Ms Karen Ellingford  
Executive Officer  
Education and Training Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms Ellingford

I write in response to a letter dated 21 January 2008 from the Hon Geoffrey Howard MP, concerning the Victorian Parliament's inquiry into geographical differences in the rate in which Victorian students participate in higher education.

I am pleased to provide the attached information on New South Wales research and policies that address this issue.

If you would like further information please contact Mr Paul Sheehan, R/Director of Higher Education of the NSW Department of Education and Training on telephone number (02) 9561 8924, or email paul.sheehan@det.nsw.edu.au

Yours sincerely

Michael Coutts-Trotter  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TAFE NSW  
28 February 2008
Characteristics of higher education participation in New South Wales

- There were 228,497 domestic students in the State’s ten public universities in 2006

- Of these, 139,207 students were enrolled in the five metropolitan universities (University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Technology, Sydney, Macquarie University and University of Western Sydney) and 89,290 students in the five regional universities (University of Newcastle, University of Wollongong, Southern Cross University, University of New England and Charles Sturt University).

- If the University of Western Sydney is classified as a regional university, the two totals are: 110,742 students in the four metropolitan universities and 117,755 students in the six regional universities.

Major research studies looking at geographical differences in participation in education and training


- The Institute for Land, Water and Society is a leading research institute within Charles Sturt University. The principal focus of the Institute is integrated research which contributes to improved social and environmental sustainability in rural and regional Australia. Details about the Institute’s work and its research output can be found at www.csu.edu.au/research/ilws/index.htm.

Potential effects of geographical differences in participation on skills shortages and the economy.

- In 2006, the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal reviewed the New South Wales skill base and identified the future challenges for the State’s vocational education and training system over the next 20 years. The review focused on publicly-funded vocational education and training programs provided by registered training organisations, including the primary provider, TAFE NSW. The report is entitled Up-skilling NSW – How vocational education and training can help overcome skill shortages, improve labour market outcomes and raise economic growth (December 2006) and is available at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

Policies or programs that are intended to address barriers contributing to geographic differences in participation in education and training.

Credit Transfer
• Credit transfer arrangements in NSW are extensive, with TAFE NSW and private vocational education and training providers negotiating arrangements with universities within NSW and external to NSW.

• TAFE NSW has articulation arrangements in place with the eleven universities in NSW for 341 TAFE qualifications at the Associate Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Diploma, Certificate III and IV levels. It has arrangements with each of the six universities in the Sydney metropolitan area and all five in regional NSW, including Newcastle and Wollongong.

• Charles Sturt University provides articulation into areas such as Bachelor of Business, Social Work, Venture Tourism, Fine Arts, Information Technology, under the following model:
  - students undertake the relevant TAFE Diploma and university studies simultaneously
  - in year 1 they do approximately 90 per cent in TAFE (no Higher Education Contribution Scheme) and 10 per cent of the university subjects
  - in year 2 they do approximately 50 per cent in TAFE and university – at the end of year 2 they achieve the requirements of the TAFE diploma
  - in year 3 they do approximately 90 per cent in university and achieve the results of the degree.

Indigenous participation in education and training

• The NSW Vocational Education And Training Plan 2006-08 identifies indigenous and rural/regional communities as two of the groups most in need of public training investment either through gaining a qualification or a set of skills.

• New South Wales has increased enrolments in vocational education and training by Indigenous Australians in regional and remote locations from 11,081 in 2003 to 16,706 in 2006 - an increase of 51 per cent.

• The NSW Vocational Education And Training Plan 2006-08 commits to implement/continue with the following initiatives relevant to Indigenous students in isolated and rural communities:
  - expanding the use of interactive distance technology in TAFE NSW to deliver training to remote and isolated Aboriginal communities
  - developing appropriate training materials to assist the uptake of health worker qualifications among Indigenous workers in rural and regional areas
  - delivering Aboriginal Language of Country courses across TAFE NSW as supported by local Aboriginal communities
  - conducting a pilot project supporting structured workplace learning for Indigenous Higher School Certificate students
  - working to increase retention rates of Aboriginal apprentices and trainees through mentoring under the program The Way Ahead – Apprenticeships and Traineeships for Aboriginal People and to facilitate successful transition of Indigenous students to training and employment through
enhanced work placement support
- providing additional learner support to Aboriginal students enrolled in
courses at Certificate III and above at TAFE NSW to improve participation
and completion rates in higher level courses
- conducting a project to improve vocational education and training
provision to Indigenous detainees and offenders and develop post release
pathways from juvenile justice and correctional centres into further
education and training
- delivering leadership courses in TAFE NSW to members of Aboriginal
communities at Certificate IV and Diploma levels to support community
capacity building at all levels
- delivering the Job Ready Program in TAFE NSW in partnership with the
Redfern Waterloo Authority, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and
Energy Union and the Macarthur Group Training Company which leads to
employment outcomes for Aboriginal men and women in the construction
industry
- offering Indigenous students one subject courses in TAFE NSW –
Illawarra Institute at Certificate III and IV in Term 4 for further study in the
following year.

University Access Centres and Partnerships with TAFE NSW

- NSW universities have a range of programs and partnerships, some with TAFE
NSW, to widen participation in higher education by students in rural and
regional areas of the State.

- The University of New England in partnership with the New England Institute of
TAFE offers access to enhanced tertiary education opportunities in the New
England region through eight access centres. The centres, located on TAFE
NSW campuses, offer flexible learning options and are equipped with the latest
information technology infrastructure. Each facility is unique to its region and its
needs. For further information go to www.une.edu.au/ac/othercentres/.

- Two other University of New England access centres located at Tamworth and
Taree have staff on site to assist with enquiries relating to studying at the
University. For further details see www.une.edu.au/ac/tamworth/ and
www.une.edu.au/ac/taree/.

- The Interactive Learning Centre at Charles Sturt University's Dubbo campus
delivers learning to students throughout the Central West of the State. For
further details go to www.csu.edu.au/about/dubbo.html.

- The Bateman's Bay Education Centre is a joint facility between the University of
Wollongong, TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute and the Eurobodalla Shire Council.
Courses are provided by the University and TAFE and the Centre also houses
the Batemans Bay Community Library. The library has experienced staff to
assist students and stocks an excellent core collection of print, reserves and
audiovisual materials as well as access to electronic databases and full text
resources. For further details go to
The Coffs Harbour Education Campus is a unique partnership between Southern Cross University, TAFE NSW North Coast Institute, and the NSW Department of Education and Training. The partnership arrangement on the Campus provides opportunities for students to move easily between educational levels and allows for the development of joint programs which combine practical skills development with high academic standards. For further details go to www.chec.scu.edu.au/.

The Ourimbah campus is a multi-sector campus which offers University, TAFE and Community College programs and courses. The Ourimbah campus is a partnership of the University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW Hunter Institute. Affiliates are the Central Coast Community College and the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music. As a multi-sector organisation, Ourimbah offers seamless pathways through post-compulsory education and training. For further details go to www.ccc.newcastle.edu.au/ourimbah/index.html.

Alternative Entry Schemes

Most higher education institutions in New South Wales offer an Educational Access Scheme for applicants who have experienced long-term educational disadvantage. Applicants must demonstrate that their educational performance has been seriously affected by circumstances beyond their control. For further details see Educational Access Schemes 2008, NSW Universities Admissions Centre at www.uac.edu.au. A number of NSW universities also provide bonus points to students from designated regional areas.

Types of disadvantage include attendance at a rural school or one supported by the Priority Schools Funding Program or the Country Areas Program. (A rural school must be in a town with a population of less than 10,000 people and a distance of at least 100km from the nearest centre with a population of 10,000 or a school in a town with a population of less than 5,000 people and distance between 50km and 99km from the nearest centre of 10,000).

Southern Cross University’s STAR Entry Scheme is available to Year 12 students in the University’s feeder region. Students at participating schools have the opportunity to present information additional to their Universities Admission Index to support their application for university entrance. Students must first be recommended by their school principal. (The University also adds five bonus points to the admission rank of final year students within its feeder region).