

Jodie Shipway
Deputy Mayor | Councillor for Division 4

T (07) 3480 6705
M 0458 696 146
E Jodie.Shipway@moretonbay.qld.gov.au



26 September 2023

Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
suburbanhubs@education.gov.au

Dear Minister

SUBMISSION: IMPLEMENTING SUBURBAN UNIVERSITY STUDY HUBS

I welcome your announcement of the Suburban University Study Hubs Program as the Government's response to one of the five immediate actions of the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report (Interim Report).

City of Moreton Bay (Council) supports UniSC's response to the Interim Report (submission dated 1 September 2023) and requests that Council be consulted when your Department undertakes stakeholder engagement to identify locations for the Suburban University Study Hubs.

As outlined in the Mayor's submission to the Australian Universities Accord Panel dated 3 April 2023, no other region in Australia with similar proximity to a capital city was as poorly serviced by universities as Moreton Bay, our city is Australia's third largest local government area with a population of more than 500,000 residents growing to almost 800,000 by 2046. As a result, our city had tertiary participation levels well below the Queensland and Australian averages.

The UniSC Moreton Bay campus at Petrie, opened in March 2020 as the first greenfield campus in Australia in 20 years. Thanks to our vision and the support of the Federal Government, this campus has been a success story and has made major inroads into lifting tertiary participation levels in our city with 40 per cent of the 4,000 students first in family.

However, much work remains to be done to address disadvantage in Moreton Bay, especially in the north of our city requiring a high need for additional higher education support.

Customer Service Contacts

PO Box 159 Caboolture QLD 4510 | **T** (07) 3205 0555
E council@moretonbay.qld.gov.au | **W** moretonbay.qld.gov.au

For example, Caboolture is an area of City of Moreton Bay with even lower higher education participation rates than the rest of the region and low socio-economic status. While UniSC has a second campus at Caboolture, co-located with TAFE Queensland, it is a campus with only limited offerings (nursing and tertiary preparation pathways).

While I am confident your Department's quantitative data analysis and research will identify Caboolture as a location with an existing need for a Suburban University Study Hub, Council believes this need becomes even greater when taking into account Caboolture's future demand for higher education support services.

Waraba, south-west of the Caboolture CBD, is one of South East Queensland's largest greenfield growth areas and one of twelve growth fronts in City of Moreton Bay. It is expected to be home to 70,000 residents over the next 40 years. The first development application for 2,050 homes was approved by Council in June this year.

While Council is advocating strongly to the State Government for the planning of reliable, safe and accessible transport systems, the reality is that access to VET providers and universities will be challenging for the future residents of Waraba. A Suburban University Study Hub at Caboolture will provide much needed support and help reduce the burden that these study hubs were designed to address.

As your consultation paper outlines, *"too often someone's postcode is a brick wall that stops Australians going to university. The cost of moving closer to a campus or a long commute is a major barrier to study."* A study hub initiative in Caboolture can help our region smash through that brick wall and provide greater opportunities for further education to an area that has for too long been ranked one of Australia's highest socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

Congratulations again on announcing the Suburban University Study Hub Program. Council looks forward to being consulted as part of the Department's work to identify locations.

Should you have any further queries in relation to this matter, please contact Joshua O'Keefe, Chief External Relations Officer, on 0403 768 927.

Yours sincerely



JODIE SHIPWAY

Acting Mayor

Our ref: 68012794

cc Professor Helen Bartlett - Vice-Chancellor & President, UniSC

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