Parliamentary Inquiry into Geographical Differences in the Rate in which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

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1 Overview of delivery at each of the Gordon Institute of TAFE's campuses

1.1 Geelong Study Area and Overall Gordon Institute of TAFE Delivery

In 2007 the Gordon Institute of TAFE delivered 3,975,922 Student Contact Hours (SCH) in government funded, VET in VCE and fee for service programs. The Institute has two main campuses located at Fenwick Street in Geelong and East Geelong. Other campuses in the region are at Colac and Barwon Prison. The Institute offers programs locally, nationally and internationally. The local area is represented by the diagram below showing the Geelong Study Area.

[Diagram showing Geelong Study Area with various locations and regions labeled]

Based on 2001 Statistical Subdivision Boundaries
Source: Census of Population and Housing 2001
1.2 2005 to 2007 Enrolment Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student enrolments in the academic year</td>
<td>14,975</td>
<td>14,848</td>
<td>14,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course enrolments</td>
<td>19,677</td>
<td>19,937</td>
<td>20,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people aged between 15 to 19 years</td>
<td>2,771</td>
<td>2,688</td>
<td>2,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course enrolments for 15 to 19 year olds</td>
<td>3,248</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>3,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolments in VCAL/VCE</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures are for new enrolments in an academic year only, ie excluding enrolments spanning over more than one year. Approximately 2,000 extra students and course enrolments can be added to the above to show actual enrolments spanning over the academic period.

There has been a decline in student numbers and course enrolments from 2002 where 15,900 student enrolments in the academic year and 23,613 course enrolments over the academic year were recorded. However, there has been an increase in Student Contact Hours since 2002. The trend indicates that students are enrolling in longer programs.

1.3 Apprentice/Traineeship Enrolment Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of apprentices</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of trainees</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>1,174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Campus and VET in VCE Enrolment Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students studying at East Campus</td>
<td>4,867</td>
<td>4,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students studying at Fenwick Street Campus</td>
<td>6,154</td>
<td>7,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of VET in VCE students (from secondary schools)</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that there is a higher proportion of students undertaking fee for service courses at the Fenwick Street campus—approx 4,075. Approx 2,133 students are enrolled in fee for service programs at East Geelong.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total SCH delivered at East Campus (approx)</td>
<td>1.48 mill</td>
<td>1.38 mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SCH delivered at Fenwick Street Campus (approx)</td>
<td>1.65 mill</td>
<td>1.78 mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SCH delivery at Colac Campus (approx)</td>
<td>16,480</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Access, equity and other student support services offered by the Gordon Institute of TAFE to assist students who may face geographic or other barriers to education

2.1 Counselling and Careers

The Counselling and Careers Unit is staffed by a team of professional, personal and career counsellors. The unit offers Vocational Counselling as follows:

- Free and confidential counselling for prospective and current students
- Current students assisted with job applications, resumes, interview skills, employment information, etc
- Career Resource Centre located at Fenwick St campus next to the Library, resources include university handbooks, TAFE directories, VTAC guides

The unit also provides Personal Counselling services such as:

- Free and confidential counselling for current students
- Mediation services for students and staff for dispute resolution
- Financial counselling, eg course and material costs

The unit manages other services such as Skill Up—supporting retrenched workers in the region; the Student Support Fund; and other scholarships. The unit offers workshops for students such as internet job searching, and relaxation and stress management

2.2 Disability Support Services

Types of support:

- Advice regarding physical access
- Adaptive or specialist equipment
- Class notes in accessible formats
- In class support—notetaker or participation assistance
- Sign interpreting
- Tutorial support

2.3 Learning Support Services

Learning Support Services staff provide academic and study skills support for students across the institute. The service provides individualised and flexible support in essay and assignment writing; reading and notetaking; maths and computing; support for ESL students; and general writing skills. Teachers often identify learning difficulties in the classroom and
refer students to Learning Support Services. The structure of support services varies and includes one to one appointments, small groups and drop-in sessions in the library.

2.4 Youth Guarantee

The Youth Support team is staffed by five dedicated, professional youth workers and supported by an administration/customer service officer.

Young people who have left school and have not completed Year 12 or equivalent may access places via the Youth Guarantee program. The program provides access to entry level courses for 16–19 year olds; individual support for students and staff; and documented pathways planning for students.

2.5 Youth Access Centre

The Youth Access Centre provides a Centrelink-approved program designed to meet the educational needs of young people aged 16–19 who are not at school. Students have the opportunity to improve their self-esteem and experience successful study outcomes. Youth Access is for young people who:

- have not completed secondary school
- need skill development and preparation for further study, training or work
- need further career direction
- are unsure of vocational training opportunities
- are unemployed

Other services include: mentoring, pathways planning, individual counselling support, opportunities for work experience, links to other youth programs, and breakfast facilities.

2.6 VCE/VCAL

The Institute’s VCE and VCAL programs are open to people who are not in school and returning to study. The programs are supported by a Youth Support Worker. The cohort generally consists of young parents returning to study, home schooled students, those who have exited school, students moving from pathways programs such as general education and youth access.

2.7 Work Education

The Certificate I in Work Education is a full-time, one year program for young people with special learning needs and/or learning difficulties looking to move into employment. The course offers a range of vocational training options. The program is supported by Youth Support Workers managing Individual Learning Plans (including liaison with parents), vocational placements, personal counselling, personal management, etc.

The Youth Support team support other programs such as:

- Schools partnerships—co-delivery models, programs supporting youth at risk of leaving school, etc
- Transition Education—programs for students with special learning needs from secondary schools, community based agencies’ programs
3 Supply and demand for accommodation at the Gordon Student Residence and alternative housing options for students studying at the Institute

The Gordon Institute of TAFE’s Student Residence has a capacity of 51 beds. For the past five years the Residence has remained full (100%) until the end of the academic year. Over Christmas/New Year the Residence generally has 25% occupancy. Approximately 90% of the current residents are studying full-time courses at the Institute.

At the commencement of the 2008 academic year there were 25 full-time students on the Residence’s waiting list. At 28 April 2008, four students have applied for accommodation for 2009.

Students on the Residence’s waiting list are informed of other options and referred to the Gordon’s Student Activities area for further assistance.

Affordable accommodation is often difficult to source in the Geelong area. There is also increased competition from the growing number of international students in the region seeking accommodation.

4 Challenges and achievements of Gordon Institute of TAFE in assisting students to articulate into higher education

The Gordon Institute of TAFE and Deakin University have a strategic alliance that facilitates collaboration between both parties to maximise access to education opportunities for students from both organisations. Over 65 courses have documented pathways from the Gordon to Deakin University. Similar pathways opportunities exist with other universities.

The benefits in the TAFE to university pathways are both financial, ie no HECS fees, and academic via the preparation for study in a higher education setting offered at TAFE.

Popular pathways programs at the Institute include:

Sport Many of the students who enter the Diploma of Sport Development after completing Year 12 have not been successful in their bid to access Human Movement or similar courses at university, and/or face financial barriers. They are also able to complete the Certificate IV in Fitness while completing the diploma. This qualification allows the students to work as fitness instructors and personal trainers while studying. The students are able to maximise credits from both qualifications and most take up pathways in teaching and/or human movement.

Nursing The pathway from the Certificate IV in Nursing (Division 2) to the Bachelor of Nursing is a popular pathway for exiting secondary school students and mature age people. The majority of the Gordon’s graduates seeking Division 1 nursing access Deakin University’s degree program. The Certificate IV in Nursing is currently a one year full-time course and graduates are able to access a summer school offered by Deakin University and may enter the second year of the degree program with advanced standing. Students are able to work as a Division 2 Nurse before taking up the pathways option or while studying at Deakin.

Children’s Services The Diploma of Children’s Services provides direct access to the third year of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Development offered at both Deakin University and the University of Ballarat. A pathway to the diploma also exists for non Year 12 or
mature age students with the entry level required from the Certificate III in Children’s Services.

Other popular pathways programs include Building Design, Business and Management, Information Technology, and Environmental Sciences.

It is planned to promote pathways from the Gordon to Deakin University in Colac for 2008 Year 12 exiting students in response to the On Track data indicators for Colac showing low take up of places at university or Certificate IV or above courses in TAFE. It is planned to initially focus on Nursing and Children’s Services/Early Childhood Education. These pathways are also valuable for mature age people living in the Colac area.

Access to online and remote services in the Colac region will also be enhanced with the development of the education precinct in the Colac Beechy Centre. The Gordon’s and Deakin University’s Colac students will be able to access learning services equivalent to the facilities available at both institutions’ major campuses.

5 The role and effectiveness of the Certificates in General Education and other preparatory programs in improving education opportunities for disadvantaged young people and adults

Courses such as the Certificates in General Education and Certificate I in Vocational Preparation are valuable preparatory programs for early school leavers and mature age people to offer pathways to vocational and higher education. Second chance education is a very important element of a TAFE setting. The new environment and different peer groups can build confidence and help move individuals from negative past experiences.

The Institute provides vocational taster programs for secondary school Years 9 and 10 students in the region mid year prior to VET in VCE selection. Many students cannot afford the additional costs associated with VET programs.

The Institute has entered into partnerships with secondary schools to provide access to vocational tasters and careers information for their students. Some examples are:

Approximately 160 Year 9 students from Colac Secondary College completed vocational taster programs in Automotive, Children’s Services/Early Childhood Development, Agriculture/Dairy, Nursing/Allied Health, Conservation and Land Management, Hairdressing, and Beauty Therapy on 17 and 21 April 2008 at our Colac campus. The program was developed based on courses offered in Colac, skills shortage data and potential employment prospects in the area.

Nine male Year 9 students considered to be at risk of disengaging from education have been enrolled in the Certificate I in Vocational Preparation. The program will be delivered by staff from Colac Secondary College, auspiced by our Youth Programs department and will incorporate vocational training offered at our Colac campus in Agriculture, Automotive, Horticulture and Carpentry (based in Geelong). A tour of the East Geelong campus will be provided at the end of the program.

The Girls’ Big Day Out was held at the Institute’s East Geelong campus on 22 April 2008. Approximately 100 Year 9 girls tried a variety of trades. The aim of the program is to encourage girls to consider trade training options. The project has been running for several years and is managed by BacLinks and is sponsored by the Gordon, Alcoa Foundation, Geelong ATC, G-Force, VECCI, Geelong Manufacturing Council and GRVEC.
Seventy-two Year 9 students from Newcomb Secondary College started the Certificate I in Vocational Preparation in April 2008. An induction program was held on Friday, 11 April for all students and approx 15 parents were in attendance. The students will be studying at either our East Geelong or Fenwick Street campuses each Friday to the end of term. Their training incorporates OHS and workplace skills including hands on training in five different vocational areas. In term three the remaining Year 9 students – approx 70 – will undertake the program.

Feedback from the partner schools has been very positive with reported improvements in students’ knowledge and attitude to vocational training. Parents also need access to vocational careers information. The value of vocational training and accessibility needs to be promoted to parents more effectively. The success of the programs described above has assisted in getting the message to parents. Positive messages are being presented by the participants.

6  Programs and services provided to assist Indigenous people to attend and succeed in TAFE studies

In addition to the student services described in section 2 of this document, the Institute has an Indigenous Education Unit located at the Fenwick Street campus in Geelong. A full-time Indigenous Liaison Officer is employed to support indigenous students across the Institute.

In 2006 and 2008, the Institute has been successful in tendering for vocational preparation courses for young indigenous secondary school students. In 2006 some classes catered for up to 19 students. The programs allow students to gain hands on experience in a range of vocational settings such as automotive, building, engineering, electrotechnology, plumbing, bricklaying, cookery, hairdressing, beauty therapy and health.

The Indigenous Education Unit is supported annually by equipment and tutorial grants. The Institute works in partnership with the Wathaurong Education Centre and was successful in 2006 in gaining funds to refurbish the education centre. Programs are offered from the centre for the Wathaurong community.

The Institute aims to improve the participation and Module Completion Rates (MCR) of Indigenous students. In 2007 the overall MCR for the Institute was 78.6%, the result for Indigenous students was 72.5%, and 66.6% including Corrections Education students at Barwon Prison where literacy and numeracy are extremely low.

Recruitment of Indigenous students into Koorie specific programs is often difficult. In 2007 the Institute had 187 course enrolments by identified Indigenous persons.

7  Challenges and achievements of the Distance Education Centre in providing access for students experiencing geographic barriers to education

The Institute offers 10 Distance Education courses in a range of business courses, such as Medical Administration, Human Resources, Management, Public Relations and Small Business Management, as well as the popular Course in Property (Agents Representative).

Online delivery is a valuable option to support distance education. Access to information technology in remote sites is still prohibitive across the region, particularly in rural areas.
8 Other issues relevant to the terms of reference

In 2006 and 2007 the Institute’s enrolled students by postcode were represented as follows:

- Surf Coast Shire 7%
- Bellarine Peninsula 15%
- Golden Plains Shire 2%
- Colac Otway Shire 4%
- Geelong Northern Suburbs 19%
- Others (Geelong central and other regions) 53%

Golden Plain Shire (southern region) does not have a secondary school. Access to transport services for young people is a concern. Many young people are leaving school early and do not have access to transport or local post compulsory education options. The Institute aims to improve the participation rate for this area by working with the local shire and targeting programs in the region. Access to information technology is also limited in the region.

Similarly the participation rates in Colac Otway Shire need to be improved. On Track data highlights the high level of deferrals and non take up of places in the shire. Promotion of vocational pathways and vocational taster programs as described in previous sections are the Institute’s priorities in 2008.

The Institute is also exploring delivery sites in the northern suburbs of Geelong to address the socio-economic needs of the area.

The following issues have been identified as barriers to vocational education:

- Financial—the Institute has continued growth in student numbers seeking fee waivers due to financial difficulties, access to VET in VCE options is prohibitive for many secondary students
- Transport—costs and accessibility to access delivery sites particularly in rural areas
- Careers information—parents and secondary teachers need to improve their knowledge of vocational training and career opportunities from TAFE courses
- On-line study options and other technologies are not always accessible to learners who cannot access main delivery sites. Learners must be supported via facilitated learning systems to successfully utilise on-line technologies
- Regional education providers struggle to maintain viable group sizes in more remote areas

There is a need for strong partnerships between schools, TAFE, universities and industry to improve participation rates in post compulsory education and to meet the regional training needs. There is evidence of very strong partnerships in existence via the Smart Geelong Region LLEN activities and the Post Compulsory Education Group that has been formed in Colac.