





### 3.1 Private Higher Education Providers

#### 3.1.1 Approval of higher education providers

In 2005, DEST continued to assess applications from non-self accrediting higher education institutions wishing to become an approved higher education provider under the HESA.

Approved higher education providers are able to offer their eligible Australian students access to FEE-HELP, an Australian Government loan scheme which assists students pay their tuition fees. Approved higher education providers may also be allocated Commonwealth supported places in areas of National Priority (nursing and teaching).

In 2005, a total of 38 applications from non-self accrediting higher education institutions seeking to offer FEE-HELP were assessed and given final approval (Table 47).

In 2005, three approved non-self accrediting higher education providers were allocated National Priority Places which provide Australian Government grants for student places in areas of national priority (currently teaching and nursing). These providers were Avondale College, Christian Heritage College and Tabor College Adelaide.

Non-self accrediting providers approved under the HESA offer a variety of higher education courses, including education, theological training, design, arts management, dramatic arts, business, architecture, youth work, counselling, information technology, viticulture, applied aquaculture and equine studies.

A list of approved higher education providers, including non-self accrediting providers approved under the HESA, can be found at [www.goingtouni.gov.au](http://www.goingtouni.gov.au).

More information on FEE-HELP is provided in Section 2.5 of this report. National Priority Places have also been described under *Allocation of New Places* in Section 2.2.4 of this report.

More information on becoming an approved higher education provider is available at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher\\_education/programmes\\_funding/forms\\_guidelines/higher\\_education\\_providers.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/higher_education_providers.htm).

**Table 47: Higher Education Providers approved under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* during 2005<sup>(a)</sup>**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Adelaide College of Divinity                         | KvB Institute of Technology                         |
| Australian College of Applied Psychology             | Marcus Oldham College                               |
| Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd       | Melbourne Institute of Business & Technology        |
| Australian College of Physical Education             | Monash College                                      |
| Australian College of Theology                       | Moore Theological College                           |
| Australian Film Television and Radio School          | National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)           |
| Australian Institute of Music                        | Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE                |
| Australian Institute of Public Safety                | Oceania Polytechnic Institute of Education          |
| Australian International Hotel School                | Perth Bible College                                 |
| Australian Lutheran College                          | Perth Institute of Business and Technology Pty Ltd  |
| Avondale College                                     | Queensland Institute of Business & Technology       |
| Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School | South Australian Institute of Business & Technology |
| Christian Heritage College                           | Southern School of Natural Therapies                |
| College of Law                                       | Sydney College of Divinity                          |
| Curtin International College                         | Sydney Institute of Business & Technology           |
| East Coast Gestalt Training                          | Tabor College New South Wales                       |
| Harvest Bible College                                | Tabor College South Australia                       |
| Holmes Institute                                     | Tabor College Victoria                              |
| International College of Hotel Management            | Wesley Institute                                    |

*Source: DEST internal administrative data, 2005*

*(a) Includes higher education providers for which instruments of approval were tabled in 2004 and 2005 and had the 15 day joint Parliamentary disallowance period expire in 2005. For a list of instruments of approval tabled in 2005 only, see Appendix C.*

### 3.1.2 Auditing of private higher education providers

In 2005, DEST continued to work with stakeholders to develop an approach to quality auditing of non-self accrediting (private) higher education providers approved under the HESA. Under the agreed model, these providers will have a quality audit conducted by either the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) or by a State or Territory higher education accrediting authority as an integrated part of the provider's re-approval process. Accrediting agencies must be added to the list of quality auditing agencies contained in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines to be able to conduct an integrated quality audit. Pilot quality audits will be conducted in late 2006 and early 2007, with auditing of all providers expected to begin soon afterwards.

## 3.2 Quality

### 3.2.1 National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes

In March 2005, the (then) Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, released an issues paper entitled *Building University Diversity*, and initiated a national debate on the future diversity of Australian higher education. The paper followed a 2004 Review of *Australia's National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* (the National Protocols).

The debate around diversity and the future shape of the National Protocols was focused through a series of roundtable discussions, a national workshop and written submissions. During March and April, representatives of universities, other higher education providers, governments and peak bodies, participated in face-to-face discussions in a number of capital cities. Approximately 100 delegates also attended a Joint Committee on Higher Education (JCHE) national workshop held in Melbourne in August, and 85 written submissions were received in response to *Building University Diversity*.

At its November meeting, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), agreed to a revised framework for the National Protocols. The framework recognised the increased diversity that would be a feature of Australian higher education in the future, while retaining the National Protocols' strong focus on ensuring the ongoing quality of the system. MCEETYA asked the JCHE to undertake further work to draft revised National Protocols, for consideration by Ministers in July 2006. The revised National Protocols agreed by Ministers in 2006 can be found at <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=15212>.

### **3.2.2 Articulation and credit transfer**

MCEETYA agreed in May 2005 to a series of initiatives for the improvement of credit transfer and articulation arrangements, which recognise and provide advanced standing for students moving from vocational education and training into undergraduate higher education programmes.

One of these was a national study to explore current practices in credit transfer, and make recommendations for their improvement in 2006. Another was a project to improve the data on credit transfer from higher education providers.

It also adopted in 2005 *Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education*, and agreed to a set of draft *Principles for Good Practice Information Provision*. These set out some broad goals to encourage measurable improvement over time, provide a benchmark against which progress can be assessed and reported, and improve the information available to students and prospective students. A copy of the Principles is available from <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11910>.

## **3.3 Collaboration**

### **3.3.1 Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council**

The Business, Industry, and Higher Education Collaboration Council (BIHECC) was established in 2004 to advise the Government on ways to increase collaboration between the higher education sector, the business and industry sector, and the wider community.

The council was allocated \$71,000 in 2005-06 to support its activities. In 2005 the council engaged a consultant at a cost of \$35,000 to undertake a gap analysis of knowledge exchange networks.

## **3.4 Indigenous Education**

### **3.4.1 Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council**

The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) provides policy advice to the Minister for Education, Science and Training on improving outcomes in higher education for Indigenous students and staff relating to their participation, progression and retention both in study and employment. In 2005-06, the council met four times.

In November 2005, the IHEAC hosted its inaugural conference on Indigenous Higher Education, *Improving Indigenous Outcomes and Enhancing Indigenous Culture and Knowledge in Australian Higher Education*. The report arising from the conference is based on seven key priority areas, which IHEAC believes will assist in improving educational outcomes for Indigenous people in Australian higher education. The IHEAC report can be viewed at [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous\\_education/](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/).

## 3.5 Research

### 3.5.1 Overview of higher education research and research training

Australia operates a 'dual support system' for the public funding of research and research training in its higher education sector. In a dual support system core public funding for research and research training is allocated independently of funding for specific research projects, programmes or fellowships. The former is typically distributed through a specific system of often performance based block grants; the latter through some form of merit-based, peer determined competitive process.

The dual support system offers governments a range of levers to influence the direction and performance of publicly funded research and research training. It also supports diversity and system robustness by allowing a focus on national priorities linked to economic and social aspirations, or a focus on research excellence, to be balanced with the ability to support and maintain strategic research capabilities over the long-term or develop emerging research areas, irrespective of the availability of competitive funding.

The project or programme oriented competitive element of Australia's dual support system is represented by approximately \$1 billion a year administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). This funding takes the form of research grants and fellowships (awarded mainly to universities), on the basis of advice from expert assessors. While national research priorities have an important role, funding decisions are largely based on the relative scientific merits of the proposed research, the track record of the researcher or research team, or the extent of collaborative linkages with industry and other end users, depending on the specific scheme.

In comparison, approximately \$1.15 billion a year is provided to higher education providers as block grants for research and research training, through a variety of performance based schemes administered by DEST. Higher education providers have considerable autonomy in deciding what research projects, teams and students, and what equipment and infrastructure, this funding should support. In this way, the system recognises that these sorts of decisions are often best made by those with the information advantage: the higher education provider and its researchers and stakeholder communities.

## 3.6 International Higher Education

### 3.6.1 Key achievements

- International education contributed an estimated \$10 billion to the Australian economy in 2005-06.
- The international education industry is Australia's second largest service export industry and fourth largest export industry behind coal, tourism and iron ore.
- Close cooperation with industry and other stakeholders to clarify and improve the National Code in response to the independent evaluation of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.
- Agreement by MCEETYA to a Transnational Quality Strategy Framework to protect Australia's international reputation for the quality of the education and training delivered in other countries.

- Country Education Profiles online was launched in October 2005 to provide Australian education providers with comprehensive market intelligence on 106 countries.
- Australian Scholarships was launched in April 2006, providing \$185.5 million of new funding over 5 years, for over 9,000 scholarships under the umbrella of the Endeavour Programme (see Section 2.4.4).
- DEST funded the Higher Education Day during the Australian Education Week at the Aichi World Expo (Japan) in June 2005.
- DEST supported the Chinese University Administrators' Mentoring Project 2005, which continued to support the building of senior linkages between Australian and Chinese universities.

### 3.6.2 Australian Education International and its focus on higher education

Australian Education International (AEI) is the international arm of DEST. AEI provides its services through the International Education Group based at DEST's National Office and through the DEST International Network, extending to 17 economies across the world. AEI has 24 offices and is also represented in a further eight European and two Latin American locations.

The aim of AEI is to encourage and facilitate Australia's international education and training engagement in line with the national interest to realise the intellectual, social, cultural, economic and security benefits from internationalisation.

This is achieved by:

- creating the environment for a successful sector through government-to-government cooperation, underpinning the quality of education and training services delivered to international students;
- achieving greater diversity of students from a broad range of countries and in the modes of education delivery and range of subjects being offered; and
- coordination of government support in partnership with the Australian education and training industry.

### 3.6.3 Funding of international higher education

During 2005-06, the Government provided \$22.85 million for programmes administered by AEI to promote and support Australia's international education sector<sup>10</sup>. These included the Endeavour Scholarships Programme (\$6.2 million), International Centres of Excellence (\$9.8 million) and the National Centre for Language Training (\$2.3 million).

### 3.6.4 Education services for overseas students

AEI has been working closely with the international education industry, including the higher education sector, to improve the framework that governs the delivery of education and training services to international students in Australia. An independent evaluation report, released in June 2005, found widespread support for the current legislated requirements. Consultations with industry are progressing the areas identified for improvement, which will aim to better support Australia's reputation for high quality education and training services, the protection of overseas students and the integrity of the student visa programme. A continued programme of visits and other support was provided to Universities and other higher education providers during the year to monitor and strengthen the quality of their educational and support services to overseas students.

<sup>10</sup> Includes funding for higher education, Vocational Education and Training, schools, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students.

During 2005, the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS) was amended to allow high quality foreign owned and operated higher education providers to offer education and training services to overseas students in Australia. These amendments were aligned with the relevant amendments to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (see Appendix C).

### 3.6.5 Transnational Quality Strategy

In November 2005, Australian, State and Territory government education ministers agreed to the Transnational Quality Strategy framework to ensure that Australia's international reputation for the quality of the education and training delivered in other countries is protected and promoted.

The Strategy will better communicate and promote Australia's quality assurance arrangements; increase access to data and information about Australia's offshore delivery activities; and strengthen Australia's transnational quality assurance arrangements so that:

- Australia's quality assurance arrangements are effective and efficient;
- courses and programmes delivered in other countries are equivalent in the standard of delivery and outcomes to those delivered in Australia;
- providers and consumers clearly understand roles and responsibilities in the delivery and quality assurance of offshore education and training; and
- Australia's quality assurance arrangements are well understood and well regarded internationally.

Australia's education and training system faces an increasingly globalised environment in which students, providers and courses are becoming more and more discerning and increasingly mobile. In this environment Australia's ability to compete and sustainably expand and benefit from the delivery of education and training will depend to an ever greater extent upon our capacity to deliver – and be seen to deliver – quality. Agreement by Australia's Education ministers in November 2005 to the Transnational Quality Strategy framework will protect and promote Australia's capacity to compete internationally by further strengthening its quality assurance arrangements and ensuring that they are well understood and well regarded internationally.

### 3.6.6 Diploma Supplement activities

Following the 2002 Diploma Supplement pilot projects, DEST's Professional and International Recognition Unit commissioned a further trial of the Diploma Supplement in 2005 to determine detailed consideration of system requirements and costings for Australian tertiary institutions to issue a Diploma Supplement.

Building on the outcomes of the pilot project, a consultancy study was undertaken by Global Learning Services Pty Ltd in 2005 to identify good practice in developing and implementing the Diploma Supplement in Australia. The consultancy raised a number of key issues and recommendations for DEST to consider in the development of strategies to promote the use of the Diploma Supplement.

### 3.6.7 Country Education Profiles

The Country Education Profiles (CEP) Online was launched in October 2005 and has been positively received by the Australian higher education industry. CEP Online profiles over 100 countries. A wide range of stakeholders, including Australian educational institutions and other organisations which support the higher education industry, use it as an essential resource for comparing overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications for admissions purposes, as well as employment and migration. CEP Online supports global mobility, and consistent and quality decision-making in qualifications recognition. By December 2005, CEP Online attracted close to 400 subscriptions and approximately 1200 users, including overseas organisations.

## 3.7 Higher Education Information Management System

The *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future* reforms introduced a fundamental change to the way the higher education sector was funded and to the entitlements and loans available to students from January 2005. There was a requirement to build a new and sophisticated Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) to enable the implementation and ongoing management of the reforms.

HEIMS is being developed for this purpose and through 2005 two major milestones were reached, with the release of the Course Finder System in September and the release of *myUniAssist* in November, both of which form part of the *Going to Uni* website.

