

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

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Department of Education and Training

Via email to: CGS@education.gov.au

Re: Consultation Paper on the Reallocation of Commonwealth Supported Places for Enabling, Sub-bachelor and Post-graduate courses

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the national discourse on the proposed reallocation of Commonwealth Supported Places for enabling, sub-bachelor and post-graduate courses.

The following is a broad-spectrum response to the issues/questions raised in the consultation paper which are most pertinent to USQ. This response should be considered in conjunction with the response submission to this consultation made by Regional University Network (RUN), of which USQ is a member.

Issue/question: Should geographical representation be a consideration in distribution of places?

The geographical representation should be a significant consideration, along with access, participant and attainment rates, in the distribution of places for enabling courses. There needs to be a more reflective representation of regional places compared to metropolitan places for enabling courses.

Limiting places will have an impact on sub-bachelor places, as students from regional and remote areas will not be prepared with enabling course skills to go into sub-bachelor programs.

Given the remote location in which some students reside, regional universities may represent their only viable option for tertiary study. If there are limited places for enabling courses, these students will be significantly disadvantaged.

Issue/question: What proportion of places should be reallocated? Should this vary for enabling, sub-bachelor and postgraduate places?

USQ agrees there needs to be better allocation of designated places at all levels that is reviewed regularly for distribution effectiveness both within fields of education and across institutions. It is recommended that consideration also be given to how the funding process may facilitate longer-term strategic planning, particularly in light of future community needs and University plans to meet those needs through a continual review of offerings.

USQ would support a three-year re-allocation process to ensure the funding is responsive to changing and emerging needs and allowing sustainable university business processes. For enabling places, it is recommended that this process also be linked to the calculation of enabling loading to ensure that universities are adequately funded for enabling students.

USQ does acknowledge the administrative overhead in an annual re-allocation process. Therefore, if it was deemed more effective to link the re-allocation to the negotiation of the funding agreement, a process by which universities could seek to request further places in interim years would be required.

Issue/question: How should criteria be configured to ensure that institutions' do not become 'locked out' of future reallocations, especially where they have a limited track record in delivery?

With reference to the criteria for "innovative teaching models" for the reallocation of enabling places, this has been drafted to favour institutions that may compete with universities in a potential tender process. Therefore, there is a need for a basis in established practice to ensure that there is a quality student experience.

If required, I would be pleased to elaborate on the matters raised in this submission.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mackenzie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Geraldine Mackenzie
Vice-Chancellor