

11 September 2017

Emeritus Professor John Halsey
Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education

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Dear Emeritus Professor Halsey

The University of Queensland endorses the Go8 submission to the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education and provides the following additional responses to specific questions in the July 2017 discussion paper.

As the first university established in Queensland, we strive to live up to expectations as The University **of** Queensland (UQ) and to support students across the State. Almost 15% (or around one in seven) of our domestic students are from a rural or isolated area (as defined by the Australian Government, according to the students' permanent home address). As you are no doubt also aware, UQ has a major regional campus at Gatton, which is situated in the Lockyer Valley and enrolls slightly more than 2,000 students (just over 1,600 EFTSLs).

We have worked over the years to develop strong ties in our communities, through the work of our staff and outreach to student groups. A small number of these initiatives and activities is profiled very briefly below, in response to specific questions raised in your discussion paper.

6.2.4 What innovative approaches could be taken to support a high quality teaching workforce for regional, rural and remote school communities?

- UQx has been working with the Brisbane School of Distance Education and the IMPACT Centre to make use of UQx MOOCs in Science, Philosophy and Critical Thinking programs being offered online to schools around Queensland.
- UQ has partnered with the Princess Alexandra Hospital to provide a range of health outreach services to patients in rural and remote Queensland using telehealth technology (<https://coh.centre.uq.edu.au/service-area/pah-telehealth-centre>); since opening in 2012, approximately 12,000 consultations have taken place, to more than 46 sites around Queensland from 23 different specialities and among its benefits, we would include the ability to empower and upskill people working and living in those communities.
- Our Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences has received funding from the Department of Health to establish a University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), a joint initiative with USQ, Darling Downs and South West Hospital and Health Service, which will have a focus on providing placement opportunities for students in rural locations, upskilling the current workforce to supervise student placements, and increasing the number of students with a rural background in our health programs.
- UQ's Rural Clinical School provides high quality medical education and training experiences for students in rural and regional areas, with the main teaching sites being located at Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba, providing learning resources and facilities that support and facilitate face-to-face, bedside and online learning. Recently published research suggests that a rural background and

undertaking training in a rural area make it more likely that medical graduates will go on to work in a rural area (<https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2017/07/medical-students-more-likely-go-rural%E2%80%99-background-and-training-combination>).

6.4.2 What motivates regional, rural and remote students to succeed and how can they be supported to realise their aspirations?

6.6.4 What gaps need to be addressed to help students transition successfully to further study, training or work?

6.7.2 What could be done to expand the opportunities available to regional, rural and remote students to access high quality education?

Failure to identify as a university student has been identified as a key impediment to access to, retention in, and completion of degree programs at university for students from underrepresented groups. UQ has launched a number of initiatives aimed at building aspiration towards undertaking tertiary studies, providing a realistic understanding of what “going to university” involves, supporting familiarization with being on-campus, and building academic capabilities and confidence.

UQ is also a member of the Queensland widening participation consortium and works in collaboration with other Queensland universities, focussing on the Ipswich and Lockyer District. In 2016, our staff delivered 174 engagement activities to 13 schools in the Ipswich and Lockyer District, with more than 8,000 students participating.

Our research also indicates that financial stressors are a significant factor for many of our students. In the 2016 SES, 13.9% of UQ students reported that they had considered leaving; just under a quarter (23.3%) of domestic students selected financial difficulties as the reason. To address this issue, we provide a number of scholarship schemes including UQ-Link, which is awarded to all commencing students who have been assessed as eligible for the scheme. In 2017, 627 students (249 new students and 378 continuing students) received scholarship support through the UQ-Link program. Expanding financial support to more regional and remote students to assist with relocation costs and day-to-day living expenses would be helpful.

Activities with a regional/remote focus include:

- UQ Young Achievers Program (YAP) is aimed at building tertiary aspirations of low SES students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who are enrolled in state secondary schools in the Ipswich, Logan, Brisbane South, Toowoomba, the Darling Downs, and the South West, Wide Bay and Bundaberg regions of Queensland. Students in Year 10 are nominated for the Program by their School Principals. Since its establishment, 799 students (including 220 students currently in Years 11 and 12) have benefited and just over 58% of these have completed their secondary schooling and accepted the offer of a place at UQ, another university, or a TAFE college.
- InspireU is a tertiary aspiration building program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, delivered in collaboration with community and industry partners, and involves a series of residential camps themed around the professional disciplines of Engineering, Science, Law, Business, and Health Sciences, as well as interactive workshops and regular communications from program coordinators and ‘catch up’ sessions. In 2016, 102 students participated in the program, across 78 schools.
- Deadly Choices Pathways to Success is an aspiration building program that provides mentoring, guidance and educational support for Indigenous youth, focussing on three key content areas (developing life skills, leadership and education) and involves both personalised and small group learning support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in junior secondary schooling, with a particular focus on students in Years 9 and 10.

- Enhanced Studies Program offers online university level courses to Year 12 students.
- Rural clinical schools engage students in a variety of initiatives including “doctor for a day” (hosting around 36 students every year) in the Hervey Bay area, a scenario-based work experience program (up to 75 students each year) and the inaugural ASPIRE2Medicine (around 35 students from 15 different secondary schools) in the Toowoomba region, and ExperienceMedicine@UQ (more than 100 students over the last two years) in the Rockhampton area.
- FEAST program is a residential camp held at our Gatton campus to showcase careers in agriculture and vet science.
- UQ Outreach encompasses UQ Experience Days, on-campus experiences, in-school activities (including a school visit to Mt Isa made in conjunction with the Brisbane Broncos), Sport Experience Days, and the Young Scholars Program.
- UQ Critical Thinking includes academic preparation programs such as the Enhanced Studies course WRIT1999 Effective Thinking and Writing for low SES Year 11 students and the QCS Booster program for low SES students and teachers (involves mentoring and tutoring students in developing strategies for the Queensland Core Skills Test).
- Other outreach activities include programs for parents and Professional Development for teachers. We know that parental support is crucial, so the Program for Parents workshops are designed to help family members and carers understand what students are learning in their Critical Thinking classes and how they can better support their learning and inquiry at home. The teacher professional development involves delivering CPD in Critical Thinking Pedagogy Content Knowledge or “Teaching for Thinking” to more than 300 teachers from low-ICSEA schools and those participating in the Solid Pathways program.

6.9.2 Are there innovative models of accommodation delivery that could benefit regional, rural and remote tertiary students studying away from home?

UQ is building student residences at its St Lucia campus which will strongly feature cluster apartments of between eight and 12 students (single occupant bedrooms and bathroom facilities, with shared kitchen and living spaces) to support a transition from, typically, living at home and moving to more independent living. We are also including a number of shared rooms in order to offer a wider choice of living arrangements and a range of more affordable price points.

6.8.3 How can schools/teachers in regional, rural and remote areas be supported to meet the individual learning needs of all students?

6.8.4 How can we create and sustain vibrant, high quality learning environments in regional, rural and remote schools?

UQ has established a specialist educational technology unit (UQx) which produces and delivers massive open online courses and small private online courses (respectively, MOOCs and SPOCs). The significant benefit of providing online courses is the ability for students to personalise their learning, for example, by repeating a section that they may not initially understand. We are applying many of the learnings from our production of MOOCs, to adapt into in-class settings (for example, the ‘flipped classroom’ approach where students complete the reading before class in order to participate in more active learning with their peers). In addition, a number of MOOCs feature our research and teaching in regional Australia, including for example,

- [World101x Anthropology of Current World Issues](#) features three modules shot in regional locations where UQ anthropologists have active research projects. Two modules on Indigeneity were shot at Gummingurru near Toowoomba and in the gulf region of Northern Queensland. The third module on unconventional gas mining was shot on the Darling Downs.

- [Sharks! Global Biodiversity, Biology, and Conservation](#) is a collaboration with Cornell University and features UQ's marine research stations on Heron Island and Moreton Bay Research Station on Stradbroke Island.
- [AbleX](#) Intellectual Disability Healthcare series examines the barriers and enablers for people with IDD and their carers to access healthcare, and a number of case studies feature families in regional areas.

In closing, I would like to extend an invitation to the review to visit The University of Queensland Gatton campus to see first-hand UQ's impact in a regional community (both to our students and our staff, and the local community) and to meet with staff leading our widening participation and outreach programs. The Gatton campus has a particular focus on agricultural and animal sciences and is the site of the 3.275 megawatt Gatton Solar Research Facility. At the recent Open Day, we welcomed around 2,600 visitors.

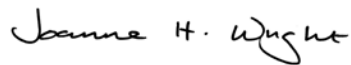
I would also like to note the impact that our research can have in creating more vibrant rural communities which, in turn, impacts on educational opportunity; just two examples of our collaborations are provided here:

<http://www.uq.edu.au/research/impact/stories/the-tree-of-shelf-life/>

<http://www.uq.edu.au/research/impact/stories/indigenous-opportunity-sprouts-from-desert-discovery/>

I trust these few comments will be useful. Please contact my office (dvca.office@uq.edu.au) if we can provide any additional information.

Yours sincerely



Professor Joanne Wright

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)