, while concomitantly reducing future economic risk through diversification;
- v. attracting and retaining private and public-sector investment, including foreign investment in the industries and infrastructure needs of the future;
- vi. enhancing the vibrancy, cohesiveness and engagement of regional communities, particularly regional cities and rural towns; and,
- vii. positioning regional cities, not just as local service centres, but as places with unique value propositions and competitive advantages on a national and an international scale.

1. Charles Sturt University recommends that a regional development framework with the seven outcomes detailed above be agreed through a national partnership comprising all levels of government and that pragmatic and measurable goals and objectives be attached to each outcome.

Delivering positive outcomes and great benefit for Australians living and working in regional, including indicators of and actions for addressing inequality in regional, rural and remote settings will require rigorous system integration, that is:

- i. holistic, with long-term policy focus and program effort on the strategies, actions and tasks required to deliver regional, rural and remote development benefit;
- ii. built on strongly facilitated participation by all economic, social, cultural and environmental stakeholders in any given region that drives a very high level of distinguishing regionalism;

- iii. based on shared regional vision and leadership, with whole of stakeholder agreement and commitment to definable and measurable economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes;
- iv. governed and coordinated at the regional level, with management and operationalisation distributed to the communities that comprise each region;
- v. guided by a planning, reporting and communication framework, including an overall regional development strategy containing economic, social, cultural and environmental roadmaps and investment plans, including capital sources and public-sector budgets;
- vi. owned and championed by individual members of the community (at local, think global – “glocal”); and,
- vii. a market-based response, where government intervention is strictly in the public good and within the scope of an overall regional development strategy, for example, only decentralising government agencies where there is positive net benefit and investing in trade facilitation rather than subsidising corporate decentralisation.

To this end, Charles Sturt University’s principal recommendations to boost the performance of Australia’s regional, rural and remote development efforts, including indicators of and actions for addressing inequality in regional, rural and remote settings is to rigorously strengthen system integration.

2. Charles Sturt University, recommends that – arm’s length, bipartisan, beyond cycle and resourced and championed governance and management model be implemented as follows:

- a. Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and including Local Government Association (LGA), the Commonwealth would establish the Australian Regional Development Commission, the Commission would report to COAG, national plan Regions 2030 Unlocking Opportunity could provide the foundations on which to build this.**
- b. The Commission would be funded 50/50 by the Commonwealth, States and Territories and would work with bodies such as Infrastructure Australia and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), with initial seed funding over four years of \$10 billion.**
- c. Commissioners would be nominated Australia’s Regional Development Australia Committees (RDAs) and appointed by a COAG Regional Development Ministerial Council, while the RDAs would be resourced to operate as locally-championed regional branches of the Commission.**
- d. The Commission would be headquartered in regional Australia, located in Orange or Dubbo as geographically they are in the centre of regional eastern Australia.**
- e. The RDAs would be resourced to continue and improve their regional planning work, based on the framework set out above and would have greater involvement from rural and remote communities in each area, thereby creating a genuine hub and spoke with a regional city at its core.**

Successful regional development strategy, action and task implementation will require investment in infrastructure from road, rail and aviation, through to social and cultural service provision and information technology and communications. Above all else, equitable and accessible world-class communications infrastructure will be required to develop our regional, rural and remote communities in the digital age of the 21st Century will be essential to resolve the indicators of and actions for addressing inequality in regional, rural and remote settings.

Upgrading of the National Broadband Network (NBN) scope, so that very high speed, fibre to the home broadband can be delivered throughout regional, rural and remote Australia will be essential to catalyse growth of our regions and address inequality. It will also be crucial to ensure that Australian's living in regional, rural and remote Australia have the same economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities as Australians living in metropolitan centres. World-class broadband services are also essential to ensure regional wellbeing through access and equity in education, healthcare, government and financial services.

3. Charles Sturt University recommends an immediate, independent review of the NBN project be undertaken and that the NBN roll-out be significantly strengthened to ensure top-10 OECD ranking fibre to the home broadband services be made available to all Australians living in regional, rural and remote communities and that fibre to the CBD's of each regional city in Australia be increased to 1GBs.

All regions, including most metropolitan centres, with the possible exception of the outer ring suburban areas of Australia's largest cities, are generally well-served by physical infrastructure such as roads, utilities and aviation as well as social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and tertiary education and training providers. While gaps exist, there are examples, particularly in regional Australia of infrastructure investments being made before population demands justified expenditure. Infrastructure investment by both the public and private sectors must be driven by the needs of a growing population.

Through organisations such as Infrastructure Australia and the Government's City Deals initiatives, population growth in any given region provides the business case for investment and is generally delivered as and when it is required by the community. As Australia's regions grow so will infrastructure investment, the key is for the economic, social, cultural and environmental stakeholders in any given region to work together to grow the population to justify continued investment in infrastructure as a means to addressing infrastructure-created inequality.

Decentralisation of public sector organisations can play a vital role in the development of our regional cities but should only be undertaken where it fits with well thought through strategies and detailed plans based on cost-benefit analysis that contributes to each region's given strengths.

While Charles Sturt University believes there is a role for governments in facilitating the involvement of national and multinational firms in regional cities, we do not support government resources being directed to the decentralisation of private firms.

It is all about what fits best with regional strategies and plans and communicating the unique mix to attract organisations. A market-based response. It is about competitiveness of a region to attract, not for governments subsidise business or act as lender of last resort. Public investment in regional development must focus on enhancing competitiveness, particularly public good infrastructure, such technology and social services. We support governments playing a role in investment attraction but not in taking on or sharing investment risk. Such an approach will be essential to achieve sustained reduction in regional inequality.

4. Charles Sturt University recommends:

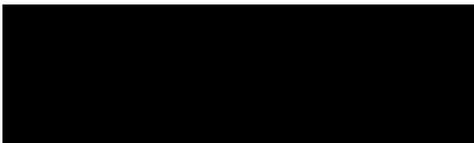
- a. government investment in regional development be restricted to public good and public accessible activities, including economic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure, such as technology, transport, education and training and health; and,**
- b. government provide funding, through the regional development governance and management mechanisms detailed above and through industry departments for the purposes of private sector investment attraction and facilitation, including foreign direct investment, while;**
- c. government must ensure that it does not use tax payers' funds to share or subsidise private sector risk or be trapped into acting as a lender of last resort to the private sector under any circumstances.**

Drawing on our *Charles Sturt University – Submission - Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation, House of Representatives - Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation* and our other recent parliamentary and departmental submissions detailed at Attachment 1, we have provided an extensive and detailed range of recommendations that we believe would contribute to addressing the indicators of and mitigating the effects of regional inequality in Australia.

Specifically, our recommendations would position the regional cities, rural towns and remote communities within the University's footprint for better economic, social and environmental outcomes which in turn would reduce, if not eliminate, regional inequality. Our recommendations are equally relevant to cities, towns and communities beyond our footprint in New South Wales and Victoria, as well as the rest of non-metropolitan Australia.

I would along with relevant Charles Sturt University representatives would be delighted to provide further information to the Committee and would be available to provide evidence at any proposed hearings that you may undertake in relation to considering the merits of the addressing inequality between Australia's regional, rural and remote communities and our metropolitan centres.

Yours sincerely



Professor Andrew Vann
Vice-Chancellor

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

ATTACHMENT 1

Senate Standing Committees on
Economics – Economic References
Committee

Inquiry into the Economic Indicators of, and Impact of Regional Inequality in Australia

30 April 2018

[Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment \(A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System\) Bill 2017](#)

Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Inquiry

8 June 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University recommends the following amendments to the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System) Bill 2017:

1.1 Recalibration of the Costs of Higher Education

Efficiency Dividend on the Commonwealth Grant Scheme

That the proposed Bill in its current form be amended to remove the proposed efficiency dividend on the Commonwealth Grant scheme.

Increased Student Share of Higher Education Funding

That the Bill in its current format be amended to delete all sections relating to increasing student share of higher education funding.

In amending the Bill or determining findings relating to proposed Bill, the Committee examine any modelling of the combined impacts of these measures particularly upon women and equity groups.

Medical, Dental and Veterinary Science Loading

That the proposed amendment to the Act detailed in the Bill proceed.

1.2 Reforms to the Commonwealth Grants Scheme

New Arrangements for Sub-Bachelor Courses

That the proposed change to new arrangements for Sub-Bachelor courses set out in the Bill proceed, with amendments to establish criteria for approved courses.

New Arrangements for Enabling Courses

That the proposed Bill be amended to remove the new arrangements for Enabling Courses.

Scholarship System for Postgraduate Coursework Places

That the proposed Bill in its current form not proceed in relation to the scholarship system for postgraduate coursework places.

Expansion of Support for Work Experience in Industry Units

That the proposed Bill in its current form proceed in relation to the arrangements for work experience in industry units.

Performance Contingent Funding for Universities

That the proposed Bill not proceed in its current form in relation to performance contingent funding.

That a national consultation process be undertaken before performance contingent funding is implemented.

1.3 Changes to HELP Eligibility and Repayment Arrangements

That the proposed Bill not proceed in its current form in relation to reducing the repayment threshold for HELP Repayment.

1.4 HEPPP Reforms

That the Bill be amended to allow for a five year improvement cycle in progress, instead of a three year improvement cycle. This amendment would allow for smoother and more accurate representation of trends in progress. This will allow for the overall impact of HEPPP post uncapping of places in 2012 to be taken into account.

That the Bill allow for performance funding weighted by the number of students who improve in addition to the percentage points improvement methodology contemplated.

1.5 Definition of Higher Education Award

That this Schedule of the Bill proceed.

[New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017 Inquiry](#)

New South Wales Legislative Council - Standing Committee on State Development

18 June 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University provides a range of recommendations relating to the policy outcomes and program objectives contained in the *New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017* that details the Government's defence industry strategy for the State as part of the New South Wales Parliament's Standing Committee on State Development as part of the Committee's inquiry into the defence industry in the New South Wales:

- 1.1 Maximise opportunities for NSW-based companies from Defence's growing exports and investment in defence capability – in both acquisition and sustainment

Charles Sturt University recommends that the New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017 defence industry strategy be implemented in its current form and that the Government consider further increasing its financial investment in the sector to ensure that its industry policy outcomes are achieved.

- 1.2 Encourage defence industry innovation, research and education including developing the future workforce

Charles Sturt University recommends that the defence industry innovation, research, education and future workforce elements of the New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017 be strengthened by direct Government investment, including:

- i. a defence industries technical skills development fund of up to \$25m per annum;***
- ii. a professional development fund of up to \$10m per annum; and,***
- iii. implementation of a "development-intensive" research fund of at least \$25m per annum modelled on the highly successful Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIRP) in the United States.***

- 1.3 Identify targets, programs and projects for defence spending in New South Wales

Charles Sturt University recommends establishment of a Ministerial Council for Defence Industry Development that would comprise members drawn from Defence, industry, scientific and community sectors.

- 1.4 Maximise the economic benefits of locating defence force bases and defence industry in the regions

Charles Sturt University recommends strengthening the regional development element of the New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017 by establishing a committee of the Ministerial Council for Defence Industry Development that we propose above, that would focus exclusively on maximising the regional economic benefit attained from colocation of Defence bases and defence industries in the State's regional centres, with membership of this committee comprising members drawn from regionally-based Defence, industry, scientific and community sectors.

1.5 How to establish and sustain defence supportive communities

Charles Sturt University recommends that the Government establish a \$5m per annum community development fund to support establishing and sustaining defensive supportive communities.

1.6 Further enhance collaboration between the NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies

Charles Sturt University makes no recommendations with regards enhancing collaboration between the New South Wales Government and Commonwealth agencies.

1.7 Any other related matters

Charles Sturt University makes no further recommendations regarding the policy outcomes to be achieved and the program objectives to be implemented as part of the New South Wales: Strong, Smart and Connected Defence and Industry Strategy 2017.

[Improving Completion, Retention and Success in Higher Education
Discussion Paper, June 2017](#)

Higher Education Standards Panel

7 July 2017

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations with regards the Higher Education Standards Panel's *Improving Completion, Retention and Success in Higher Education Discussion Paper*.

1.1 Setting expectations of completion

(1) Completion rates

Charles Sturt University recommends that formal expectations not be set for completion rates.

1.2 Enhancing transparency

(1) Data collection

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- no changes to data collection are required to enhance transparency and accountability; and,***
- attrition calculations be adjusted to accommodate study sessions that cross calendar years and to account for specific student related factors.***

(2) Government websites

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- student success, completion, retention and attrition data should be made available on the Department of Education and Training's website but not on QILT; and,***
- a completions calculator should not be provided for prospective students.***

(3) Student tracking

Charles Sturt University supports this element of the Panel's Discussion Paper.

1.3 Supporting students to make the right choices

(1) Student assistance

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- *Charles Sturt University supports the need for universities to raise the aspirations of prospective students through outreach and early intervention.*
- *Furthermore, Charles Sturt University, recommends that informed career advice be provided to young people from as early as primary school.*

1.4 Supporting students to complete their studies

(1) Support strategies

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- *Charles Sturt University argues that there are no universal best strategies, that the effectiveness of strategies are dependent on cohort and context.*
- *Charles Sturt University supports the nuanced use of a wide range of support strategies.*

(2) Entry-Exit pathways

Charles Sturt University supports increased flexibility, but argues it must be accompanied by support to navigate the increased complexity flexibility would create.

1.5 Disseminating best practice

(1) Evaluation approaches

Charles Sturt University makes no recommendations with regards disseminating best practices and evaluation approaches.

(2) International experience

Charles Sturt University makes no recommendations with regards disseminating best practices and international experience.

(3) Sharing best-practice

Charles Sturt University makes no recommendations with regards disseminating best practices and sharing best-practice.

(4) Embedding success

Charles Sturt University makes no recommendations with regards disseminating best practices and embedding success.

1.6 Regulating

(1) Compliance strategies

Charles Sturt University recommends that TEQSA continues to use its full range of powers proportionately to risk for Table A, B and C providers. We do not believe any additional powers are required, but accept that additional processes might be required for high risk Table C providers.

[Inquiry into Perinatal Services in Victoria](#)

Family and Community Development Committee

14 July 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University recommends the following with regards the improvement of perinatal services in Victoria:

1.1 The availability, quality and safety of health services delivering services to women and their babies during the perinatal period

Charles Sturt University recommends, as a first step to enhancing perinatal services in Victoria, that the State Government:

- *make access to the State's birthing statistical data bases open to the public with no charge; and,*
- *that the State Government put greater resources and effort into understanding Victoria's perinatal service requirements, including collection and analysis of birthing data for informed, evidenced-based decision making.*

1.2 The impact that the loss of commonwealth funding (in particular, the National Perinatal Depression Initiative) will have on Victorian hospitals and medical facilities as well as on the health and wellbeing of Victorian families

Charles Sturt University recommends that the Victorian Government advocate for reinstatement and full funding of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative by the Commonwealth.

Furthermore, as part of reinstating the Initiative, Charles Sturt University recommends that the State Government, whether in conjunction with the Commonwealth and/or in its own right make further resources available to:

- *boost availability of staff trained in perinatal depression identification and management;*
- *enhance perinatal depression training resources and the delivery of perinatal depression training with public vocational and higher education providers and in health institutions; and,*
- *clarify and effectively communicate perinatal depression screening protocols.*

1.3 The adequacy of the number, location, distribution, quality and safety of health services capable of dealing with high-risk and premature births in Victoria

Refer recommendation at Section 4.1(b) as a first step in addressing the adequacy of the number, location, distribution, quality and safety of health services capable of dealing with high-risk and premature births in Victoria.

- 1.4 The quality, safety and effectiveness of current methods to reduce the incidence of maternal and infant mortality and premature births

Refer recommendation at Section 4.1(b) as a first step in addressing the quality, safety and effectiveness of current methods to reduce the incidence of maternal and infant mortality and premature births in Victoria.

- 1.5 Access to and provision of an appropriately qualified workforce, including midwives, paediatricians, obstetricians, general practitioners, anaesthetists, maternal and child health nurses, mental health practitioners and lactation consultants across Victoria

Charles Sturt University recommends that the Victorian Government make funding available to substantially grow the perinatal services workforce in Victoria to ensure that the State's perinatal service workforce is appropriately qualified and operates at world's-best standards. This would include, amongst program elements, the following:

- ***establishment of a centre for regional, rural and remote midwifery practice in collaboration with Charles Sturt University's and La Trobe University's Murray Darling Medical School to deliver teaching and learning for the development of the midwifery profession and provide an industry research function, thereby providing the evidence base for governments to make policy decisions and develop and implement programs to enhance perinatal services in regional Australia;***
- ***engaging Charles Sturt University to design, develop and deliver a "midwife practitioner" course at Master's degree level, that would provide highly specialised midwives to work as independent midwives, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas of Victoria; and,***
- ***engaging Charles Sturt University to design, develop and deliver a "child health nurse" course, that would provide highly specialised child health nurses, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas of Victoria.***

- 1.6 Disparity in outcomes between rural and regional and metropolitan locations; and,

Charles Sturt University recommends, as a first step to enhancing perinatal services in regional, rural and remote Victoria, that the State Government:

- ***make access to the State's perinatal statistical data bases open to the public with no charge; and,***
- ***that the State Government put greater resources and effort into understanding regional, rural and remote Victoria's perinatal service***

requirements, including collection and analysis of birthing data for informed, evidenced-based decision making.

Furthermore, by adopting our recommendation at Section 4.5(b), Charles Sturt University, through the Murray Darling Medical School, could provide the Victorian Government with the capability and capacity to collect and analyse data on perinatal services in regional, rural and remote Victoria which would provide an evidence base from which governments can make sound policy decisions and design effective programs for service enhancement.

1.7 Identification of best practice.

Charles Sturt University recommends that the Victorian Government invest in a thorough and detailed analysis of perinatal best practice that draws on Victorian, Australian and international experience, and that such an investment include comparison of perinatal service best practice across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote communities to underwrite evidence based decision making.

Furthermore, by adopting our recommendation at Section 4.5(b), Charles Sturt University, through the Murray Darling Medical School, could provide the Victorian Government with the capability and capacity to collect and analyse perinatal best practice services across Victorian, Australian and international regional, rural and remote communities.

School to Work Transition

Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training

2 August 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University provides recommendations on nine key elements of Australia's school to work transition system, our recommendations are aimed at improving policy outcomes from and boosting program outputs of Australia's school to work system for the future success of all young Australians.

1.1 School to work transition policy outcomes

Charles Sturt University believes that transition from school to work policy outcomes must:

- provide access to all;
- enable individualisation of solutions;
- address generic problem-solving;
- engage the community – whole of student support system; and,
- guarantee benefit, at both the individual, institutional and community level that:
 - recognise and accept credentials authorising entry into career opportunities or postsecondary education programs;
 - placement or acceptance in post secondary vocational training and higher education programs;
 - placement in competitive or supported employment; and,
 - participation in continuing and adult education, adult services, and independent living in community settings.

1.2 School to work transition program design

Charles Sturt University believes success in transition from school to work program design, development and implementation aimed at meeting the aforementioned policy outcomes, relies on:

- pathways that deliver strong social capital in communities;
- transition programs that enhance the work skills and dispositions of young Australians to work – making them 'work ready';

- transition programs that develop significant human capital capabilities in young people which enable them to assume positions in the workplace more readily and with better outcomes for employers;
- ensuring considerable benefits to all parties involved in placing young people in quality programs that support the transition from school to work are realised;
- employers and potential employees being encouraged to trial an industry or company to ascertain if it was their preference;
- considering the demands of local sites, different opportunities are available for all stakeholders;
- involving considerable effort from schools and industry;
- providing options for addressing skill shortage, nationally but also locally;
- acknowledging that economic benefits are long term and should be built into the long-term planning of potential employers; and
- acknowledging that rural Australia may be particularly disadvantaged in offering options for transitioning young people from school to work as there are often limited options available in some towns for employment.

1.3 **School to work transition program outputs**

Charles Sturt University believes success in transition from school to work program interventions, or actions, incorporated into the design and development of school to work transition programs, must facilitate the following seven system outputs:

1. economic and education fundamentals as the foundation for good outcomes.
2. reduction in early school leaving as it is more efficient and effective than treating disengagement at a later stage.
3. rapid responses to disengagement.
4. formal participation requirements to drive effective responses for improving outcomes.
5. Individualised approaches, but recognise they are more expensive to deliver.
6. Solutions that are driven locally as they tend to be more sustainable and effective.
7. Integrated responses that help reduce confusion amongst participants and are more efficient and effective.

1.4 **School to work transition stakeholder responsibilities**

Charles Sturt University believes the development of work or study 'readiness' must be a joint responsibility of all stakeholders with definition of the roles and responsibilities and the theme of collaboration and partnership between schools, families and employers required:

- Schools (and families) predominantly have responsibility for assisting young people to start the development of Foundation Skills and Knowledge and Self-understanding.
- Some exposure to Broad Industry Understanding can take place at school, but that it requires the input of employers and industry.
- Tertiary education providers and employers are responsible for helping young people to develop Occupation-specific Skills and Knowledge.
- Employers are responsible supporting the development of Workplace-specific Skills and Knowledge, including making expectations of workplace behaviour and performance clear to young people.

1.5 School to work transition priority areas

Charles Sturt University believes that there are three broad priority areas for facilitating a successful transition from compulsory education to full-time work:

1. Getting educational fundamentals right:
 - Developing literacy and numeracy skills in early school years.
 - Strong and effective school leadership.
 - A robust curriculum.
 - High standards of teacher quality and effective accountability.
 - Appropriate recognition of school and student disadvantage in funding arrangements.
2. Promoting engagement and ensuring streamlined services are available for young people who are disengaged from employment, education and training:
 - Dealing more quickly with young people that become disengaged.
 - Creating integrated responses to promote engagement and facilitate re-engagement and in delivering such integrated responses managed their delivery in an accountability framework that answers:
 - Who should fund the elements and what level of funding certainty should be provided?
 - Whether the elements should be re-focused in any way, including eligibility criteria and target clients?
 - How to manage the transition from a National Partnership context?

3. Engaging business to increase opportunities and enhance the employability of young people:
 - Schools, the community and businesses need to work together in partnerships to create opportunities for successful transitions to meaningful employment.

1.6 School to work transition system governance

Charles Sturt University believes driving positive school to work transition will require effective system governance that involves all stakeholders in agreeing policy outcomes and setting program outputs, including:

- A clear scope and agenda for its operation.
- Funding and secretariat support to enable data collection, analysis and dissemination.
- Fewer meetings of higher value, including one face-to-face meeting focused on the annual reporting of data/trends and interpretation from experts in the field.
- A continued commitment to openness of discussion and sensitivity to specific jurisdictional contexts.
- A forum for responding to emerging policy issues and priorities.

1.7 School to work transition measurement and reporting

Charles Sturt University believes that measuring and reporting will be crucial and that effective measuring and reporting should provide a basis for evidence-based decision making in the governance of Australia's school to work transition system, however to deliver effective system measurement and reporting and number of barriers will need to be addresses, including:

- the widespread lack of understanding and confidence in how to measure these school to work transition capabilities at the individual, institutional and community wide level in a way that is authentic and meaningful;
- concerns about what the results of the assessment of these capabilities might be used for and that this might further disadvantage those who are already struggling, or that results may not be interpreted accurately by employers, perhaps for diagnostic or self-reflection purposes rather than for summative reporting; and,
- no point in establishing a benchmark for certain capabilities if there are not mechanisms in place for helping students to reach those benchmarks.

1.8 **An effective policy framework for school to work transition**

In summary, Charles Sturt University proposes a school to work transition policy framework that we believe would deliver positive results at the individual, institutional and community level, our five-part framework includes:

1. Workplace specific skills and knowledge.
2. Occupation specific skills and knowledge.
3. Broad industry understanding, including career pathways and necessary attributes and skills.
4. Self-understanding, including an understanding of own strengths, weaknesses and interests and how these might relate to work, as well as an ability to manage own behaviour in a work situation.
5. Foundation skills and knowledge, not only literacy and numeracy skills, but also skills that provide a foundation for applying technical knowledge and skills, (such as digital literacy, learning, problem solving, innovation, communication and reflection skills) and a basic understanding of the world of work.

1.9 **An operative program design for school to work transition**

Finally, Charles Sturt University proposes a school to work transition program design that we believe would deliver positive results at the individual, institutional and community level, our 10-part design includes:

1. Effective assessment.
2. Real communication and active motivation.
3. Fitness for purpose.
4. Value for money.
5. Logistics – including technological considerations and professional development needed for teachers and other stakeholders to deliver.
6. Reliability – training and education consistency and assessment over time.
7. Validity – drawing upon many sources of evidence.
8. Fairness – by avoiding any bias created by elements that are not being assessed (such as lack of familiarity with the language or context).
9. Credibility – amongst those who have a stake in the outcomes of the assessment.
10. Simplicity and clarity.

1.10 **Gain in school and how this contributes to supporting students to prepare for post-secondary education and training**

Charles Sturt University provides a series of recommendations to improve gain in school and how this contributes to supporting students to prepare for post-secondary education and training in this submission. Please refer to the recommendations set out earlier in this Section under the following key elements of Australia's school to work transition system:

- School to work transition program design.
- School to work transition program outputs.
- School to work transition stakeholder responsibilities.
- School to work transition priority areas.
- School to work transition measurement and reporting.

1.11 **Better inform and support students in relation to post-school education and training**

Charles Sturt University provides a series of recommendations to better inform and support students in relations to post-secondary education and training in this submission. Please refer to the recommendations set out earlier in this Section under the following key elements of Australia's school to work transition system:

- School to work transition program outputs.
- School to work transition stakeholder responsibilities.
- School to work transition priority areas.
- School to work transition measurement and reporting.
- An effective policy framework for school to work transition.
- An operative program design for school to work transition.

1.12 **Other possible initiatives to enhance school to work transition outcomes**

Charles Sturt University provides a series of recommendations in relation to other possible initiatives that could enhance school to work transition outcomes in this submission. Please refer to the recommendations set out earlier in this Section above under the following key elements of Australia's school to work transition system:

- School to work transition policy outcomes.
- School to work transition program design.
- School to work transition program outputs.

- School to work transition priority areas.
- An effective policy framework for school to work transition.
- An operative program design for school to work transition.

Independent Review Regional, Rural and Remote Education

Australian Government

29 August 2018

2. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University recommends the following with regard strengthening Australia's regional, rural and remote education system for better economic, social and environmental outcomes for students and our communities across Australia:

2.1 The gap in educational achievement between regional, rural and remote students and metropolitan students

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

- ***That student aspiration and capability built in and through schools be recognised as essential for regional, rural and remote educational outcomes and that governments directly invest in this area of comparative market failure (when compared to metropolitan outcomes).***
- ***That educational pathway options for regional, rural and remote students be greatly expanded to materially deliver access and equity gains for non-metropolitan Australians. Refer to recommendations provided by Charles Sturt University in submission to the Senate Education and Training Committee Inquiry of 7 July 2017 regarding the proposed Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System) Bill 2017).***
- ***The design, development and delivery by higher education training providers of a greater range of Bachelor programs that articulate from vocational education and training (VET) diplomas and Certificate 4s, including greater integration between levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF), including amendment of National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR) and Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) regulations to enable nesting of VET and higher education qualifications and vice versa.***
- ***That Government, Schools and tertiary education continue to focus and investment in participation and success programs by government, schools and tertiary education and training providers, including continuation and expansion of HEPPP, particularly in regional, rural and remote Australia.***

Again refer recommendations provided by Charles Sturt University in submission to the Senate Education and Training Committee Inquiry of 7 July 2017 regarding the proposed Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System) Bill 2017).

2.2 The key barriers and challenges that impact on the educational outcomes of regional, rural and remote students, including aspirations and access issues

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

- ***That governments design and implement funded programs that support pathways for non-traditional students in regional, rural and remote Australia, building on the successful interventions and learnings of the University.***
- ***That governments design and implement pathway programs that build on the regional retention results of the Graduate Outcomes Survey and the crucial role the University plays in developing and securing skills for the regional workforce, which in turn supports the viability of regional businesses and communities.***
- ***That governments provide additional funding for the University to work with schools and their communities in promoting the benefits of, and developing aspiration for, higher education across non-metropolitan Australia. This work has been demonstrated to be a prime influence in the increasing number of university enrolments by regional, rural and remote students reported in the national data.***
- ***That governments provide additional support and funding to enable higher education to provide role models (for example, university academics, graduates working in the community, and non-metropolitan focused teaching, learning and research institutes such as the proposed Murray Darling Medical School), noting that for universities to be able to continue to influence regional secondary students in this crucial area public funding will be required.***
- ***That to provide an appropriate evidence base, government support and expand Charles Sturt University's pilot research into the barriers and challenges that impact on the educational outcomes of regional, rural and remote students (CIN Educational Consulting & Charles Sturt University, Office of Indigenous Affairs). This work would include aspirations and access issues to address this as a first step to enabling all regional, rural, remote school leaders, onsite access to contextually relevant, face-to-face professional learning and on-going support.***
- ***That governments, collectively utilise individual rural and remote schools as the contextual centre for professional development for principals and school executives. Such work would include ongoing and professional support, delivered by experienced rural and remote education experts insitu.***
- ***That State governments partner with universities, such as Charles Sturt, to prepare and accredit professional development for educators specifically for rural and remote school leadership in rural and remote communities throughout Australia, this would include pre-teaching appointment and on-going insitu professional development and mentoring.***
- ***The Review team examine Charles Sturt University's early research findings referred to herein and conduct consultations within the pilot communities that this nascent work is being undertaken in, as well as request the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training to partner with the University to progress this research enquiry for tailored,***

contextualised and insitu professional development of rural and remote educators for improvement of student learning outcomes (CIN Educational Consulting & Charles Sturt University, Office of Indigenous Affairs).

- 2.3 The appropriateness and effectiveness of current modes of education delivered to these students, including the use of information and communications technology and the importance of face to face regional, rural and remote education provision

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

- *That the Commonwealth Government, as a matter of national urgency, immediately review, refine and revise its information technology and communications policies, to ensure that all Australians, including those in regional, rural and remote Australia have world's-best access to the internet.*
- *To this end, the Commonwealth Government's national broadband network initiative be expanded to provide full fibre (or equivalent) to the home for all regional, rural and remote Australians, noting that failure to do so will consign non-metropolitan Australia to great education disadvantage and irrelevance in the digital century.*
- *That technology and communications related initiatives in the Commonwealth Government's Regions 2030 Unlocking Opportunity policy statement be revised to reflect the two recommendations above, and that following revision of the policy statement and our two recommendations above be funded in full and implemented as a matter of priority to ensure a viable future for regional, rural and remote Australia.*
- *That technology and communications related initiatives in the Commonwealth Government's Regions 2030 Unlocking Opportunity policy statement be revised to reflect the two recommendations above, and that follow revision the policy statement and our two recommendations above by funded in full and implemented as a matter of priority to ensure a viable future for regional, rural and remote Australia.*
- *That government devise new and effective ways of financing information technology and communications access, hardware and software for regional, rural and remote students and their family's that consider the often very short life spans of technology products, noting that current public funding models to do not take into account the useful life of technology, and therefore subject regional, rural and remote students to additional disadvantage over their metropolitan peers.*
- *Finally, Charles Sturt University supports the recommendations provided by Mr Craig Petersen, the Principal of Denison College of Secondary Education and Deputy President of the New South Wales Secondary Principal's Council, in his submission to the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education.*

Also, refer to recommendations in Section 1.5 below.

2.4 The effectiveness of public policies and programs that have been implemented to bridge the divide

Charles Sturt University supports the recommendations provided by Mr Craig Petersen, the Principal of Denison College of Secondary Education and Deputy President of the New South Wales Secondary Principal's Council, in his submission to the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education.

Charles Sturt University has made a number of other recommendations in Section 4.5, that we believe would strengthen effectiveness of public policies and programs that have been implemented to bridge the divide between regional, rural and remote education outcomes and those of metropolitan Australia.

2.5 The gaps and opportunities to help students successfully transition from school to further study, training and employment

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

1. *Development of complementary investment in soft resources that leverage the use of existing hard resource facilities in regional Australia.*
2. *An agile funding model that removes barriers to cross-sector collaboration and rewards engagement with community and industry. In particular, a dedicated strategy to enable education providers to develop seamless transitions between Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education providers (Acer: [credit based pathways in tertiary education](#)) (NCVER; a half-open door: pathways for VET award holders into Australian universities 2013), including:
 - *a continuing focus on implementing the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) operational guidelines for pathways, in particular working towards guaranteed entry into Higher Education courses for VET award holders;*
 - *combined educational leadership from all three sectors, with dedicated, senior roles that hold responsibility for collaboration and education pathways;*
 - *investment in systems to monitor student progress and achievements within and between all three sectors (enabled through the Universal Student Identifier (USI); and,*
 - *accessible, well-structured information about pathway options for students and key influencers (including parents and careers counsellors).**
3. *A model that has a core function of maximising the use of technology and capacity building around digital service delivery in a way that addresses disparities in regional capacity and ability (Morgan, 2016) and addresses*

substantial growth in regional to metropolitan migration for Higher Education study (a 75 per cent increase between 2008 – 2014) (National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education; Regional Student Participation and Migration 2017).

- 4. Education pathways that address existing and emerging workforce needs, customised for regional communities. The pathways should have a focus on digital ability, critical thinking and entrepreneurship and critically, expose students to industry and vice versa.**
- 5. Incentives for earlier and deeper collaboration between both the schools and VET sectors, and the Higher Education sector. This would include more opportunities for schools and VET students (and key influencers such as parents) to engage with their local education providers both within the school, VET campus and on Higher Education campuses.**
- 6. More coordination around pathway promotions within schools, between Higher Education and Vocational education providers, with the intent of reducing duplication and triplication activities (and to ensure that no school misses out).**
- 7. A continuing focus on the professional development of community and industry leaders within regional Australia, alongside and in collaboration with educational leaders. This professional development should focus on building an advanced capability for collaboration in complex and changing environments, managing ambiguity and stakeholder engagement.**
- 8. A core requirement, for digital ability and capacity be raised. Digital inclusion research indicates that regional Australians are 20 per cent less likely to use online technologies to manage their work and personal lives than the national average (Roy Morgan, Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2016). With technological impacts cited as one of five disruptive megatrends for the next 10 years by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC: [what is a megatrend and why do they matter?](#)), a dedicated focus will help to bridge this gap.**
- 9. A broader definition of information and communications technology (ICT) investment within education sectors. While Professor Halsey's Discussion Paper touches on the need for innovation in the use of ICT (Pages 33 & 34), it does not address regional disparities associated with community ability in the use of ICT. Specific investment is required to ensure that once technologies are accessible, teachers and educational leaders can make the best use of this technology. This would include investment in best practice use of videoconferencing and collaboration between networks of connected education providers.**
- 10. A continued focus on providing opportunities for students to access education and training in the regional areas that they reside. Students who study in regional areas tend to remain in regional areas after graduation and provide a ready supply of professionals to fill critical regional roles (Acer:**

Credit based pathway in tertiary education).

2.6 Innovative approaches that support regional, rural and remote students to succeed in school and in their transition to further study, training and employment

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

- ***that the Aspiration and Outreach agenda be continued;***
- ***that university school zones for partnership activity between universities be established to allow for greater collaboration between institutions;***
- ***ongoing targeted support tailored to address access, participation and success issues faced by Indigenous peoples who reside in regional, rural and remote areas; and,***
- ***strategies to enhance Indigenous participation should be designed in conjunction with local communities and embrace a whole of university approach.***

Furthermore, in this respect, Charles Sturt University recommends ongoing targeted support tailored to address access, participation and success issues faced by Indigenous peoples who reside in regional, rural and remote areas.

We also recommend that strategies used should be designed in conjunction with local communities and embrace a whole of university approach. That is, success in this area will not be enhanced by central, standardised approaches. For example, Charles Sturt University's Strong Moves mentoring program, links to Future Moves and to the Indigenous Student Centres at the University. This mentoring program was built in consultation with parents and students from our local communities and provides a seamless relationship for school students with staff and students in the University.

2.7 Charles Sturt University - Learnings from regional New South Wales and Victoria and potential intervention strategies to boost regional, rural and remote educational outcomes.

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

- ***that the Aspiration and Outreach agenda be continued;***
- ***the proposed budget reforms that remove enabling funding to be rejected;***
- ***that consideration is given to the need for additional strategies to effectively support and engage regional rural and remote students who study by distance education; and,***
- ***that three-year funding streams for outreach funding are established.***

Furthermore, Charles Sturt University supports a minimum three-year HEPPP funding stream to encourage schools' continued partnerships and

participation, as per the August 2017 EPHEA statement:

This three-year funding stream would mean that equity practitioners can coordinate widening participation and retention programs, resources and partnerships more effectively and sustainably.

(EPHEA 2017, Information to Government Representatives regarding the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment [A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System] Bill 2017.)

We also recommend that the Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education examine the early research findings from work currently underway, including that of Charles Sturt University. In particular, we recommend that the Review consult face-to-face with the pilot schools and communities and drive a partnership with the University to progress the pilot and research enquiry.

Finally, we recommend that the Review team consider the early trends emerging from this research and partner with Charles Sturt University for further development of the model.

Reforms to Modernise Australia's Visa System

Australian Government - Department of Immigration and Border Protection

15 September 2017

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University recommends the following reforms to modernise Australia's visa system:

1.1 Policy Consultation Paper - Visa Simplification: Transforming Australia's Visa System

- (1) Scope for reduction in the number of visas from 99 at present, to approximately ten visas

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system;
- changes to the visa system reduce processing times and ensure consistency in outcomes;
- any changes to the visa system are made with recognition to the differing characteristics of applicants in Australia's diverse education system;
- the retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian universities; and,
- that the government should maintain short term visa pathways (such as the current 600, 601, 651 and 400) that allow for overseas academics and specialists to enter Australia for short periods of time to undertake highly specialised activities and attend academic meetings.

- (2) Delineation between temporary entry and long-term or permanent residence

Charles Sturt University recommends the retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian universities.

- (3) Role a period of provisional residence could play in enhancing the integrity of the visa system and easing the burden on taxpayers

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian universities;

- recognising time spent studying in Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency; and,
- a period of provisional residence could indeed assist the enhancement of the integrity of the visa system by securing our investment and retaining our best people. This could be achieved by individuals remaining with their sponsoring institution or their nominated occupation for a defined period. However, the implementation of provisional residence as the only pathway for permanent residency could also be a hindrance for our sector and a flexible approach is necessary in order to:
 - not limit the ability of academics to apply for competitive Category 1 funding;
 - provide settlement opportunities (for example, ability to secure mortgages); and,
 - ensure the reduction in exposure to additional costs of living, such as;
 - state-based fees for public schooling; and
 - health care costs.

(4) Ensuring that our visa system supports Australia as a competitive and attractive destination for temporary and longer-term entrants

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- that all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system;
- that changes to the visa system reduce processing times and ensure consistency in outcomes;
- that the financial support threshold or application fees are not increased against key competitor markets;
- the retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian Universities;
- no change to existing framework for dependents and other family members extended to student visa holders; and,
- consideration of increases to - the number of student visas for students who elect to study in a non-metropolitan location.

(5) Simplifying our visa arrangements

(a) What would a system with approximately 10 visas look like?

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- any changes to the visa system are made with recognition to the differing characteristics of applicants in Australia's diverse education system;
- all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system;
- changes to the visa system reduce processing times and ensure consistency in outcomes; and,
- the financial support threshold or application fees are not increased against key competitor markets.

(6) What factors should we consider when simplifying the visa system?

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- assessing visa applications are supported by clear, standardised and objective criteria,
- consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency of outcomes,
- all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system; and,
- the financial support threshold or application fees are not increased against key competitor markets.

Charles Sturt University also refers the Department, to the University's recent submission to the Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation which is currently being undertaken by the Select Committee of Regional Development and Decentralisation of the House of Representatives of the Australian Parliament, which contains a range of recommendations regarding international students studying in regional Australia.

(7) What should be the key characteristics of a simplified and flexible visa system?

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- assessing visa applications are supported by clear, standardised and objective criteria; and,

- consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency of outcomes.

(8) Temporary and permanent residence

(a) What distinctions should apply to temporary and permanent visas?

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- the retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian universities;
- considering increasing the number of student visas for students who elect to study in a non-metropolitan location;
- recognising time spent studying in Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency; and,
- recognising time spent studying in regional Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency.

(b) What requirements should underpin a migrant's eligibility for permanent residence?

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- recognising time spent studying in Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency; and,
- recognising time spent studying in regional Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency.

(c) Should a prospective migrant spend a period of time in Australia before becoming eligible for permanent residence? What factors should be considered?

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- recognising time spent studying in Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency;
- recognising time spent studying in regional Australia as part of any time threshold in considering eligibility for permanent residency; and,

- providing consideration to the provision of an extended post-study work rights are lengthened should employment in regional areas be prioritised by the applicants who find employment in regional areas of Australia.

(9) Modernising Australia's visa arrangements

- (a) What role does the visa system play in ensuring Australia remains attractive to the best and brightest temporary and permanent migrants?

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- that all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system;
- that consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency in outcomes;
- that changes to the visa system are made with reference to the settings imposed by key international education competitor markets; and,
- the retention of a class of visa that support post study work opportunities for graduates of Australian Universities.

- (b) Will an efficient visa system that is simple to understand and quickly assesses risk make Australia a more attractive destination? Why?

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency in outcomes;
- changes to the visa system are made with reference to the settings imposed by key international education competitor markets; and,
- all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system.

- (c) To what extent should the Government collect biometrics from visa applicants?

Charles Sturt University recommends that all changes to the visa system are announced with adequate time to prepare and educate the

market with clarity around the policy settings of changes to the visa system.

1.2 **Delivering visa services for Australia - Market Consultation Paper**

- (1) Ways to create an efficient, sustainable and innovative service delivery model

Charles Sturt University recommends:

- consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency in outcomes; and,
- changes to the visa system are made with reference to the settings imposed by key international education competitor markets.

- (2) New technologies and innovative solutions to help design and build a global digital visa processing platform

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- consideration be given to administrative processes that increase efficiencies delivering savings in time processing and consistency in outcomes; and,
- changes to the visa system are made with reference to the settings imposed by key international education competitor markets.

1.3 **Attracting and Retaining World-Class Teaching, Learning and Research Workforce**

Refer commentary and suggestions provided in Section 4.4 below.

1.4 **Distinguished Talent Pathway – Barriers to World-Class Workforce Attraction**

Refer commentary and suggestions provided in Section 4.5 below.

[Inquiry on the Impact of Technological and Other Change on the Future of Work and Workers in Australia](#)

Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers

20 February 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University recommends the following with regard the future of work and future workforce capabilities:

1.1 The Future Nature of Work

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

That:

- *Technology literacy will be crucial to maximise participation in workforce of the future.*
- *Future workforce productivity will depend on individual talent that is creative, innovative, entrepreneurial and resilient.*
- *Individuals, as well as education and training providers, must be incentivised to undertake and provide science, technology, arts, engineering and maths (STEAM) studies, as well as globally-focused commercial studies, particularly international markets and finance.*
- *Australia must aim to exceed the OECD average for public R&D expenditure in support of the recommendations above.*
- *Building on initiatives, such as the National Science and Innovation Agenda (NISA), see <http://www.innovation.gov.au> and the Prosperity Through Innovation Statement of January 2018, see <https://industry.gov.au/Innovation-and-Science-Australia/Pages/default.aspx>, Australian governments must adopt a national technology transformation agenda, much like the leadership shown by the Victorian Government in the 1990s with regards multimedia.*

1.2 Impact of the Changing Nature of Work

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

That building on the recommendations put forward above, governments and the private sector will not only have to continue but increase investment in technology infrastructure, as “nice-to-have” infrastructure becomes “critical-utility” for future economic and social development, for example broadband connectivity being the railway line of the 21st Century.

1.3 Wide Effect of the Changing Nature of Work on the Economy, Society and the Environment

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

That, building on University Australia’s 2010 work regarding Australia’s future academic workforce, <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/news/commissioned-studies/Academic-Workforce#.WnOZnkxuJjo>, that the Australian Government, through COAG develop and implement, with the tertiary education and training sector, a national strategy for ensuring Australia maintains and assembles a technology-orientated academic workforce through the 21st Century.

1.4 Adequacy of Legislative Frameworks for the Future Nature of Work

That the Australian Government, work with industry, unions and the tertiary education and training sector to undertake a review of, develop and implement findings, of the Fair Work Act 2009 and related legislative instruments to ensure that Australia’s industrial relations system is 21st Century technology fit-for-purpose to ensure international competitiveness for the future of work.

1.5 International Efforts – Capturing the Opportunities and Meeting the Challenges of the Future Workforce

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

That the Commonwealth Government commission suitable service providers to undertake a comprehensive review of international efforts aimed at capturing the opportunities and meeting the challenges of the future nature of work, with the report providing the basis for stakeholder consultation regarding the future of work and the nation’s workforce.

1.6 Other Future Work and Workforce Considerations – In Regional, Rural and Remote Communities

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations:

That the recommendations detailed above regarding the future of work and the future workforce be developed and implemented with specific consideration given to the specific circumstances and unique needs of regional cities, rural towns and remote communities across Australia.

[Advice on the Impacts of Professional Accreditation in Higher Education](#)

The Higher Education Standards Panel

30 April 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations regarding the Higher Education Standards Panel's (the Panel) advice on the impact of professional accreditation in Australian higher education and opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden on higher education providers:

1.1 Assessment for Accreditation of Professional Competencies

Charles Sturt University recommends that the findings of the Higher Education Standards Panel's regarding the accreditation assessment of professional competencies by professional associations as set out in *The Higher Education Standards Panel's Advice on the Impacts of Professional Accreditation in Higher Education*, be accepted by the Government and be implemented in full.

1.2 Professional Associations - Accreditation Capability & Capacity

Charles Sturt University recommends that the findings of the Higher Education Standards Panel's regarding the capability and capacity of professional associations to accredit university graduates and tomorrow's future workforce as set out in *The Higher Education Standards Panel's Advice on the Impacts of Professional Accreditation in Higher Education*, be accepted by the Government and be implemented in full, subject to the Commonwealth ensuring that the:

- policies, procedures and systems of accrediting organisations be simplified, streamlined and aligned wherever possible, particularly at the course level, but also at the discipline and industry level too;***
- enhanced management, administration and reporting mechanisms proposed by the Panel do not incur additional costs for higher education providers; and,***
- common, technology platform solution only be implemented if the Government is prepared to provide sufficient funding to ensure such a solutions success – both in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.***

1.3 Stakeholder Engagement – Education Providers & Professional Associations

Charles Sturt University recommends that the findings of the Higher Education Standards Panel's regarding the Government's forward stakeholder engagement with education providers and professional associations to ensure the most efficient and effective professional accreditation system possible in Australia for tomorrow's future workforce as set out in *The Higher Education Standards Panel's Advice on the Impacts of Professional Accreditation in*

Higher Education, be accepted by the Government and be not only implemented in full but be strengthened to ensure as close as possible to align policy, streamline process and integrate system for accreditation efficiency and effectiveness.

1.4 Observations from Regional Australia - Professional Accreditation

Charles Sturt University recommends that particular attention be given to research, findings, analysis and recommendations regarding professional accreditation in regional Australia, to ensure the regional higher education providers can efficiently and effectively work with professional accreditation organisations to ensure that Australia's regional cities, rural towns and remote communities have access to the professional workforce required today and into the future to ensure the prosperity of non-metropolitan Australians.

Closing the Gap – the Next Phase

Australian Government

30 April 2018

1. Recommendations

Charles Sturt University makes the following recommendations regarding future Closing the Gap reforms, policies, initiatives and programs:

1.1 Recognising the Value of Tertiary Education & Training

Charles Sturt University recommends that:

- i. the value of tertiary education and training be recognised in the ongoing Closing the Gap agenda, not just for school leavers and young adults, but all First Nations people including Elders.*
- ii. all education programs are designed to enable all First Nations students to engage in their own education in ways that enable them to achieve the successful outcomes they desire from the learning experience. Life experience, closely aligned with language and culture, is a strong determinant in what students want to learn and how they wish to pursue the necessary learning experiences.*
- iii. real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together to effect change, adoption of enhanced reporting mechanisms, measuring actual performance with meaningful and tangible indicators, valuing culture and custom in study and agreeing targets for responsibility of management and accountability of governance.*
- iv. unlocking the value of tertiary education and training will require:*
 - equality of study outcome, not just equity in participation;*
 - learner support to ensure capacity for moving forward and better futures;*
 - greater reach, depth and presence in remote Australia, including recognising the role of digital technology and face-to-face study hubs, but that the logistical and financial challenges associated with connectivity in remote communities and locations must be overcome;*
 - de-alienation of learning spaces, including actions to overcome sheer loneliness and inability to engage; and,*
 - continual improvement and investment in pathways from school to tertiary education and training, as well as for adults (without accredited qualifications or who have disengaged from formal education) to access vocational education and training as well as higher education.*

1.2 Enabling People to Work Effectively Together

Charles Sturt University recommends that real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together to effect change, including through:

- ***commitment to a process of genuine and meaningful engagement that reduces and, in the future eliminates systemically and structurally racist ideas and beliefs;***
- ***acceptance and recognition, including constitutionally, legally through treaty and truth commission;***
- ***authentic collaborative conversations that enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to work together for a better future;***
- ***address feelings of inadequacy through recognition of the genuine challenges of learning in remote communities, and being from a remote community;***
- ***building and maintaining relationships with communities to support greater involvement in learning needs;***
- ***cultural competency training and education for institutional staff (and students);***
- ***draw on educators and trainers with learned-experiences;***
- ***inclusion of these themes in curriculum, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; and,***
- ***above all else, in concert with key stakeholders provide a welcoming environment in which to learn.***

1.3 Enhancing Reporting

Charles Sturt University recommends that real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on adoption of enhanced reporting mechanisms, including through reporting processes that:

- ***are informative and transparent;***
- ***allow for Indigenous Australian's to be respected and have their say about what matters to them, and what is important to report on;***
- ***are collaborative in nature, with Indigenous ownership;***
- ***are genuinely consultative and outcomes focused (rather than "tick-the-box" bureaucracy);***
- ***draw on feedback and really focus on need for change;***
- ***manage and report quality and risk of reconciliation through continual improvement and a constant quest for Elder input and knowledge; and,***
- ***inclusion of non-Indigenous students and staff of education and training institutions in equity and equality and the interplay between all cultures.***

1.4 Using More Effective & Meaningful Performance Indicators

Charles Sturt University recommends that real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on measuring actual performance with meaningful and tangible indicators, including through:

- ***development of an agreed definition of what closing the gap in education means, what it is expected to deliver and how success will be measured (beyond NAPLAN, Year 12 completion etc.);***
- ***metrics for education and training institutions commitment to First Nations;***
- ***ensuring non-Indigenous Australians learning about First Nations' culture, custom, people and communities, at the regional and local level, again with metrics for progress***
- ***metrics must take into account that not all Indigenous people, their Nations and their cultures are the same;***
- ***customised and targeted education and training performance measurement that is culturally inclusive and linguistically appropriate (learning from the poor integration of NAPLAN questions with Indigenous and remote community cultures);***
- ***consistent with 1.2 and 1.3 above, metrics should be developed and refined by listening to Indigenous Australians to ensure outcomes are tangible and real (and genuinely understanding need to close the gap); and,***
- ***recognising that effective and meaningful key performance indicators are crucial to close gaps – as, what gets measured gets done.***

1.5 Enabling People to Understand & Value Their Differences

Charles Sturt University recommends that real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous valuing culture and custom in study, including through:

- ***education journeys that are grounded within First People's own cultures and languages;***
- ***providing a sense of belonging that ensures that Indigenous students become critically engaged in the learning process;***
- ***recognising that reconciliation is more than a legal definition of title, but is more about connection to country, and the nation's history, knowledge, language, culture and stories;***
- ***strategies to combat disadvantage and promote positive futures embedded in teaching and learning plans;***
- ***revitalising language as a solution for inclusivity, including education and training delivery in First Nation languages and teaching of First Nation languages to non-Indigenous Australians, particularly at the regional level;***
- ***not only empowering students, but also enabling a quality of learning engagement that is equally satisfying for the teacher and fellow learners;***

- *striving to ensure that the world in which we live is one that values us as human beings who are valued for our ‘common humanity’, ie. we measure our worth by the way we are treated by others; and,*
- *as the basis for enabling people to understand and value their differences adopt a both ways education model for future teaching, learning and research in primary, secondary and tertiary education.*

1.6 Enabling People to Commit to Targets for Responsibility & Accountability

Charles Sturt University recommends that real progress to close the gap through tertiary education and training will depend on all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous agreeing targets for responsibility of management and accountability of governance, including through:

- *traditional knowledge, shared understanding and be evidence-based, or at the very least, be embedded in research that will provide a future empirical evidence base; and,*
- *performance management descriptors that promote, encourage and reward closing the gap initiatives in education and training, at the organisational, contractual (in the case of service delivery agreements) and personnel level, including, but not limited to the following higher education commitments and targets for responsibility and accountability:*
 - a. further development of cultural competency frameworks which clearly map targets for responsibility and accountability across training organisations and education providers;*
 - b. further formal research into decolonising and indigenising measures;*
 - c. development of research that identifies and focusses on the aspirations of local Indigenous communities within the sphere of across training organisation and education provider influence;*
 - d. developing innovative and engaging online training courses in cultural competency for all staff throughout their term of employment. Where possible, modules will be developed, and face-to-face delivery will be undertaken by qualified Indigenous staff;*
 - e. the review of all hybrid subjects to ensure cultural competency is achieved across training organisations and education providers and the tertiary education system (possibly through ASQA and TEQSA);*

- f. the Indigenous schools of training organisations and tertiary education providers will undertake community-based research to build and maintain relationships between all education and training providers including, the secondary school system, and industry or local businesses; and,***
- g. student participation and retention in Indigenous knowledge and cultural subjects to be measured through internal analytics generated from enrolments, face to face and online student activity across training organisations and education providers.***