I am delighted to have an opportunity to submit a response to the information being gathered as part of the Australian Universities Accord. My connection is to Central Queensland University (CQU) at their main Rockhampton Queensland Campus. I am neither an academic nor a graduate. My connection has been as its (retired) Community Relations Officer as part of the Graduate Office for approximately 9 years and then for the past 6 years as a lay member of the Human Ethics Research Committee. With this background, my viewpoint of the value of CQU to the communities it serves may be slightly more slanted toward the ability of our communities to thrive through our privilege of having a local University. The increased research I have been able to read over the past few years has also underlined the value our researchers have added, especially to local knowledge, on all manner of subjects. It is exciting work. It goes without saying that regional catchments are totally different to metropolitan catchments with their almost unending supply of prospective students, and this is a point I hope to underline. There is not a never-ending supply of students. Our reach covers many hundreds of kilometers with the attendant travel/accommodation/additional costs to be considered by students, their families and the University. Outreach campuses certainly help, but obviously increase associated management costs. From a regional perspective, the hope is always that if they study in town, they’ll choose to stay in town and contribute to the local community, businesses, agriculture and industry. Sustainable and equitable funding MUST be available for the University to encourage, offer and then provide courses that are as ‘do-able’ for Farmer John’s son studying by distance ‘ed’ with his laptop in the tractor while he ploughs, as they are for the student that lives across the road in town. There is an ongoing need for the provision of a wide variety of courses to cover the wide variety of regional needs, many covering subjects metropolitan Uni’s would have no call for. This often leads to low student numbers per course but if regional universities are to continue to offer accessibility, affordability and sustainability for the communities they serve, ongoing and viable funding to support the employment of valued lecturers, researchers and support staff to allow this to happen, is essential. I am appalled to be told that there is an inequity of funding with Rockhampton receiving 5% and Mackay and Townsville and Cairns receiving a 10% funding rebate. The logic of that is lost on me when Rockhampton is the main campus and administration centre for the University with the largest number of staff and providing the largest amount of support services. If it is based on city population alone then scant knowledge is held about the satellite feeder towns such as Gladstone, Emerald, Biloela, Longreach, Barcaldine etc. etc., all of whom rely on Rockhampton as their ‘big smoke’. Our graduates have just been celebrated for 2022 and the good news stories have been once again celebrated by family and friends and the graduates themselves. Part of that celebration is related to the fact that the majority of graduates were able to stay at home while they studied, enriching the lives of their families while they contributed to the regional economy as valuable staff for local businesses as well as being consumers. Many local businesses contribute to the great employability outcomes of CQU by extending training and experience opportunities and offering full-time positions even before graduation. This is extremely important within a limited regional population. As well, the community is a massive beneficiary of CQU's largesse with strong support for too many organisations for me to list here, who would falter without the provision of facilities; information; personnel (both student and staff); sponsorship and much more. I am confident that these values are attached to all Universities but I would seek to underline the absolute importance of this University to the ongoing success, even survival, of Rockhampton and the communities it serves. To be provided with fair and equitable funding to not only provide opportunity for students who are historically academically disadvantaged by virtue of their family's choice of residence, but to also, through that funding, be indirectly supporting regional communities and business, agriculture and industry should be high on the list of considerations put before this inquiry. This regional university and others in similar situations should not be considered the poor cousin to their metropolitan family members. It is my strong belief that their value to the country’s growth and ability to thrive cannot be underestimated. With respect. Glenys Kirkwood . Mobile : Email : .