



## Key achievements in 2004-2005

## Report on performance

# Higher Education

- established a Ministerial Advisory Panel on Higher Education Approval Processes to improve education quality
- implemented a review and improvement cycle in support of the Department's higher education approval functions
- coordinated Ministerial missions and high-level delegations showcasing Queensland universities in European and Asian markets
- participated in key national forums to reconsider the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*, to improve the accreditation procedures for private higher education providers and to discuss responsibilities in higher education between the State and Commonwealth Governments
- monitored the effects of Commonwealth-legislated reforms to higher education on student access and participation rates
- promoted programs that increased access to tertiary education
- supported a consortium approach to educational research
- commissioned, with the Higher Education Forum, research into the school to higher education pathway
- provided submissions to the national quality framework review being conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

## Objective:

To support the continuing development of high-quality, accessible higher education that meets the needs of the Queensland community, and contributes vigorously to the state's economic, social and cultural development.

The state's higher education system comprises a diverse range of universities and non-university providers operating in communities across the state. Queensland has nine universities teaching approximately 184 000 students – of which around 43 700 are international students.

Almost 16 000 people are employed by the universities at 26 campuses. The small, but growing non-university sector includes 22 institutions catering to more than 4000 students.

In 2004–05, five key strategies advanced the development of a high-quality, accessible higher education sector. These were:

- advocate for Queensland in the national policy arena
- pursue state objectives for higher education
- monitor institutional viability and higher education affordability
- foster the internationalism of higher education
- maintain the quality of the higher education system.

[www](#)

### Strategy

- Advocate for Queensland in the national policy arena.

### Advocacy within the national agenda

Over the past 12 months, the Office of Higher Education has actively participated in key forums at a national level to ensure that Queensland has a say in any proposed changes in the higher education sector.

The office was regularly engaged in national considerations concerning the framework and structure of Australian higher education. In these forums the office has made a key contribution towards the reconsideration of the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*.

The office contributed to national discussions to improve accreditation procedures for private higher education providers. It has also participated in the dialogue, initiated by the Commonwealth Government, concerning the current distribution of responsibilities in higher education between the State and Commonwealth Governments.

In all of these forums, the Department has advocated a policy position that has been informed by the views of Queensland's universities and accredited providers. The focus of this advocacy has been directed at protecting the quality of Australia's higher education system, enhancing its diversity, and strengthening its reputation in both domestic and international contexts.

Key alliances, which are critical to national developments and have been the focus of interactions by departmental officials, include:

- Joint Committee for Higher Education (JCHE) which provides policy advice to Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers through submissions to the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)
- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) which provides quality assurance of the operations of Australian universities and state and territory accrediting agencies
- Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) with which interactions are ongoing for planning and policy issues.

The Department continues to provide Queensland representation on the Board of AUQA. This national body was established to provide independent quality assurance for the nation's universities and state and territory-based higher education accreditation agencies. A departmental official serves as a member of the JCHE and has served on audit panels established by AUQA for university and state accreditation agency audits.

### Outlook 2005–06

The Department will:

- participate in a national workshop on 17 August 2005 of key stakeholders to respond to revisions to the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* proposed by a consultant commissioned by the JCHE. Recommendations from the JCHE will then be considered by MCEETYA
- monitor and respond to an independent review of the work of AUQA during the latter part of 2005 and early 2006.

### Strategy

- Pursue state objectives for higher education.

### State objectives

Throughout much of the last decade, the Department has pursued a number of state objectives with respect to higher education policy. These are to:

- ensure Queensland is positioned to meet its higher education needs
- maximise post-school opportunities for all Queenslanders
- foster university research and development

- support university innovation and competitiveness
- maintain the quality of higher education in Queensland
- advance the lifelong learning agenda.

The Department's commitment to supporting these objectives has continued in 2004–05.

### Ensure Queensland is positioned to meet its higher education needs

The office ensures that Queensland can meet its higher education needs through its active engagement in national forums, advocacy of positive outcomes for Queensland higher education through national policy reforms and monitoring of participation rates, demographic trends and other performance data across the state.

In 2004–05, the Department has monitored participation and application rates in Queensland higher education. This will contribute to longer-term monitoring of the impacts of reforms on the ability of the sector to meet Queensland's higher education needs. Overall the participation rate in Queensland higher education has been decreasing between 2002 and 2004, mostly due to funded places not keeping pace with population growth. Any effects of reforms to the sector are yet to be shown in available figures.

Monitoring of higher education participation rates of Indigenous students has shown that Queensland, with 34 persons per thousand of Indigenous adults of working age in higher education, is well ahead of the national Indigenous average of 30. However, these numbers remain well below the participation rates of the total population.

### Maximise post-school opportunities

To maximise post-school opportunities for Queenslanders, the Department has continued to support programs aimed at increasing access to tertiary programs. Some of these programs include funding for the Cape York Institute for Indigenous Leadership and Policy and the pre-tertiary programs offered through the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland.

The Cape York Institute provides important opportunities for Indigenous students in the Cape York region to gain the appropriate qualifications and build practical skills to be administrators, public servants and project managers in Indigenous issues.

The Gatton pre-tertiary programs provide a valuable pipeline for regional people into higher education courses.

Learning Network Queensland (LNQ) encourages the development of active learning communities through the operation of open learning centres throughout regional and rural Queensland. It supports the provision of continuous learning processes that allow people to acquire new knowledge and skills. The Department has continued to fund the work of LNQ with an \$800 000 allocation in 2004–05 and a supplementary grant of a further \$800 000.

The Department also participated in negotiations over the future management of LNQ. The aim is to establish a transitional advisory board in collaboration with Central Queensland University.

### Foster university research and development

The Department continues to foster university research and development through its membership of, and support for, the research institute, Eidos. Eidos is a network of educational and social research and policy leaders, working together to create, analyse and implement key ideas. It acts as a think-tank and facilitator, supporting and enabling the blending of research, policy and practice around major educational and social issues.

Through the appointment of its inaugural director in 2004, Eidos has begun to develop and promote a consortium approach to educational research. The consortium of universities, government and non-government agencies is committed to improving education and social research, policy and practice and to creating better futures for all people and their communities. [WWW](#)



The Central Queensland University was officially proclaimed in 1991.

Figure 41: Higher education participation rates for school-leavers, regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Participation at university as a share of population (selected cohorts, expressed per 1,000 population)		2002	Year 2003	2004
Full domestic cohort	Queensland domestic university students per 1000 17 to 64 yrs Queensland population	59	57	56
	Australian domestic university students per 1000 17 to 64 yrs Australian population	56	56	55
School-leavers	Queensland 17 year-olds at university per 1000 Queensland 17 years population	230	2 11	214
Regional people	Brisbane university students per 1000 17 to 64 yrs Brisbane population	67	68	65
	Queensland-outside-Brisbane university students per 1000 17 to 64 yrs Q-o-B population	46	44	44
Indigenous people	Qld Indigenous university students per 1000 15 to 64 yrs Qld Indigenous population	34	35	34
	Aust Indigenous university students per 1000 15 to 64 yrs Aust Indigenous population	32	31	30

Note: 1. The federal government changed the student reporting method for 2002, from snapshot to full-year counting, such that drawing comparisons to the years 2001 and earlier is misleading.

2. 2004 includes Bond University for the first time.

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training (Higher Education Student Data Collection); Australian Catholic University. ABS Catalogues 3201; 3235.3.55.001; 3238; 2001 Census.

## Support university innovation and competitiveness

Legislation which supports and underpins the establishment of universities is administered by the Department. Individual university Acts were amended in 2004–05 to allow universities greater autonomy in their commercial activities. Under these Acts, universities have considerable autonomy to pursue innovative commercial enterprises. The Department supported universities in their approaches to Queensland Treasury for funds to support innovation.

## Maintain the quality of higher education

In addition to the activities under the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003*, the Department has participated in national debates about the regulation of higher education nationally. These debates have included issues about the role of the state in maintaining the quality of higher education. The Department has consistently worked to maintain its central role in maintaining the quality of Queensland higher education.

## Advance the lifelong learning agenda

The Department has also worked with the Higher Education Forum to commission a research proposal to examine the school to higher education pathway. The project, jointly funded with the Department of Employment and Training, is to be conducted by researchers from Griffith University. Costing \$50 000, of which \$35 000 is being contributed by the Department, the project will examine school to university transition trends and identify alternative and innovative potential policy responses to the direct school to university entry pathway. The study will be completed in early 2006.

Outlook 2005–06

The Department will:

- respond appropriately to the outcomes of research commissioned by the Higher Education Forum to examine the school to higher education pathway.

Did you know...

The University of Queensland, established in 1909, was the first university in Queensland.

### Strategy

- Monitor institutional viability and higher education affordability.

## Queensland's response to Commonwealth legislative reforms

In response to the Commonwealth Government reforms to higher education, which were the subject of legislation at the end of 2003, the Department has:

- made the required changes to Queensland legislation to ensure Queensland's seven public universities achieve

compliance with the National Governance Protocols

- monitored the effects of the significant increase in the costs incurred by students through their higher education contributions.

Taken individually and collectively, these reforms are the most significant to be imposed on the sector in recent years and are likely to have a major impact on Queensland's diverse university sector and the way in which Queenslanders access higher education. In particular, the significant increases in student costs will require close monitoring over the next few enrolment periods to assess whether it leads to changes in the student population, particularly its socioeconomic mix, and how the increases impact on participation rates. As figures become available for analysis, the Department will develop appropriate responses to any adverse trends.

Figure 42: Share of Commonwealth supported higher education places.

Commonwealth-supported places per capita (expressed per 1000)		2001	2002	Year 2003	2004*	2005*
Queensland	Fully funded places per 1000 17 to 49 yrs population	45	45	44	44	45
	Fully funded places per 1000 17 to 64 yrs population	34	33	33	32	33
Australia	Fully funded places per 1000 17 to 49 yrs population	42	42	42	42	42
	Fully funded places per 1000 17 to 64 yrs population	31	31	31	31	31

\* Preliminary unpublished data.

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training (Higher Education Group), ABS catalogues 3201; 3220.

## Improving university governance through legislative reform

The required legislative reforms of Queensland university Acts were completed with the passage of the University Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 through the Parliament in May. The passage of this reform Bill has ensured that all Queensland universities have governance provisions which comply with the membership and other guidelines that are prescribed by the Commonwealth through the National Governance Protocols. Compliance with these protocols is required as one of several conditions on which additional Commonwealth funding is dependent.

Outlook 2005–06

The Department will:

- continue to liaise with universities in reconstituting effective governing bodies
- closely monitor the impacts of the higher education reforms over the next few enrolment periods to assess whether they lead to changes in the student population
- develop appropriate responses to any adverse trends.

## Strategy

- Foster the internationalisation of higher education.

### International initiatives

During 2004–05, the Department continued its international efforts through its leadership and involvement in international programs and activities.

Central to this effort was the coordination of Ministerial missions and a series of high-level education and arts delegations to key countries. The Department led visits to Singapore, the People's Republic of China, Europe and Taiwan to showcase Queensland universities and, more importantly, assist with their activities in these markets, with a view to expanding links and opportunities for commercial relationships in research, development and commercialisation and in teaching and academic programs.

The highlight of this year's missions was the visit to Singapore and the People's Republic of China in October 2004, where a delegation of 30 government and university officials accompanied the Minister with the following objectives:

- to develop a full understanding of the current directions and reforms in education and the impact that these will have in the region
- to assist Queensland universities in their activities, particularly in China, for the purpose of expanding links and opportunities for commercial relationship in research, development and commercialisation and in teaching and academic programs
- to support and maintain long-term strategic relationships and develop new links with these two countries.

Throughout 2004–05, the Department has continued to work closely and collaboratively with Queensland Education Training International (QETI) towards achieving the mutual goals of the internationalisation of education in Queensland, and the generation of increased earnings for the state through exporting education services.

In 2004–05 Queensland has had one of the strongest international programs in Australia. Part of this program has included a redefining of the direction for international programs to provide for greater opportunities for Queensland students to study overseas. [www](#)



*International students participating in dance class as part of International Students Day.*

### Emerging International Partnerships – 2004–05

Recently the Department engaged in international partnerships that deliver benefits to the Queensland education sector.

Education Queensland International is working with the Al Sharif Education Group to provide a tailor-made curriculum for students at the first Australian International School in the Middle East in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

The Chinese province of Jiangsu, in collaboration with Queensland universities, will establish teacher training facilities in Queensland. This project will provide access to Queensland's cutting edge teaching methodology and innovative curriculum development, in an English language environment.

In another developing relationship, student and staff exchanges between Queensland universities and institutions in Hessen, Germany have paved the way for a broader engagement that is attracting German study abroad students and research collaboration to Queensland.

Activities this year included:

#### Australian Universities International Alumni Convention (AUIAC)

In conjunction with QETI and Queensland universities, the Department was an active participant in the 2004 AUIAC Conference held in Hong Kong in December. The convention, held every two years, is designed to bring together a network of graduates of Australian universities linked by a common interest in personal and professional development, community development, commerce and education. Queensland will host AUIAC in 2006.

#### International Students' Day

In continuing the annual tradition of welcoming new international students to Queensland, the Department hosted over 200 students, at its biggest-ever function at Parliament House in May 2005. This year a wider representation of students attended from state and non-state high schools, institutes of TAFE, private VET providers, English language schools and regional and Brisbane-based universities. Themed *Creative Smarts: Educated in Queensland*, the event celebrated the creativity, innovation and diversity in Queensland education.

#### Learning Round Table of Regional Heads of Education

In June this year, the Department participated in the Learning Round Table (LRT) of the Regional Heads of Education, along with education CEOs from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, to discuss policy directions and identify solutions to challenges confronting the education systems of the region. The LRT provided a very open and collegial environment and highlighted the great commonality in the region's views on education and policy directions. It identified opportunities for regional cooperation

and cooperative learning, including the advancement of teacher professionalism, information and communication technologies within schools and curriculum, assessment and reporting.

### Queensland Universities Guide

The *Queensland Universities Guide*, a new publishing concept, was developed this year following extensive consultation with universities. Funded by universities and coordinated by the Department, the guide includes profiles of research disciplines focusing on innovation, creativity and excellence of Queensland universities. The AEI Study in Australia brand is incorporated in the publication to maximise exposure of Queensland as a study destination in an Australian context. The guide has also been produced in a Chinese translation.

Outlook 2005–06

The Department will:

- manage and host the 2006 Australian Universities International Alumni Convention (AUIAC) in Brisbane.

### Strategy

- Maintain the quality of higher education system.

### Key quality standards

The State Government sets standards for establishing and recognising new universities, for accrediting university-level courses offered by non-university providers, and for the operation of overseas higher education providers in the state.

The regulatory framework for maintaining higher education quality is provided by the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003* and is supported by its implementation guidelines. The Minister for Education and the Arts is the approving authority for higher education approval processes under the Act. For more information on higher education approval activities, see Appendix 7.

### National Quality Framework

Queensland's higher education approval processes operate in the context of a national higher education quality framework, comprising the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

Departmental officers have continued to be actively involved in national policy discussions and working groups on higher education quality. Submissions were made to reviews of aspects of the national quality framework being conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. These reviews have the potential to change significantly the nature and characteristics of higher education providers and their regulation.

Queensland's reputation for best practice in higher education quality is enhanced by the Department's participation in a national network of higher education accreditation agencies, through which officers provide advice to other jurisdictions on accreditation policy, legislative reviews and guidelines for approval processes.

Consistent with the national quality framework, a streamlined accreditation process for institutions with courses already accredited interstate came into effect in 2004–05. Nine courses offered by four providers were approved through this process.

### Ministerial Advisory Panel for Higher Education Approval Processes

A significant initiative to enhance higher education quality in the state was the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Panel on Higher Education Approval Processes (MAP). The MAP performs a range of advisory functions to the Minister. Its key standing responsibilities are to consider and report to the Minister on annual reports and monitor the outcomes of higher education approval processes. The Minister has appointed the following people to the MAP for a three-year period from 1 July 2004:

- Professor Philip Almond, Head, School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, the University of Queensland
- Dr John Grant, Visiting Fellow, Australian National University Centre for UNESCO
- Professor Gail Hart, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), University of Tasmania
- Emeritus Professor Geoff Wilson, former Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University.

The establishment of this panel further strengthens the higher education approval processes supporting higher education quality standards.

### Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)

The AUQA is auditing the higher education approval functions of the Department in 2005. An integral part of this process is the preparation of a comprehensive Performance Portfolio for the audit panel. To inform the Performance Portfolio, the Department conducted a rigorous self-review of its higher education approval functions, evaluating their features and identifying improvement priorities. A key feature is a comprehensive quality system which has as its core a continuous review and improvement cycle for approval processes. The review and improvement cycle includes systematic consideration of feedback from the Department's higher education clients.

Outlook 2005–06

The Department will:

- continue to participate actively in debates on the national quality framework
- respond appropriately to the outcomes of the AUQA audit
- monitor the effectiveness and quality of its approval processes.