



## **Submission to the Government Review of Universities December 2022**

I am writing this submission on behalf of the Capricorn Community Development Association (CCDA) based in Rockhampton Central Queensland, with Associate Members based in Rockhampton, Gladstone, Biloela, Woorabinda, the Central Highlands, Barcaldine and Longreach.

CCDA is a regional, independent, non-funded, incorporated community organisation that facilitates community to find solutions to its challenges. Its membership (800+) includes individuals and organisations from across the broad range of the human services sector. We provide a place-based voice for this region with local, state and federal governments and other strategic agencies and organisations.

CCDA has taken a strong community development perspective in the views being put forward in this submission.

From our standpoint regional universities are crucial to both the fabric and survival of the communities they serve. Communities are shaped by their essential symbiotic relationship with their own local campus. This is particularly evident in any regional community fortunate enough to host a main campus, however this relationship also exists within other smaller communities. The viability of regional universities is essential to ensuring thriving, sustainable rural and regional communities across Australia.

Within the Review's Terms of Reference, equity is a key priority for CCDA. Equity for students and equity for the regional universities themselves.

For students, CCDA strongly supports the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program for domestic undergraduate students from a low SES background, students from regional areas and remote areas and Indigenous students.

For universities, CCDA recommends regional universities receive long-term sustainable and equitable funding for higher education models that enable students from disadvantage backgrounds achieve academic success. This funding must adequately cover the additional costs that occur when supporting disadvantaged students, working in thin markets and for required essential travel.

In terms of meeting Australia's skills and knowledge needs, now and in the future, employers benefit from partnering with local universities to ensure that the skills and



knowledge being built meet the needs of businesses and industries in regional and rural locations. Maintaining this connection is critical for sustaining the future regional and rural workforce.

It has been drawn to CCDA's attention that current government funding provides universities with regional subsidies of 5% for Rockhampton and 10% for Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. Under this funding model, CQUniversity earns more revenue if they have students studying from their northern campuses, rather than studying in Rockhampton. CCDA believes that this is a matter that needs to be considered by the Review and addressed.

Further CCDA identifies funding for research undertaken by regional universities as a priority. It is crucial that regional universities receive sufficient funding to remain inclusive teaching and research universities, contributing to their community's sustainability. Research underpins the capacity of rural and regional communities to learn, adapt, face future challenges and take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new knowledge acquired.

With the importance of the research undertaken by regional universities in mind CCDA believes that the Review should identify the sustainability of current research funding as minimum acceptable baseline whilst seeking opportunities to keep improving the funding model.

CCDA cannot stress strongly enough the importance of thriving regional universities to the long term sustainability of their connected communities. Having local access to education and training, with a broad variety of courses available is important from the perspective of students and regional workforce development needs, which in turn provide services for the people of our local and regional communities.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to contribute to Government Review of Universities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. H. Paton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light blue rectangular background.

Sandy Paton  
Chair  
Capricorn Community Development Association