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Trading as Capricorn Enterprise

Tuesday 13th December 2022

Professor Mary O’Kane AC (Chair)
The Accord Panel
Australian Universities Accord

RE: Capricorn Enterprise Submission to the Australian Universities Accord

Capricorn Enterprise is one of Queensland’s thirteen (13) official membership based Destination Management Organisations and is recognised as the peak business and industry body for the Capricorn Region within Central Queensland and the Southern Great Barrier Reef destination. Our organisation is chartered to deliver a number of key services, including assisting with the facilitation of a strong, healthy and diverse local economy through Destination Marketing, Business Support, Visitor/Tourism Servicing and Investment Attraction.

Capricorn Enterprise represents a diverse range of local business and industry across the region, from accommodation providers and food services to civil engineers and professionals, many of whom have accessed educational opportunities at local, regional or other universities.

A common concern among our members is that training and education is available locally that meets the needs and demands of industry today and into the future. Local access to education and training, delivering a wide variety of courses is important for prospective students and regional workforce development needs, which in turn provide services for the people of our local and regional communities. Ensuring regional universities remain comprehensive teaching and research universities, is also important to ensure the communities we serve continue to thrive.

Regional universities are important and significant contributors to regional economies, through direct and active engagement in the community as well as the contributions of multiple students’ needs catered on and off campus. The use of university facilities and grounds by community members and organisations is also well utilised and recognised.

Regional universities service vastly different student cohorts with historical characteristics of inequity and disadvantage, when compared to metropolitan universities. Regional markets often operate with smaller class sizes generating less revenue for the university while still incurring similar or higher expenses, and means very different associated business models for regional universities compared to their metropolitan counterparts. Therefore, we value prioritising the importance of a sustainable and equitable funding model for higher education that supports access and attainment.

Current government funding provides universities, such as locally based CQUniversity Australia, with regional subsidies of 5% for Rockhampton and 10% for Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. Under this funding model, CQUniversity earns more revenue if with students studying in northern campuses, rather than studying in the home campus of Rockhampton.

As more than just a centre for further education in the region, these universities provide:

- opportunities for students from local schools through events and learning experiences to develop a love of learning and open their eyes to future education possibilities;
- local support and guidance for tertiary students with on campus guidance, tutors, lecturers and support staff as well as residential schools for distance students;
- forums for local employers and companies to engage with the academic community in developing relevant and topical curriculum; and
- a space for community and sporting events and much more.

As such, for regional universities to continue to try and provide as much as possible to their local communities, they need to be funded accordingly. In contrast to metropolitan universities that become centres of excellence where students simply catch a different bus or train to access the necessary classes and services, regionally based students have more limited options.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact me on 07 4927 2055 or email

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mary Carroll', written in black ink.

Mary Carroll
Chief Executive Officer