

教育部

參訪澳洲評鑑中心
參訪報告

報告人：黃宏斌

楊玉惠

中華民國九十三年三月十八日

CO/CO9301398

系統識別號:C09301398

公 務 出 國 報 告 提 要

頁數: 25 含附件: 否

報告名稱:

參訪澳洲評鑑中心報告書

主辦機關:

教育部

聯絡人/電話:

馬淑珍/23565907

出國人員:

黃宏斌 教育部 高教司 司長
楊玉惠 教育部 高教司 專門委員

出國類別: 其他

出國地區: 澳大利亞

出國期間: 民國 92 年 12 月 13 日 -民國 92 年 12 月 18 日

報告日期: 民國 93 年 03 月 18 日

分類號/目: C0/綜合(文教類) C0/綜合(文教類)

關鍵詞: 大學評鑑

內容摘要: 一、參訪時間：九十二年十二月十三日至十八日。二、參訪主題及對象：參訪澳洲的大學品質監督局（AUQA），了解該單位之經費之編列、組織之運作等，以作為我國之參考，另順道拜訪澳洲聯邦教育科學暨訓練部（DEST）及澳洲墨爾本大學之相關主管，拜訪行程及訪談對象，請參閱所附行程表。三、參訪目的：本部為提升大學教育品質，大學評鑑工作係必須，而為使評鑑工作制度化，成立專責之評鑑中心係有其必要性，澳洲的教育制度及大學運作與我國相似，而澳洲的大學品質監督局（AUQA）設立係近年成立，運作成效頗受澳洲大學之肯定，值得做為國內成立專責評鑑中心之參考，故提出本項出國考察計畫。四、訪視報告：本次訪視報告擬針對澳洲的大學品質監督局（AUQA）之成立經費籌措、後續運作經費分配、內部組織、訪評委員組成等運作及澳洲聯邦教育科學暨訓練部（DEST）對該國高等教育品質提升之相關措施等提出說明，並規劃具體建議方案以供本部施政之參考。

本文電子檔已上傳至出國報告資訊網

目次：

照片集錦

一、參訪緣起與目的

二、計畫行程

三、澳洲高等教育品質控管

四、參訪紀實

五、結論與建議

六、附錄

(一) Australian Universities Quality Agency
Annual Report 2002

(二) Australian Universities Quality Agency
Strategic Plan 2001-2006

(三) The Australian Higher Education Quality
Assurance Framework



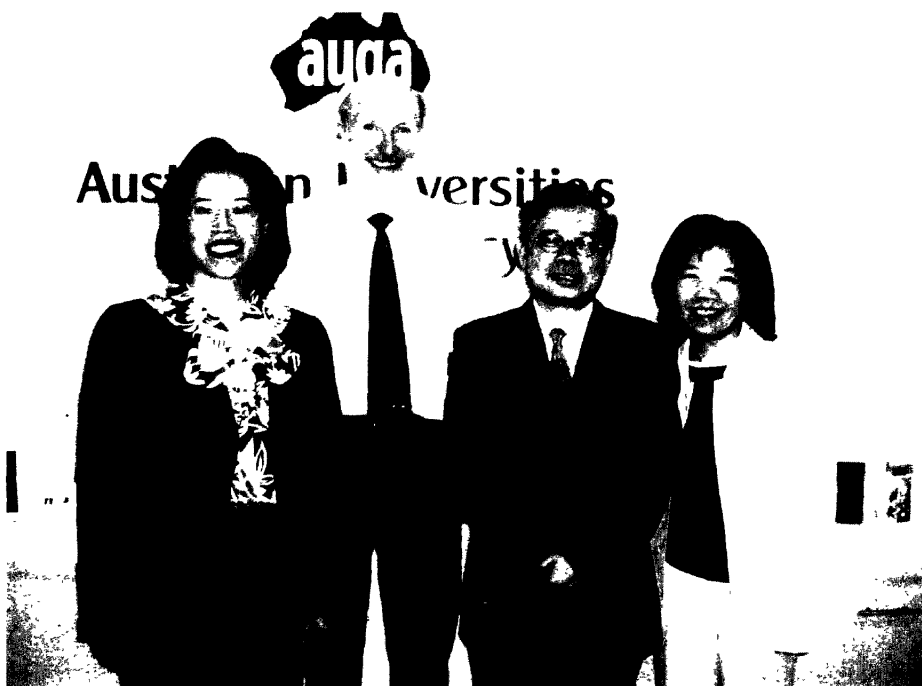
澳洲墨爾本大學行政副校長 Mr. Roger Peacock 贈黃司長禮物



黃司長贈送禮物給墨爾本大學學術副校長 Mr. Ian Marshman



黃司長贈送禮物給 AUQA 執行長 Dr. David Woodhouse



本部參訪人員於 AUQA 與執行長 Dr. David Woodhouse 合影



墨爾本大學校園



墨爾本大學校園-鐘樓



澳洲國立大學校門留影

澳洲評鑑中心參訪報告

壹、參訪緣起與目的

廿一世紀是一個知識經濟的時代，也是一個競爭激烈的時代，追求卓越，提昇品質，已是廿一世紀各行各業共同追求的目標，也是大學教育熱門的話題。大學教育是推動國家賡續發展，也是提昇國際競爭力的泉源，肩負著培育國家高級人才的使命與功能，教育品質之良窳，對國家社會整體發展有直接影響。

鑑於國際競爭日趨激烈，各國政府為了提高人民的智識水準，莫不積極投資大學教育，以提升國際競爭力。91 學年度國內大學校院已達 148 所，但在大學數量迅速擴充後，如何兼顧「數量」與「品質」，維持並提升大學教育水準，便成為我國及各國高等教育的重要課題。大學本身除了必須不斷地自我發展與改進教學研究工作外，主管教育行政部門亦有必要透過評鑑的過程，以了解大學辦學績效，激勵各大學校院充分利用教育資源，並改善各項缺失，以提升我國大學的教育品質。

教育水準的提昇，除了由學校本身內部訂定相關辦法，致力於各項研究與發展外，亦可藉由校外單位進行公正、公平、公開的客觀評鑑。透過此評鑑，使各校能對學校所設定的目標與努力成果，做一完整性的了解，也因此較清楚自己學校的發展狀況及其優缺點與特色，而能更進一步提昇教育水準及發展與改進。我國的大學評鑑發展，從民國六十四年開始實施大學教育評鑑至今，因未建立一套完整的評鑑制度，且皆由教育主管行政機關辦理，故評鑑結果之公信力屢遭外界質疑。建立一個專責公正之評鑑機構，係社會各界及大學所期盼，澳洲的教育制度及大學運作與我國相似，而澳洲的大學品質監督局（AUQA）設立係近年成立，運作成效頗受澳洲大學之肯定，值得做為國內成立專責評鑑中心之參考，故本項出國考察計畫案獲行政院同意 92 年度辦理在案。

貳、計畫行程

| 時間 | 地點 | 工作內容 |
|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| 十二月十三日晚 | 台北— | 啟程 |
| 十二月十四日 | 雪梨—坎培拉 | 轉機行程 |
| 十二月十五日上午 | 坎培拉 | 訪澳洲聯邦教育科學暨訓練部 (DEST) |
| 十二月十五日下午 | 坎培拉—墨爾本 | 轉機行程 |
| 十二月十六日 | 墨爾本 | 訪澳洲評鑑中心 (AUQA) |
| 十二月十七日 | 墨爾本 | 參訪墨爾本大學 |
| 十二月十八日 | 墨爾本—雪梨—台北 | 返國 |

參、澳洲高等教育品質控管

一、高等教育機構之設立

澳洲「大學」的設立，由各州或特區經過嚴謹的學術及財務評估審查後，經過立法通過後使得設立。大學設立後都是所謂的「自我認可」(self-accrediting) 機構，即經授權得自我認可開設課程及為其學術標準負責(與我國大學既經教育主管機關核准立案招生後，其課程及學位授予完全認可相同)。大部分「自我認可」機構都是大學，不過也有少數因特殊歷史條件而不是大學的機構。

- (一) 澳洲高等教育核准程序協定 (National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes) 澳洲聯邦教育部與各州(特區)教育廳共同擬定一套適用全國之〈澳洲高教核准程序協定〉，該協定規範澳洲大學設立之標準及大學認可的程

序、有關核准外國高等教育學府到澳洲開辦之準則，以及認可澳洲各學院校提供海外學生就讀之課程等。

- (二) 各州（特區）政府根據澳洲全國高等教育核准程序協定（National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes）負責核可各高教校院（大學）之成立。

二、 高等教育之品質控管

- (一) 澳洲全國資格認證架構（The Australian Qualifications Framework, 簡稱 AQF）係依澳洲教育就業訓練青年事務部理事長（the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 簡稱 MCEETYA）之指示於 1995 年成立，目的在其一認定澳洲技職教育與訓練及高等教育校所授予之學位及文憑資格，以便銜接和連結。AQF 同時亦建立一個公開名錄，載明已經註冊，並得到各級政府認可之高教學校名冊。列入 AQF 名冊上之大學即表示已獲得教育就業訓練青年事務部長理事會（MCEETYA）對其教育品質之保證。
- (二) 澳洲聯邦教育科學訓練部（Department of Education Science and Training, 簡稱 DEST）負責出版各大學年度保證及改進計畫、獎勵教學創新，並補助品質提升及教學卓越之大學。澳洲各大學每年必須提送聯邦教育科學訓練部有關該校之「教育概況」（educational profile），其中包括有關教學活動及學生人數之統計資料、品質改進計畫、平等受教計畫、澳洲原住民教育策略、資產管理計畫等。1998 年起，凡擬向澳洲聯邦政府申請經費補助之高教校院，均需提出該校之〈品質保證及改進計畫〉（Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan）列入該校的「教育概況」

中。此計畫書勾勒該校創校宗旨及辦學目標、達成創校宗旨及辦學目標之策略、以及評量主要領域（教學、研究、社區服務和行政管理）之指標與成果。

- (三) 「澳洲大學品質監督局」(the Australian Universities Quality Agency, 簡稱 AUQA) 鑑於各州和特區對於大學設立與開課標準寬鬆不一，加上澳洲某些大學為招收自費生及外國學生而降低入學標準，澳洲聯邦政府特於 1999 年宣佈成立「澳洲大學品質監督局」，負責評鑑各大學之教學、研究和行政等，並研擬嚴格監督和管理澳洲高等教育院校所提供之課程及頒發之學位。澳洲各大學每五年要接受該局評鑑一次。該局係並可監督各州（特區）負責認可非大學之高等教育學府頒發之學位及提供之課程之行政機關。
- (四) 「澳洲大學校長協會」(AVCC) 在品質控管過程中一直積極參與，並在過程中提供有關大學本質、監督高等教育學術、大學課程發展及審查原則、訂定國際課程開設準則等實質意見。

三、 高等教育機構分類

在 AQF 註冊有案之高等教育機構分為以下三類：

- (一) 大學及其他自我認可機構：這些機構係各州、特區或聯邦立法通過，且有權自行認可開設課程，目前共有 44 校。
- (二) 非自我認可之高等教育機構：開設之課程須經州及特區核可者，並有一定效力期限。
- (三) 立案訓練機構：技職教育及訓練機構開設之課程，則一個州或特區所認可之套裝訓練課程來加以認定。

肆、參訪紀實

澳洲聯邦教育科學訓練部

參訪日期：92 年 12 月 15 日

接待人員：Mr William (Group Manager, Australian Education International Group)、Mr Iain Watts (Branch Manager, International Cooperation Branch, Australian Education International Group)、Mr Oliver Simmonson (Assistant Director, Export Facilitation Branch)、Ms Sally Jones (Policy Analyst, Apec, WTO North and South Asia Unit, International Cooperation Branch, International Group)、Ms Lois Sparkes (Branch Manager, Quality, Equity and Collaboration Branch, Higher Education Group)、Ms Sian Lewis (Director, Quality Unit, Higher Education Group)

一、澳洲中央教育主管機關

澳洲教育之中央主管機關為聯邦教育部，全稱為聯邦教育科學訓練部 (Department of Education, Science and Training, 簡稱 DEST)。澳洲政府採內閣制，聯邦各部會之首長均由國會議員兼任，DEST 亦然。現任 DEST 之部長有二位，一位是聯邦教育科學訓練部部長 Dr Brendan Nelson MP，一位是聯邦科學部長 Dr Peter McGauran MP。部長下有次長 (Secretary) 為部內真正負責督導部務的最高層級官員。

二、澳洲大學經費分配

澳洲聯邦教育部對各大學之經費分配共分三部分，一為依據各校的學生人數，二為依據學校教學所需，三為依照學校團隊的研究成果來爭取經費。各校使用政府補助之經費皆有規定使用項目，並須繳交

績效報告。

三、DEST 的重要議題

依據 DEST 2002-2003 年度報告，DEST 的重要議題包括以下幾項：

- (一) 從 2004 年 4 月開始檢討澳洲高等教育，並於 2004 年 5 月向部長提出高等教育改革的新政策-「支持澳洲的未來-支持我們的大學」，該項改革將予大學鬆綁、提供新助學貸款以鼓勵終生學習，DEST 認為大學將會是 21 世紀澳洲的發展基礎。
- (二) 在科學創新方面，接續「2001 年支持澳洲創新能力計畫」，DEST 開始進行一項檢測澳洲科學及创新能力的大型計畫，冀以發展出一新科學政策綱領 (policyframework)。
- (三) 職業教育及訓練仍是澳洲教育的眾議要議題之一，在過去 DEST 一直依市場的需要積極持職業教育及訓練部門，2002 年 9 月提出鼓勵新學徒制計畫 (The New Apprenticeships Incentives Programme)，強調學徒完成所有訓練及行政程序的簡化，DEST 透過簽約成立 37 個新學徒中心，他們從 2003 年 7 月起提供服務，未來三年將擴大增加 77 萬的新學徒中心。
- (四) 教育品質的確保及維持亦為 DEST 的重點工作之一，一項有關教學和師資教育的檢討即將完成，未來將更重視能源科學、科技及數學，並繼續支持學校教育的創新文化。澳洲必需是個創新的國家，才能具備國際競爭力，因此對於中小學能源科學、科技及數學師資的培育格外重視。
- (五) 2002-2003 澳洲教育國際輸出持續升高，DEST 認為澳洲在這一部分的努力有助於其未來在國際上的角色，因為國際教育和研究的聯繫能建立個人和機構間的關係，不但可增加澳洲的對外影響力，亦可增加澳洲為外之宣傳瞭解，對外交和貿

易之推展多所助益，尤其澳洲教育國際化也符合吸引其他國家的優秀人才來澳洲的目標。教育及訓練是澳洲的第三大服務輸出項，2003年5月DEST宣佈的新政策綱領，重點放在企業界的支持與參與，以及服務的整合上。

四、DEST之未來工作重點

- (一) 高等教育改革。
- (二) 實施國際教育之系列改進工作，確保多元而落實的教育輸出企業。
- (三) 發展國家教育政策綱領，回應澳洲政府高優先目標——到2010年要讓澳洲學生均能成為世界公民。
- (四) 提昇原住民教育成果。
- (五) 籌謀學校教育和原住民教育未來四年之發展計畫及經費。
- (六) 與ANTA研商一前瞻性的三年(2004-2006)協定，改進訓練品質、找出技能缺失、提昇創新能力，並發展出2004-2010國家職業教育及訓練策略目標。

五、政策重點

DEST近年來特別強調研究、科學、創新的必要性及對澳洲之重要性，並將持續致力以下工作：

- (一) 規劃澳洲科學及創新架構。
- (二) 國家研究優先議題的實施與提昇。
- (三) 發展國家研究組織策略。
- (四) 與公立研究機構和大學建立更密切的合作關係。
- (五) 評估澳洲政府1999年的知識及創新演說對於政府研究經費分配及訓練安排的影響。
- (六) 更進一步評估第五項對澳洲國立的影響。

六、部長施政重點

DEST 聯邦教育科學訓練部長 Dr Brendan Nelson 特別重視高等教育改革曾多次發表文獻及演說倡導，為奠定未來十年澳洲高等教育得基礎，並將於未來四年投入一億五千萬澳幣以提昇大學的研究水準。他認為澳洲未來高等教育的四個推動原則是永續經營、品質、受教平等及多元 (Sustainability, Quality, Equity and Diversity)。推動的重點包括重申對教學成果的重視、區域性學府及機構角色的更深認同、研究補助審核應強調具競爭力以及務實導向；此外，提供新的學生就學貸款、保證高等教育的平等取得、在品質管控下開放私立高等教育市場、鼓勵高等教育提供多元功能亦是改革的重點。

澳洲大學品質監督局

參訪日期：92 年 12 月 16 日

接待人員：Dr David Woodhouse (Executive Director)

一、澳洲大學評鑑

近幾年來，由於澳洲聯邦政府提供大多數的大學教育經費，因此它在大學教育上逐漸扮演著主要決策的角色。尤其近幾十年來聯邦政府逐漸增加對於教育事務的參與，目前聯邦政府已肩負起提供大學教育經費的主要職責。而聯邦議會 (Federal Paliament) 對大學僅有極小的立法權，它在大學教育上扮演著協調及財務補助的角色。但這也僅是指編列特殊用途的預算供大學使用，而在各個大學經常運作經費上，並無直接影響力或控制力。

目前澳洲共有四十二所高等教育機構，其中三十六所大學是國立大學 (Australin National University)，四所是接受聯邦部分經費補助的學院，以及二所私立大學 (Bond University)。澳洲採取中央集權的大學教育體制。澳洲的大學教育品質評鑑團體為「高

等教育品質保證委員會」(Committee for Quality Assurance on Higher Education, 簡稱 CQAHE), 成立於一九九二年十一月, 針對各大學學術水準及國際地位每年進行一次評鑑並發表報告。

二、澳大利亞大學品質局設立

澳洲政府為確保大學教育品質之績效責任, 體認到導入大學認可或品質管理制度之必要性, 並同時提升大學在國際之競爭力, 因此在 1999 年由當時聯邦教育部長 Kemp 宣布, 為確保高等教育的學生能獲得基本品質之教育, 聯邦教育經費使用之效率, 以及高等教育機構之輸入與運作過程, 能獲得高品質之教育產出, 高等教育應該導入全國性之品質保證制度, 透過對大學之策略發展計畫、研究與研究訓練報告、學生貸款統計資料、資產管理計畫、本土化教育策略以及品質改善與保證計畫等資料之品質審核, 以確保高等教育之績效責任。為回應教育部長之政策宣示以及體認到高等教育之快速擴展、資訊科技之影響、國際之競爭以及對品質管理之需求, 聯邦政府決定在 2000 年設立「澳大利亞大學品質局 (Australian Universities Quality Agency, 簡稱 AUQA)」, 負責高等教育之品質審核工作。

AUQA 在 2000 年正式成立開始運作, 以下茲簡略介紹該機構之性質:

2. 是屬於獨立、非營利型態之國營股份有限公司, 其組成會員為九個聯邦、省及自治區之教育部長。根據組織法規定, 會員大會每年開會一次, 負責討論公司之政策。公司實際之運作, 則由一個十二人組成之董事會負責, 十二個成員中有五個是高等教育機構之代表, 三個是聯邦教育部代表, 三個是省及自治區教育廳代表, 另一個則為董事會聘任之執行長兼董事會秘書, 董事會成員任期三年。
3. 該組織之組成除有 12 位董事外, 有 8 位 (含執行長) 專任

行政人員，及超過 100 人的榮譽訪評委員人才庫；設立基金共一千五百萬澳幣，由聯邦教育部、省及自治區及各大學三個單位各捐資 500 萬澳幣而成立，每年之運作費用由聯邦教育部、省及自治區各負擔百分之 40（各 500,000 澳幣），餘 20% 由受評學校支付。

4. 設立目標有四：(1) 規劃與執行有關大學各種活動之品質保證之定期審核；(2) 檢視、評核、分析與出版有關品質保證設計之報告，以及對各大學品質方案運作過程之衝擊；(3) 研訂與公布新設高等教育機構認可之效標；(4) 藉由品質審核之過程所獲得之資訊，評估與公布澳洲高等教育制度與品質保證之機制，在國際高等教育社群中之相對效標。據此，AUQA 之品質審核系植基於全面性、支持性、變通性、合作性、透明性、經濟性及公開性之原則。
5. AUQA 除進行高等教育評鑑工作外，與品質改善之相關機制尚包括：(1) 編輯與出版高等教育品質之概念與實務的相關資訊；(2) 確認、記錄、編撰與分享高等教育最佳實務之案例；(3) 提供品質諮詢服務；(4) 進行有關品質之標準與達成之研究；(5) 確認與調查當前全國所關注之品質與標準相關議題；(6) 協助機構間對品質之討論與對話；(7) 辦理研討會或工作坊；提交政府及相關機構有關品質之仲裁報告。

三、澳洲大學品質保證過程

澳洲大學的品質審核過程是一種系統與獨立的檢核，以決定高等教育機構所規劃的學術活動與相關的結果，是否能夠有效執行並達成既定目標(Woodhouse, 2002)。因此，在進行品質審核時，AUQA 並不訂定任何外在標準，而是以各校自定之設校宗旨與目標為基準點，進行評鑑。此一作法主要在確保大學之自主性，同時為達成協助品質改善之導向，整各品質審核之過程相當強調各大學批判性自

我評鑑的重要性。

(一) 機構之自我評鑑

澳洲品質審核過程主要是強調自我評鑑的重要性，由於 AUQA 一再強調品質審核的核心是自我評鑑，各校不應以 AUQA 的評鑑目標為評鑑依據，而是根據大學本身之宗旨與目標進行評鑑，因此各大學自我評鑑之作法相當多元，包括抽樣調查、檔案記錄分析、結構性自我檢核與報告、全校性模擬檢核等，充分反映出大學之自主性。但不論採用何種方式，各校自我評鑑的主要內容包括：1.參與人員與步驟；2.評鑑目標與設校宗旨及和目標的相關性；3.相關文件；4.執行作業；5.效能指標；6.檢核效能之作業；7.宗旨或目標達成程度；8.優勢與缺失之分析等。

(二) 外部專家同儕訪視

為能有效進行品質審核的外部專家訪視，AUQA 建立了一個訪評委員人才庫，當中建檔的人力稱為「榮譽訪評員」，其係由大學代表、企業代表及國外學者三類所組成，榮譽訪評員的資格是需要有高等教育相關的研究、教學經驗，並能具備評鑑的實務經驗、管理能力等，故被聘為榮譽訪評員皆是一時之選的菁英份子。2002 年人才庫中共有 109 人，其中 56 人來自澳洲學術機構，26 人來自澳洲各企業界，23 人來自海外地區，4 位為 AUQA 內部人員。由 AUQA 的執行長依照擬評鑑學校性質來擇定訪評委員，在實際到學校評鑑前，每位訪評委員須接受為期 10 天的講習，以確保評鑑標準之一致性。當大學完成自我評鑑，並將表現檔案提交 AUQA 後，AUQA 及根據審核之範圍、訪評大學之特徵及訪評小組之需求，從人才庫中遴選適當人員組成訪評小組。訪評小組通常包括二位大學學者、一位企業界人士一位國外學者及一位 AUQA 專任行政人員。訪視評鑑的目的另一方面再檢視大學自我評鑑所呈現的資料；另一方面在透過各種訪評活動之實施，提供大學發展之建議，具體

而言，透過外部評鑑，AUQA 認為可達成下列功能 1.檢視大學之目標與價值；2.檢驗與修正大學自評報告之內容；3.強化自我評鑑之可信度；4.協助大學判斷其教學與研究是否達到全國或國際卓越之標準，因此，AUQA 並未訂定全國統一適用之評鑑指標或項目，完全依照各校自評內容及指標項目進行評鑑。AUQA 於 2001 年完成 3 個學校之評鑑作業，2002 年完成 10 個學校，2003 年完成 8 個學校。

(二) 提出評鑑報告

在完成實地訪視後，訪視小組成員根據個人所負責範圍，提出訪視發現，並由 AUQA 參與訪視之專任行政人員負責報告之撰寫，訪視小組委員提供諮詢服務，並針對報告內容作必要之修正。報告草案完成後，送受評學校針對內容提出評述意見及申覆，並經訪評小組作最後討論修正後，完成正式評鑑報告，並再書面報告送受評學校二週後，正式對社會大眾公開。

(四) 回饋與追蹤

大學在收到 AUQA 之評鑑報告，應從 AUQA 之「最佳實務資料庫」中，搜尋可借鏡之機構，進行標準化之品質改善計畫與行動方案，大學若未針對品質改善建議作出具體回應，則會遭到聯邦政府刪減經費補助。另由於 AUQA 係在 2000 年才成立，2001 開始實施品質審核，該機制上屬於初步萌芽階段，有關外部訪評後之回饋與追蹤，目前整個作業設計分為三階段，第一階段在報告公布後三至四個月，主要在追蹤個大學是否依據報告提出改善行動方案；第二階段在報告出版二年半後，對行動方案之行程性評鑑，最後為報告出版後五年，配合品質審核五年依循環週期之設計，針對品質改善結果進行總結性評鑑。

(五) 評鑑結果運用

AUQA 之評鑑結果係做為各校內部改進之重要依據，並提供企業界做為捐款之參考，評鑑結果的好壞，並不會影響聯邦

政府做為經費補助之依據。

澳洲墨爾本大學

參訪日期：92年12月17日

接待人員：Mr Roger Peacock (Vice-Principal, Uni. Of Melbourne)、Mr Ian Marshman (Senior Vice-Principal, Uni. Of Melbourne)、Ms Roslyn Holloway (International Liaison Officer)、Ms Suzanne Daroesman (Manager, Evaluation Cycle, University Planning Office)

一、學校特色

墨爾本大學創建於1855年，是澳洲公認最卓越的研究型學府之一，墨大本身特質及發展焦點都強調國際化。該校研究成果被引用之次數佔全澳第一，達到世界一流水準。

墨大的經費百分之五十五來自聯邦政府。墨大共有十一個學院：建築設計學院、文學院、經濟商貿學院、教育學院、工程學院、農學院、法學院、醫學及牙醫與衛生學院、音樂學院、理學院及獸醫學院。此外尚有墨爾本商業學院、維多利亞藝術學院、研究生院、研究卓越中心及私立墨爾本大學（有限公司）。

墨大有甚多馳名世界的研究中心，例如「神經科學研究中心」(Center for Neuroscience)。除研究中心外，墨大計有六個博物館，其中以 Ian Potter Museum of Fine Arts 最出名。

每年墨大提供大約三千個獎學金給優秀學生。墨大與一百三十個以上的外國大學有交換計畫，學生可以出國唸書，得到的學分國內可以認可。此外，墨大亦是 Universitas21 (二十一世紀大學聯盟) 創始會員，此一組織結合世界頂尖之研究型大學，期目的之一在透過網際網路提供一流的大學教育給世界各地之學生。

墨大內部組織中有「計畫發展處」，共有行政人員 10 人，負責全校評鑑所須的文件資料彙整，平時即蒐集各學院、系所、中心之相關資訊資料，並與以重整處理，使得學校各單位之資料完備，利於進行評鑑工作。

二、品質保證模式

墨爾本大學對品質保證以發展出一套良好的制度，主要特點包括：

- (一) 每年廣泛地蒐集資料（包括時序資料），一般稱為「評鑑循環週期」(the Evaluation Cycle)。
- (二) 訂定清楚之負責界限，以及與表現有關之獎勵辦法。
- (三) 成立有關教學品質之委員會「教學品質保證委員會」(Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee)，向學數理事會負責報告。

三、墨大評鑑循環週期制度

墨爾本大學的評鑑循環是一種回饋機制，主要目的是找出學生及畢業生對學校課程的看法，自一九九七年開始實施，是大學計畫與預算等各種循環的一部分，這些循環是彙報學校成果、表現與評量。大學有三項主要的內部回饋調查，分別是教學品質調查（對大學部學生，每一學科每一學期都需調查）、研究指導與學術資源品質調查（對研究所學生）及行政與資源品質調查（所有學生，有關圖館、電腦設備及健康福利等）。另外，在澳洲學生生涯委員會協調下，各大學也對學生進行三項全國規模的調查，分別是課程經驗問卷、研究生研究經驗問卷及畢業發展問卷。另外，墨大的高等教育中心也對畢業校友進行追蹤調查，另外學校應用經濟與社會研究中心也對畢業生的雇主進行問卷調查。

有關上述調查的分析報告，將分送給資深主管、學術委員會、

各學院院長與主管等，這些調查資料可用於對外報告（如官方教育部），亦可用於內部報告（如課程檢討等）。

現茲就教學品質調查內涵簡述如下：

- (一) 該調查有兩份問卷，一是學生回饋問卷，另一是遠距學習問卷。通常問卷含有六項共同問題；包括學生對科目的期待、授課品質、智能的激發、課程進展的互動性、教師的專長及課業份量的合適性。問卷之問題，採五級回答制：從非常同意到非常不同意的選項或五燈獎制，請學生對問題作答或評量。
- (二) 從歷史資料 1995-2002 學生回饋問卷分析，整體而言，墨大學生滿意其學科教學，平均 3.5 分；而 1/5 的大學部學科被學生評分 4.5 以上，30%的學生認為所學課程用到電腦且有助學習，38%大學部學生認為上課程會利網路資源等。
- (三) 從上述分析，可以歸納教學品質平均分數的變化趨勢，而學門間的差別可能有許多原因：不同的教學品質和方法 practice、不同的評分方法、課程結構、班級大小及問卷回收率等因素。
- (四) 問卷將由校方統一統計，不由系所計算，蓋因求保密。所有調查結果將回到各相關系所，對低評價的科目應立即檢討。系所亦應安排與學生對談調查結果。學校整調查結果亦應報告「品質保證局」的學術部。
- (五) 大學對調查結果的追蹤，特別對平均分數 3.0 以下的學科和那有在“不良教學方法”問題項目下得到 4.5 比例以上的學科。而對教學品質調查反應良好的學院（3.0 以上）

予以額外經費補助。

伍、結論與建議

一、結論

- (一) 澳洲大學品質保證局之成立係由澳洲政府與各大學合作捐資推動完成，後續運作經費充裕，制度規劃妥善，對各大學品質提升有具體及正面之功能。
- (二) 評鑑專責中心有固定之行政人員進行事務性工作之規劃及執行，評鑑人員背景具多樣性及人數要多，並進行在職訓練教育，以確保評鑑標準一致性及公平性，評鑑人才庫之建立很重要。
- (三) 各校評鑑採自願性及付費原則，政府經費分配不以評鑑結果為依據，評鑑目的係自我改進導向。而 AUQA 的成立，確實達到各校提升教育品質之功能。
- (四) AUQA 除辦理大學評鑑工作外，亦辦理評鑑相關工作知能之研習，協助各校了解如何進行自評。
- (五) 中央教育主管機關僅負責教育政策大方向之規劃，及整理各大學相關之校務運作資訊供外界參考，大學運作回歸各校自主。

- (六) 澳洲大學皆為國立，但各校皆設有董事會，校長係由學校董事會及學校組成之 search community 共同選出，並非由政府指派或校內教師選舉產生。
- (七) 政府經費補助不與評鑑結果掛勾，除各校依照學生人數及教學之基本需求補助外，亦提供競爭性經費，由各大學依學術研究成果來爭取，以提昇大學之學術卓越。
- (八) 各校的資訊檔案資料建立完整豐富，有利評鑑工作之進行。

二、建議

- (一) 成立專責獨立之高教評鑑單位是世界先進各國現行之作法，亦是追求高等教育卓越之手段，
- (二) 我國現正規劃成立專責評鑑中心，依規定文教財團法人基金為三千萬元，以澳洲僅42所大學，所成立之評鑑中心成立基金即有澳幣一千五百萬元（合台幣約3億7千5百萬元），我國目前公私立大學校院共151所，規模是澳洲的3倍多，現擬成立之評鑑中心規模應較澳洲大，故設立基金應充裕，基金來源除政府負擔外，各大學亦應共同捐資。
- (三) 未來評鑑中心成立後每年之年度運作經費，除受評學校付

費外，政府仍應每年編列年度運作補助經費，使得該中心能持續運作。

- (四) 評鑑中心之工作除辦理大學評鑑外，仍應積極辦理有關評鑑工作之相關之研討會或工作坊之專業訓練，以提供各大學相關工作人員研習。
- (五) 評鑑中心成立後仍須儘速建立評鑑委員人才庫，落實評鑑委員的多元化及培訓制度，如此才能使評鑑結果具公信力。
- (六) 各校及本部應儘速建立高等教育各項重要資訊資料庫，除作為評鑑之重要背景資料外，亦可做為本部重要教育決策之參考。

<附錄一>

**AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES
QUALITY AGENCY LIMITED**

ANNUAL REPORT 2002

“Growth is the only evidence of life.”

– *John Henry Newman*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Background | 2 |
| Establishing AUQA | 4 |
| Quality Audits | 6 |
| National Activities | 8 |
| International Activities..... | 11 |
| Structure of AUQA..... | 12 |
| The Board..... | 12 |
| The Staff..... | 13 |
| The Register of Auditors | 14 |
| Finance | 15 |

Background

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is an independent national agency set up to promote, audit, and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, and was registered on 24 May 2000. AUQA was created by the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), the group of nine ministers responsible for higher education in the Australian Commonwealth government and each of the six States and two Territories. These ministers are the Members of the company. AUQA receives core operational funding from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, but operates independently of governments and educational institutions under the direction of a Board of twelve Directors. Eleven of the directors are nominated by governments and the higher education sector and appointed by MCEETYA, while the twelfth, the Executive Director, is appointed by the Board.

The Company has four Objects:

1. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of QA arrangements relating to the activities of Australian universities, other self-accrediting institutions (SAIs) and state and territory HE accreditation bodies.
2. Monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on QA arrangements in SAIs, and on processes and procedures of state and territory accreditation

authorities, and on the impact of those processes on quality of programs.

3. Report on the criteria for the accreditation of new universities and non-university HE courses as a result of information obtained during the audit of institutions and state and territory accreditation processes.
4. Report on the relative standards of the Australian HE system and its QA processes, including their international standing, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

Establishing AUQA

The Executive Director took up his position on 1 July 2001, and another five staff were appointed and began work over the next year. Audits are carried out by panels of about five people, including one AUQA professional staff member, and four others drawn from universities, business and industry, from Australia and abroad. Although these honorary auditors are very senior and experience people, they are required to attend a two-day training workshop before being eligible to serve on an AUQA audit panel. These workshops are led by AUQA staff and other experienced auditors.

Over one hundred auditors have now been trained and appointed by the Board. Auditor training workshops were held in September 2001 (one in Melbourne and one in Sydney), March 2002 and November 2002 (both in Melbourne). The latter two were opened to other participants who paid a fee to attend. On both occasions, the number of applicants exceeded the number of places available, and participant evaluation of the workshops was excellent.

Policies were developed and approved by the Board on matters including Board responsibility, risk management, consulting, observers on audit panels, intellectual property, and auditing international activities, and Staff Conditions of Service were drafted and approved by the Board.

An Audit Manual was drafted, setting out the approach that AUQA intends to take and the procedures it will follow in

carrying out its audits. This was published in July 2001, and extensive consultation with the sector took place in drafting a revised version. Following approval by the Board, a revised version was published in June 2002. This will be further revised in 2003.

A Staff Manual was written, detailing the steps in the procedures set out in the Audit Manual. This document will be continually updated as processes are refined.

A website was designed and constructed, and went live in December 2001. The site is constantly up-dated with news, articles, activities and reports. It is well-used and feedback on the site is very positive. The address is www.auqa.edu.au, but the domain names 'com', 'gov' and 'org' have also been registered.

The term 'Australian Universities Quality Agency', with the logo, has been registered as a trade mark in Australia.

Quality Audits

Volunteers were sought for three trial audits in 2001, and from the volunteers AUQA selected Northern Territory University, the University of New South Wales, and the Queensland Office of Higher Education. The three audits were carried out over the period September 2001 to February 2002. The feedback obtained from the panels and the auditees at a one-day meeting held for the purpose in February 2002 was very positive. These trials served to validate AUQA's procedures and instructions, while highlighting some improvements that could be achieved through changes in emphasis.

AUQA was given the task of auditing all its constituency (currently 43 institutions and eight agencies) over five years, so there will be about 10 audits each year over the period 2002 to 2006 inclusive. The AUQA Board decided to select auditees for each year in a more or less random fashion. Nine institutions and one agency were selected for audit in 2002, and eight institutions and two agencies for 2003.

During 2002, audit visits were conducted to the Victorian Office of Higher Education, Australian Maritime College, the Universities of Adelaide, Ballarat, Newcastle and Southern Queensland, and the Australian Catholic University, Curtin University of Technology, Macquarie University and Swinburne University of Technology. In several cases, in addition to the main visit of the whole audit panel to one campus of the institution (or agency), some panel members visited other campuses, partner

organisations within Australia, or operations in other countries. The conclusions of the audits are set out in the public audit reports on AUQA's website, and by the end of 2002, reports had been published on the Australian Catholic University, the University of Ballarat, Curtin University of Technology, the University of Southern Queensland and the Victorian Office of Higher Education. (The other reports are expected by the end of April 2003.)

By the end of 2002, audit panels had been established for almost all the 2003 audits, and the first portfolio for 2003 (from the University of Canberra) was received in December 2002.

It has become clear that the planned full-time staff of six is minimal for the required work, and at the end of 2002 a new staff position was established. This is envisaged as an Information Manager with prime responsibility to assist each audit panel in organising and using the large amount of information it receives.

National Activities

Although there was agreement on the establishment of AUQA from all governments and the institutions to be audited, nonetheless the institutions and agencies were apprehensive about the form and emphasis that the audits would take. The Executive Director therefore undertook to visit all auditees over the period 2001 to 2002. As a result of the discussions at these visits, institutions have increasingly realised that AUQA intends to be rigorous but fair; to recognise, respect and encourage institutional diversity; to minimise the work that needs to be done for AUQA; to expect institutions to concentrate on their own QA needs and not 'prepare for AUQA audit'; and to operate economically.

Institutions have also realised that AUQA will aim to avoid duplicating the work of other agencies (such as those of the ombudsman or auditor-general). Furthermore, AUQA is trying to educate the public to understand that it is not a body that investigates individual grievances or appeals, but assists in enhancing institutional QA systems and performance so that grievances are less likely to occur, and are dealt with satisfactorily when they do occur.

Work with other agencies such as professional associations, the auditors-general, ANTA, DEST, IDP and AEI is progressing smoothly. AUQA kept the federal government informed of the international reaction to the Norfolk Island-based Greenwich University, assisting in the government's decision to act on accrediting requirements towards the end of 2002. AUQA has also provided

information to DEST to assist in responding to issues raised in the Senate Estimates Committee.

AUQA took the initiative to organise a conference, called the 'Australian Universities Quality Forum', in Brisbane in September 2002. There were over 170 participants and the feedback on it was very positive. A number of organisations and institutions that have featured quality in their meetings over recent years (such as AAIR, ATEM, AVCC; CAPA, HERDSA) are supportive of AUQA now taking the lead role in this area. It is expected that this Forum will be an annual event. The steering group for the Forum is representative of the bodies just mentioned, as well as DEST, accrediting agencies, professional associations and institutions.

In conjunction with the Forum, AUQA held a meeting for as many of the AUQA honorary auditors as could attend. This is planned to be an annual occasion to enable auditors to share experience of audits, to assist them in their audit work, and to enhance consistency of audit decisions made by different audit panels. AUQA produces a quarterly newsletter for its honorary auditors, and a quarterly newsletter for the media.

AUQA staff members have been invited to speak at a large number of conferences and meetings, both about the work of AUQA, and more generally about the principles and practice of quality assurance. We have also given numerous media interviews.

Continuing change in the Australian higher education sector and our leading international position in higher education mean that AUQA's role is now even more vital than when MCEETYA established AUQA only two years ago. A feature of 2002 has been the federal government 'Crossroads' review of higher education. One stated intent was to increase the diversity of the HE sector as well as enhancing its interaction with the VET sector. Inasmuch as AUQA's audits are based on an institution's own objectives, they will be equally valid and valuable if these revisions are made. Furthermore, AUQA has established itself as a national authority on quality assurance in HE, and is therefore in a position to assist more generally in Australia's quality assurance developments, both nationally and internationally.

International Activities

There is a great deal of international interest in AUQA, and we have received delegations from China, Malaysia (twice), New Zealand (twice), South Africa and Thailand.

AUQA is building relations with the quality agencies in the other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 'Executive Director has been invited to speak at a number of international symposia, and has been a member of an international panel to review the Internationalisation Activities of the Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico, and of another international panel to audit the teaching and learning activities of all the universities in Hong Kong.

Structure of AUQA

AUQA has four parts, namely the Members (the nine ministers responsible for higher education), the Board (of 12 directors), the staff and the Register of Auditors.

The Board

The members of the Board, with nominating groups and date of termination of appointment, are as follows:

| Member | Affiliation | Nominating Group/Date of termination |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Dr Colin Adam | <i>formerly Deputy CE, CSIRO</i> | <i>Federal govt 2003</i> |
| Ms Stella Axarlis | <i>Chairman, Peninsula Health Services</i> | <i>Federal govt 2003</i> |
| Emeritus Prof. David Beanland | <i>formerly VC, RMIT University (Board Chair)</i> | <i>Federal govt 2004</i> |
| Professor Denise Bradley | <i>VC, University of South Australia</i> | <i>SAIs * 2003</i> |
| Dr Martyn Forrest | <i>Secretary, Department of Education, Tasmania</i> | <i>State govts ** 2004</i> |
| Mr David Gray | <i>Managing Director, Boeing Australia Ltd</i> | <i>State govts ** (resigned during 2002)</i> |
| Professor Don McNicol | <i>VC, University of Tasmania (to June 2002)</i> | <i>SAIs * 2004 ▼</i> |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Dr Geoff Madigan | <i>President, Avondale College</i> | <i>NSAIs *** 2004</i> |
| Professor Ingrid Moses | <i>VC, University of New England</i> | <i>SAIs * 2004</i> |
| Professor Alan Robson | <i>Deputy VC, University of Western Australia</i> | <i>SAIs * 2003</i> |
| Ms Leigh Tabrett | <i>Assistant Director General (Portfolio Programs), Office of Higher Education, QLD</i> | <i>State govts ** 2003</i> |
| Dr David Woodhouse | <i>Executive Director, AUQA</i> | <i>AUQA Board 2006</i> |

* 'SAI' denotes 'self-accrediting institution'

** 'State govts' denotes 'State and Territory governments'

*** 'NSAI' denotes 'non-self-accrediting institution'

The Staff

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Ms Elizabeth Burke | <i>Audit Support Administrator</i> |
| Mrs Natalie Byrne | <i>PA to the Executive Director</i> |
| Mr Rob Carmichael | <i>Audit Director (from Sept, 2002)</i> |
| Mr Martin Carroll | <i>Audit Director</i> |
| Ms Judith Duffy | <i>Audit Director (to August, 2002)</i> |
| Ms Robyn Harris | <i>Audit Director</i> |
| Ms Betty Taylor | <i>Audit Officer (from July, 2002)</i> |
| Dr David Woodhouse | <i>Executive Director</i> |

The Register of Auditors

AUQA has established a pool of people willing to serve on AUQA audit panels as honorary auditors. Honorary auditors may be senior staff from Australian universities or other HE institutions; individuals from Australian business or industry with high-level experience and understanding of planning and quality assurance; and people from other countries (usually from within a university). Each audit panel contains members from each of these groups, as well as an AUQA staff member. Auditors serve in an honorary capacity on audit panels from time to time, receiving a small honorarium. At the end of 2002, AUQA had a Register of 109 trained auditors (56 Australian academic, 26 Australian industry, 23 overseas and four AUQA staff members), including 27 female and three indigenous auditors.

Finance

Each institution or agency pays a cost-recovery fee for audit. With the level of fees set, and the auditing of 10 organisations each year, AUQA's income comes approximately one third each from the Commonwealth, from the states and territories, and from audit fees. AUQA also has a small income from consulting activities.

Two meetings of Members have been held to approve the financial statements (to June 2001 and June 2002).

As most of AUQA's audit constituency operates on a calendar year, AUQA is also moving to use the calendar year for its budgeting and reporting. Approval has been obtained from ASIC for this change to flow through to the financial reporting year. Henceforth, therefore, AUQA's reports to MCEETYA and the financial reports to the Members will refer to the previous calendar year.

In brief, the financial position at the end of 2002 was as set out on the next two pages.

Contact details:

Level 10, 123 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne, VIC 3000

Ph: + 61 (0)3 9639 1100

Fax: + 61 (0)3 9639 7177

email: admin@auqa.edu.au

web: www.auqa.edu.au

**AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY LTD
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2002**



| 31/12/01 ACTUAL \$ | | | | 31/12/02 ACTUAL \$ |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | MEMBERS EQUITY | | |
| | 996,673 | Retained earnings | | 996,673 |
| | - | Net surplus / (deficit) | | 268,412 |
| | <u>996,673</u> | | | <u>1,265,085</u> |
| | | CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| 318 | | Cash on hand | 508 | |
| 121,222 | | Cash at bank | 56,271 | |
| 963,909 | | Investment accounts | 1,058,383 | |
| 44,000 | | Debtors | 240,513 | |
| 2,580 | | Accrued income | 30,675 | |
| 10,757 | | Prepayments | 17,113 | |
| | <u>1,142,786</u> | | <u>1,403,462</u> | |
| | | CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| | | Salary sacrifice | 6,479 | |
| 53,664 | | Creditors | 47,585 | |
| 18,103 | | GST liability | (3,656) | |
| 10,609 | | Employee provisions | 21,460 | |
| 293,300 | 375,675 | Grants in advance | 250,000 | 321,869 |
| | <u>767,111</u> | WORKING CAPITAL | | <u>1,081,594</u> |
| | | FIXED ASSETS | | |
| 146,116 | | Fixtures and fittings | 144,628 | |
| 98,447 | | Office equipment | 102,446 | |
| (15,000) | 229,563 | Accumulated depreciation | (63,583) | 183,491 |
| | <u>996,673</u> | | | <u>1,265,085</u> |

**AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY LTD
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2002 TO 31 DECEMBER 2002**



| Actual July 00 - December 01 | | December 2002 | | | Budget January 02 - December 02 |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| \$ | Revenue | Budget | Year To Date Actual | Variance | |
| 1,500,000 | Grants | | | | |
| | - Australian Capital Territory | 8,500 | 8,500 | - | 8,500 |
| | - New South Wales | 170,500 | 170,500 | - | 170,500 |
| | - Victoria | 127,200 | 127,200 | - | 127,200 |
| | - Queensland | 86,600 | 86,600 | - | 86,600 |
| | - South Australia | 41,600 | 41,600 | - | 41,600 |
| | - Western Australia | 47,400 | 47,400 | - | 47,400 |
| | - Tasmania | 13,400 | 13,400 | - | 13,400 |
| | - Northern Territory | 4,800 | 4,800 | - | 4,800 |
| | - Commonwealth | 500,000 | 500,000 | - | 500,000 |
| 28,842 | Interest | 9,091 | 39,262 | 30,171 | 9,091 |
| 3,500 | Consulting | 27,273 | 19,470 | (7,803) | 27,273 |
| | Audit Fees | 409,090 | 393,182 | (15,908) | 409,090 |
| 2,301 | Other Revenue | - | - | - | - |
| 3,378 | Expenditure Reimbursements | - | 33,605 | 33,605 | - |
| 60,000 | Workshop Income | - | 104,175 | 104,175 | - |
| <u>1,598,021</u> | Total Revenue | <u>1,445,454</u> | <u>1,589,693</u> | <u>144,239</u> | <u>1,445,454</u> |
| | Expenditure | | | | |
| | General | | | | |
| 290,821 | - Salaries | 510,000 | 513,269 | (3,269) | 510,000 |
| 78,849 | - Travel | 15,000 | 40,773 | (25,773) | 15,000 |
| | - Accommodation & Expenses | 5,000 | 1,546 | 3,454 | 5,000 |
| | - Publication/Printing | 10,000 | 2,768 | 7,232 | 10,000 |
| 20,078 | - Office Accommodation | 100,000 | 71,769 | 28,231 | 100,000 |
| 3,229 | - Computers | 20,000 | 17,157 | 2,843 | 20,000 |
| 34,196 | - Administrative Expenses | 50,000 | 30,679 | 19,321 | 50,000 |
| 3,582 | - Insurances | 15,000 | 8,990 | 6,010 | 15,000 |
| - | - Subscriptions/Conferences | 10,000 | 5,332 | 4,668 | 10,000 |
| 55,925 | - Finance and Legal Expenses | 53,000 | 57,983 | (4,983) | 53,000 |
| 15,000 | - Depreciation | 30,000 | 48,583 | (18,583) | 30,000 |
| 79,251 | Audit Activity Expenses | 409,090 | 301,585 | 107,505 | 409,090 |
| | Establishment | - | 77,842 | (77,842) | - |
| 19,521 | Board of Management | 76,000 | 27,743 | 48,257 | 76,000 |
| 897 | Professional Development | 25,000 | 38,810 | (13,810) | 25,000 |
| | Consulting (incl. Public Relations) | 10,000 | 8,908 | 1,092 | 10,000 |
| | Workshops | 78,150 | 67,544 | 10,607 | 78,150 |
| <u>601,348</u> | Total Expenditure | <u>1,416,240</u> | <u>1,321,281</u> | <u>94,959</u> | <u>1,416,240</u> |
| 996,673 | Profit / (Loss) for the year | | 268,412 | | 29,214 |
| | Profit / (Loss) from prior years | | 996,673 | | |
| <u>996,673</u> | Accumulated Profit / (Loss) as at 31/12/02 | | <u>1,265,085</u> | | |

Audits - completed or scheduled

Institutions listed in Alphabetical order (not in order of audit for respective year)

| | |
|------|--|
| 2001 | <p>The Northern Territory University The University of New South Wales</p> <p>Queensland Office of Higher Education</p> |
| 2002 | <p>Australian Catholic University Australian Maritime College Curtin University Macquarie University Swinburne University The University of Newcastle University of Adelaide University of Ballarat University of Southern Queensland</p> <p>Victorian Office of Higher Education</p> |
| 2003 | <p>Griffith University Notre Dame University Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Southern Cross University The University of New England University of Canberra University of Queensland University of Western Australia</p> <p>ACT Accreditation and Registration Council South Australian Accreditation and Registration Council</p> |
| 2004 | <p>Bond University Charles Sturt University Deakin University Edith Cowan University James Cook University La Trobe University University of South Australia The University of Sydney</p> <p>Department of Education and Training, New South Wales Department of Employment, Education and Training, Northern Territory</p> |



**Australian Universities Quality Agency
Strategic Plan
2001-2006**

Context for AUQA

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is a core part of a total national quality assurance (QA) framework. Major areas of change were identified by the Australian government as providing a context for a renewed focus on QA. These were:

- “the massive growth in higher education (HE) both in Australia and internationally,
- the influence of information technology on the delivery of education,
- the internationalisation of education, including the emergence of new providers, and
- a greater focus on good management.”

(D.A.Kemp (1999), 'Quality assured: A new Australian quality assurance framework for university education', Seminar on the New QA Framework, Canberra).

The system proposed in this paper was to:

- “reflect very clearly the responsibility of governments to provide a robust QA and accreditation framework,
- build on and strengthen the existing accreditation process of the ... governments,
- recognise the autonomy of HE institutions,
- place the responsibility for the quality of provision on individual universities, and
- signal to the community and the rest of the world that the quality of the HE system is assured through a rigorous external audit of university QA processes” (ibid)

To these ends, AUQA was established in 2000 by the group of ministers of education of Australia and each of the six states and two territories, acting jointly through the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). AUQA is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, operating independently of governments and the higher education sector under its own Constitution.

AUQA's scope and method of operation must be consistent with the above requirements. As part of its planning, AUQA has developed the following statements to guide and direct its actions.

Mission

By means of quality audits of universities and accrediting agencies, and otherwise, AUQA will provide public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of higher education, and will assist in improving the academic quality of these institutions.

Values

AUQA will be

- **Thorough:** AUQA carries out all its audits as thoroughly as possible.
- **Supportive:** recognising institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, AUQA acts to facilitate and support this.
- **Flexible:** AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity.
- **Co-operative:** recognising that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, AUQA operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- **Collaborative:** as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- **Transparent:** AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system, are open to public scrutiny.
- **Economical:** AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- **Open:** AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

Objectives

AUQA's objectives, specified in its Constitution, are to

- arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of QA arrangements relating to the activities of Australian universities, other self-accrediting institutions (SAIs) and state and territory HE accreditation bodies;
- monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on QA arrangements in SAIs, and on processes and procedures of state and territory accreditation authorities, and on the impact of those processes on quality of programs;
- report on the criteria for the accreditation of new universities and non-university HE courses as a result of information obtained during the audit of institutions and state and territory accreditation processes; and
- report on the relative standards of the Australian HE system and its QA processes, including their international standing, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

Vision, or Key Outcomes

- AUQA's judgements will be widely recognised as objective, fair, accurate, perceptive, rigorous and useful.

AUQA has established detailed and effective procedures for audit, that include auditor appointment and training, extensive and thorough investigation, and consistent implementation.

- AUQA will work in partnership with institutions and accrediting agencies to add value to their activities.

AUQA audit is based on self-review, acknowledges the characteristics of the institution or agency being audited, and accepts comment from the auditee on the best way of expressing the audit findings

- AUQA's advice will be sought on matters related to quality assurance in higher education.

AUQA will carry out consulting activities, including workshops, publications, and advising, and will publish and maintain a database of good practice.

- AUQA will be recognised among its international peers as a leading quality assurance agency.

AUQA will build international links, to learn from and provide leadership to other agencies, and will work with other agencies to the benefit of Australian institutions.

AUQA's assumptions and emphases

AUQA's audits are based on the assumptions that an institution or agency has explicit objectives, which it genuinely wishes to achieve; that it acts in ways intended to achieve these objectives; and that it periodically checks how close it is to achieving these objectives, and acts on the findings. This, AUQA's audits will pay investigate the **rigour and effectiveness of performance monitoring against the organisation's plans**

Audits of institutions will pay particular attention to

- Course & program approval and monitoring.
- Research activities and outputs.
- Overseas operations, including comparability of standards, on-shore and off-shore.
- Communication with stakeholders.
- Systematic internally-initiated reviews (eg of departments, themes), including the rigour and effectiveness of the review mechanisms employed.

and as appropriate will refer to planning documents, such as QAIPs, RRTMPs.

Audits of agencies will pay particular attention to their implementation of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (which cover a range of aspects of their accreditation and other activities).

Quality Improvement

Over the last 50 years, much has been written about quality in organisations. Although some of the writings contradict each other, one point is generally agreed, namely that quality is dynamic. It is not possible to discover what is quality for an organisation, deal with it, then forget it and move on to something else. The environment changes, and quality changes, a situation reflected in phrases such as 'the quality journey', 'continuous quality improvement'. Quality is provisional and emergent. This means that if AUQA is going to speak of quality to institutions and agencies, it must speak of quality improvement.

The audits themselves contribute to quality improvement, and they will form the main source for a flexible database of good practice, through which AUQA identifies, records, codifies and disseminates good practice in HE (not restricted to good practice in QA in HE). Other mechanisms used by AUQA for assisting in the improvement of quality in the HE system include

- compiling and publishing information on concepts and practices in QA in HE
- providing advice and consultation
- carrying out and commissioning research into quality and standards and their achievement
- identifying and investigating issues of current or likely national interest in relation to quality and standards
- facilitating inter-institutional discussions
- running seminars and workshops
- making submissions to government and other agencies.

These activities are not restricted to supporting Australian HE institutions and accrediting bodies, but are made available as a consulting service within Australia and internationally.

Commitment

AUQA is committed to HE, and its value to individuals and society. It is therefore committed to the provision of HE which is of the greatest possible value to individuals, society and the world. As AUQA is itself neither a provider nor a recipient of HE, this commitment is expressed through its support of institutions, agencies and individuals.

The Australian Higher Education Quality Assurance Framework

This paper provides an overview of quality assurance in the Australian higher education sector. It begins by considering the development of higher education quality assurance in Australia, particularly through the 1990s. The paper then outlines Australia's current multi-faceted quality assurance framework. It covers the various roles of the higher education sector, the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, as well as two joint Government initiatives; the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

This paper is timely due to the recent introduction of two major quality assurance initiatives by Australian Governments represented on the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. In March 2000 the Council established the Australian Universities Quality Agency and endorsed the adoption of the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*. These two initiatives have been introduced to ensure that the higher education sector maintains and enhances its quality in an increasingly competitive environment, and they are discussed in some detail within this paper.

Introduction

Throughout the world there has been a move to mass higher education, associated with greater diversity of institutions and programmes and a large increase in the number and size of universities. This expansion of higher education has prompted the rise of a variety of modes of course delivery, including franchising arrangements with third parties under which the parent institution may exercise limited control, virtual course delivery, as well as the delivery of courses through satellite campuses situated at a substantial distance from the institution's main campus. All these developments pose challenges for the efficacy of institutional quality controls.

In addition to the changes impacting the higher education sector referred to above, other new pressures are emerging both nationally and internationally. Australia's national policy environment encourages universities to seek greater commercial opportunities and align themselves more closely with industry needs. Efforts by the higher education sector to attract business investment rely to a considerable extent on available evidence attesting to the quality of their service and the skill level of their graduates. Formal, transparent and credible systems of quality assurance will help guarantee a successful future for Australian universities in this environment.

The world's workforce is becoming increasingly geographically fluid across national, regional and international borders due to economic globalisation and the development of advanced communications and information technologies. In this context, knowledge has emerged as an economic commodity which has in turn placed pressure on existing national systems to ensure they are placed competitively in the international marketplace.

There is currently a strong move throughout developed countries towards having rigorous, internationally recognised higher education quality assurance processes. Foreign governments and institutions considering education relationships with Australia, and families considering personal education investment must have confidence in the quality of Australian universities and in the quality and reputation of Australian degrees.

These changes in organisation, scale and mode of delivery have led to increased public concern about the maintenance of programme quality. In response, many countries have taken steps to establish mechanisms for quality assurance in higher education. Governments must justify spending on higher education in competition with other demands for public spending. Communities whose taxes must support the system and individuals who need to be satisfied about the value and portability of their credentials all demand external validation of the quality of their investments.

Development of Quality Assurance in Australia

Since the late 1970s the Commonwealth Government has promoted a climate of critical self-assessment within the higher education sector, and Australian universities have been encouraged to monitor their own performance. Throughout the 1980s this focus was extended to include the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness, and an increased awareness of public accountability. From the mid-1980s greater emphasis was placed on system-wide studies. Major discipline reviews were funded to determine standards and to improve quality and efficiency. While these reviews served to highlight the importance of quality assurance within institutions and across the sector, there was no mechanism to ensure that the recommendations of the reviews were acted upon at the institutional level.

The Australian higher education sector experienced large scale structural reorganisation in the late 1980s, and rapid growth in higher education participation from the early 1990s. Given this, the Commonwealth Government was concerned to assure the community that the quality of higher education in Australia was of an appropriately high standard and that it would be maintained and enhanced.

In its 1991 policy statement, *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990s*¹ the Commonwealth Government sought to address the weaknesses of the discipline review approach to quality assurance. The statement announced a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the quality of higher education teaching and research. A major initiative was the provision of funding, additional to institutional operating grants, to those universities able to demonstrate a high level of quality assurance in the context of their missions and goals.

The Government established the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in November 1992 to provide advice on quality assurance issues, conduct independent audits of institutional quality assurance policies and procedures, and to make recommendations to the Government on the allocation of annual quality-related funds. These funds were made available to institutions from 1994.

Three rounds of independent whole of institution audits were performed under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Program between 1993 and 1995. The voluntary self-assessment undertaken by institutions under this Program fostered an enhanced and enduring awareness of the importance of internal quality assurance and triggered

¹ Baldwin, Hon P. MP 1991, *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990s*, AGPS, Canberra,

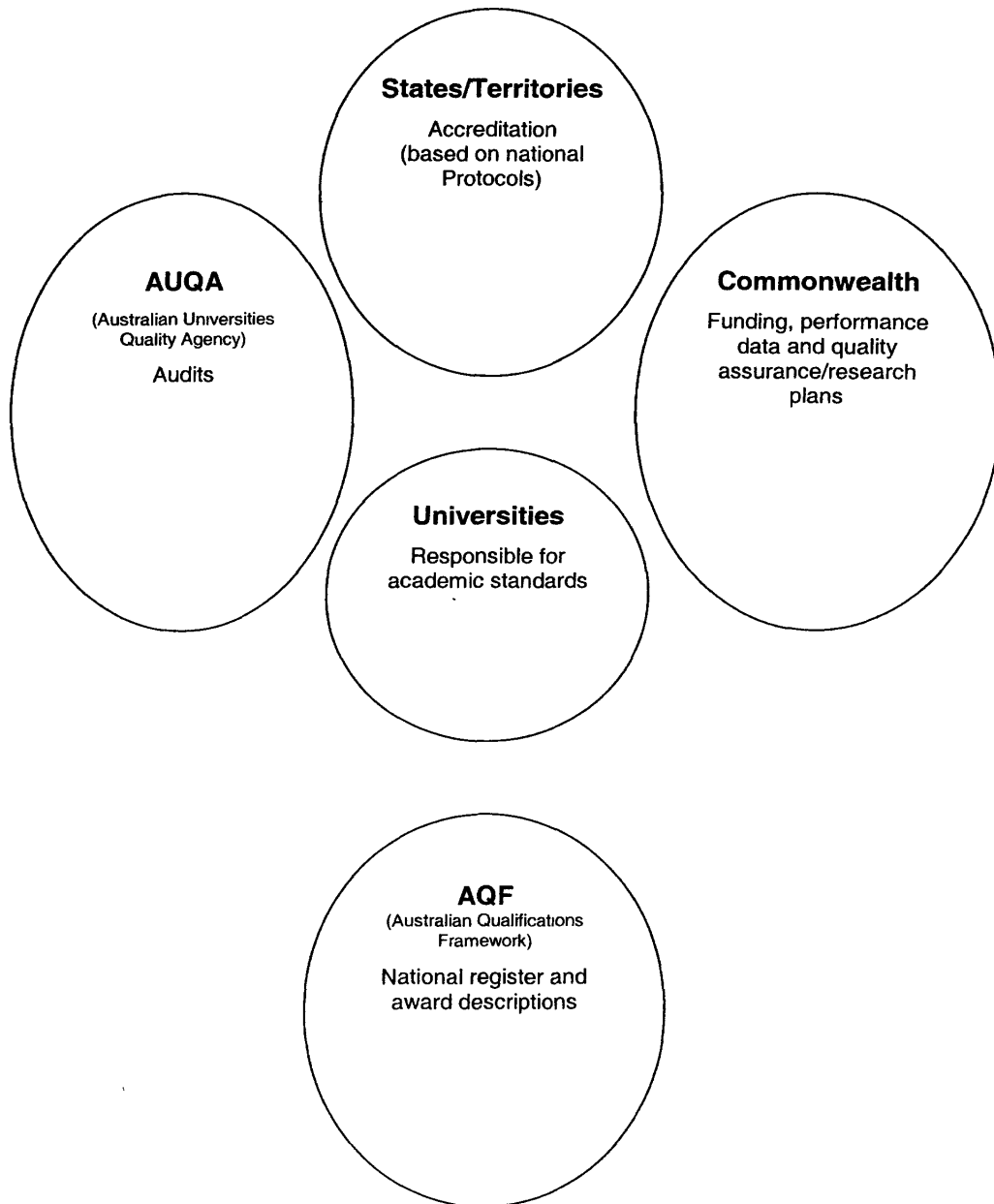
assessment undertaken by institutions under this programme fostered an enhanced and enduring awareness of the importance of internal quality assurance and triggered considerable change in institutional systems as procedural gaps were identified and outcomes measured. In fact, the audit programme served as a mechanism for change. Rather than providing a snapshot of current activities as the discipline reviews had, this holistic approach had the advantage of involving much of the university in a self-analysis and it evaluated policy and hence commitment to the future.

In early 1998, after wide consultation, the Government integrated quality improvement into its yearly funding negotiations with institutions. Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans were required of universities from 1998 onwards and are published annually by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA). These plans are expected to contain goals and strategies to maintain and improve quality assurance in the key areas of teaching and learning, research, management and community service and they focus on outcomes.

In April 1999 Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers of Education, meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, referred the issue of a common approach to higher education accreditation criteria and procedures to a committee of higher education officials from the State, Territory and Commonwealth departments of education. The committee's deliberations were informed by developments in quality assurance in the higher education sector in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as by developments in the international arena.

The committee recognised the strength of the current quality assurance arrangements and sought to build on that strength. It recognised the need for common accreditation processes across all States and Territories and the need to independently evaluate those accreditation processes, as well as the internal quality management processes adopted by universities. The committee presented its advice to Ministers in March 2000 and made two recommendations: that Ministers endorse the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* and agree to the establishment of the Australian Universities Quality Agency. Both recommendations were accepted by Ministers and were integrated into the Australian quality assurance framework.

Figure 1: The Australian Quality Assurance Framework



As outlined diagrammatically in Figure 1, the framework encompasses the roles of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the universities, State and Commonwealth Governments and the Australian Universities Quality Agency. The following pages detail these elements of the framework beginning with the AQF.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

The AQF was established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 1995 to provide for national articulation of awards offered in the Australian vocational education and training and higher education sectors. The AQF also maintains a public register of MCEETYA-endorsed post-compulsory education providers and accreditation authorities. The higher education institutions and accreditation authorities on the AQF registers have the full endorsement of Australian Education Ministers represented on MCEETYA and as such, the list protects the integrity of Australian higher education.²

The Universities

Australian universities are established by or under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation. They have the authority to accredit their own programmes, and have primary responsibility for their own academic standards as well as the quality assurance processes which underpin them. The capacity to responsibly exercise this authority is among the criteria for recognition as a university in Australia.

The relevant legislation vests responsibility for governance and management in a governing body in the form of a Council or Senate, which is accountable to the Federal, State or Territory Government. The governing bodies are generally composed of the Chancellor, senior academics including the Chair of the Academic Board, as well as external members, government appointees and staff and student representatives.

All universities develop annual Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans. The plans are an integral part of the institutional planning process. They indicate the institution's goals, outline strategies and report on outcomes. They provide a definition of the attributes of the university's graduates and include a range of outcomes information.

Universities have internal processes to ensure quality in the areas of admissions, teaching, learning and assessment. There are processes to assess new course proposals and to monitor and evaluate course curriculum on a continuous basis, including regular evaluation of student feedback. These mechanisms involve consultation with, and often accreditation by, relevant industry or professional bodies in addition to formal assessment by the university. Normally courses are subject to review on a five-yearly basis.

External bodies play an integral role in assuring the continuing high quality of higher education in Australia. It has become common practice in Australian universities to arrange for professional associations to perform programme reviews in fields such as accountancy, engineering, architecture, dentistry and pharmacy. Professional accreditation bodies

² More information on the AQF, including its public registers, can be found on their website at <www.aqf.edu.au>.

accountancy, engineering, architecture, dentistry and pharmacy. Professional accreditation bodies examine the general structure and content of curriculum, academic standards and course length. They establish general expectations concerning entry level to courses, practical experience, subjects to be covered and mode of study. This process enables universities to compare the quality of their academic activities with other institutions, and to ensure that their graduates are well equipped to operate at the leading edge of their profession.

Universities also cooperate with each other to provide external evaluation of honours degrees and higher degrees by research, as well as peer reviews in the competitive grants process. It is common practice to use international examiners in the evaluation of higher degrees. Many universities participate in national and international networks and benchmarking projects undertaken by those networks.

Different arrangements are in place among Australian universities for the assessment and improvement of staff teaching and research. Institutions undertake student evaluation of teaching, develop special projects for the improvement of teaching and offer internal awards for teaching excellence. Promotion criteria normally focus on the quality of teaching, research activity and community service contributions. Most institutions have entered into relationships with other Australian and international universities to facilitate staff exchanges, collaboration in research and benchmarking of course delivery standards.

Where an Australian university or other self-accrediting institution operates in a distant location and issues an award under its own name, the Council or governing body of the university or institution is responsible for quality assurance. For its overseas campuses the institution is expected to maintain standards at least equivalent to those provided in Australia regardless of any specific requirements of overseas governments. Universities are also expected to ensure the standards of courses provided through franchising and other arrangements in which the university is not directly delivering the course. Where there are serious concerns about the quality of delivery the arrangements may be subject to review by State or Territory Governments.

State and Territory Governments

Australian State and Territory Governments have a number of responsibilities in respect of quality assurance in higher education. These responsibilities were standardised by the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* that were endorsed by Australian Education Ministers in March 2000. Before this time the processes employed by the States and Territories varied. The Protocols were designed to ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia in the recognition of new universities, the accreditation of higher education courses, delivery arrangements for higher education courses involving other organisations, the operation of overseas higher education institutions in Australia, and the endorsement of higher education courses for overseas students.³

³ The *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* can be found on the DETYA website at <www.dest.gov.au/highered/mceetya_cop.htm>

Establishment and recognition of universities

State and Territory Governments have responsibility for approving applications from institutions wishing to operate as a university within their State or Territory.

To establish a common standard and process for the recognition of universities across Australia, the Protocols specified a common definition of an Australian university, being 'an institution which meets nationally agreed criteria and is established or recognised as a university under State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation'.

An Australian university must demonstrate the following features:

- authorisation by law to award higher education qualifications across a range of fields and to set standards for those qualifications which are equivalent to Australian and international standards;
- teaching and learning that engages with advanced knowledge and inquiry;
- a culture of sustained scholarship extending from that which informs inquiry and basic teaching and learning, to the creation of new knowledge through research, and original creative endeavour;
- commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to free inquiry and the systematic advancement of knowledge;
- governance, procedural rules, organisation, admission policies, financial arrangements and quality assurance processes, which are underpinned by the values and goals outlined above, and which are sufficient to ensure the integrity of the institution's academic programmes; and
- sufficient financial and other resources to enable the institution's programme to be delivered and sustained into the future.

Delivery arrangements involving other organisations

The Protocols detail the powers of State and Territory Ministers over institutions that have a campus in their jurisdiction, yet are based elsewhere. Where the Minister in a State or Territory in which a campus is operating has serious concerns about quality of delivery they may, following consultation with the Minister in the State or Territory where the institution is established, conduct an independent review.

The review will enable the State or Territory Government to:

- establish conditions for the continuation of activities within the State or Territory;
- require that the operations of the institution within the State or Territory occur under the academic supervision of another institution; or
- close the campus and cease providing programmes in that State or Territory. ✓

The Protocols also confirm that institutions offering an award, regardless of whether they have used curricula and materials supplied by another institution, will be subject to the accreditation requirements of the State or Territory in which they operate.

Accreditation of higher education courses to be offered by non self-accrediting institutions

Non-university providers wishing to offer courses leading to higher education awards are subject to regulation in the States and Territories. Mutual recognition arrangements are in place between jurisdictions, and providers may apply for courses to be offered concurrently in two or more States or Territories.

Higher education courses offered by non self-accrediting providers must:

- satisfy the award level requirements set by the AQF;
- be comparable to courses at the same level at Australian universities;
- be able to be successfully delivered at the level proposed; and
- providers must have appropriate financial and other arrangements to permit successful delivery of the course, and must be a fit and proper person to accept responsibility for the course.

Recognition of overseas higher education institutions

An overseas higher education institution refers to a university or other recognised higher education provider whose legal origin is in a country other than Australia. To gain approval to operate in an Australian jurisdiction, an overseas institution must meet the following criteria.

The institution must demonstrate that:

- it is a bona fide institution, legally established in its country of origin;
- the courses to be offered have been properly accredited in the provider's country of origin by an authority that, in the opinion of the Australian jurisdiction's decision-maker, is the appropriate authority;
- where the standing of the institution's accreditation status is not acceptable to the decision-maker, the decision-maker may require the proposed courses to be subject to a full accreditation process;
- the course or courses are comparable in requirements and learning outcomes to a course at the same level in a similar field in Australia;
- the delivery arrangements, including the arrangements for academic oversight and quality assurance proposed by the overseas institution are comparable to those offered by accredited Australian providers; and
- appropriate financial and other arrangements exist to permit the successful delivery of the course in the Australian jurisdiction.

Protection of the word 'university'

Until recently, it was taken for granted that a university in Australia was an institution established by specific legislation. All States and mainland Territories of Australia have legislative or procedural arrangements which effectively require an institution wishing to operate as a university in their jurisdiction to be established by the mechanism of a legislative instrument.

To protect the standing of Australian universities nationally and internationally, the title 'university' is now protected in two ways:

- by protection of the title 'university' in State and Territory business names/associations legislation, and under the Commonwealth *Corporations Act 2001*; and

- by establishment in all Australian jurisdictions of a legislative framework specifying consistent criteria and procedures by which an institution/organisation may use the title 'university'.

Endorsement of courses for overseas students

Since 1991 it has been the responsibility of State and Territory Governments under the Commonwealth Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS Act), to endorse courses of study as suitable for overseas students. This endorsement is accepted by the Commonwealth for the purpose of issuing visas to students.⁴

For the protection of students and the international reputation of Australian awards, this endorsement is only given where the endorsing authority has confidence that the courses concerned are offered at a standard equivalent to other programmes of a similar kind, that facilities and services are of adequate standard, and that the organisation providing the programme has the financial and other resources to ensure full and effective delivery of the programme.

The endorsement of courses for overseas students is given by the State or Territory where the course is to be delivered.

Endorsement of higher education courses for overseas students is only given by, or following advice from, State or Territory officers responsible for accreditation and the approval of higher education awards. If the course is to be offered in special circumstances such as at a distant location or through an agent, the endorsing authority requires that particular concerns be met.

The authority must be satisfied that:

- the special circumstances will be made clear to students before enrolment;
- the facilities and services are of adequate standard for the courses offered;
- in the case of delivery through an agent, the teaching staff are adequately qualified, effective quality assurance measures are in place, and appropriate guarantees by the principal institution are given for the protection of students; and
- the endorsement of the course is not transferable to another provider.

Where a course is to be offered by an institution other than a university or other self-accrediting institution there are also particular requirements.

- the course should be accredited according to the guidelines specified for non self-accrediting institutions, and the institution must have approval to offer the course in that jurisdiction; and
- the endorsement of the course is not transferable to another provider.

This Protocol is supported by the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students*, which has been developed by DETYA. The Code seeks to provide a nationally consistent and legally enforceable framework for the registration of providers of education and training to overseas students on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.

⁴ See <www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/esfosopafra1991909> for further information.

The Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Government, through DETYA, plays a key role in the quality assurance framework. It substantially funds universities, monitors and publishes performance data and provides the sector with a range of tools and incentives to enhance the quality of outcomes.

Commonwealth funding for higher education, with some minor exceptions, is provided as a triennial funding agreement under the *Higher Education Funding Act 1988*. Integral to higher education funding in Australia is an accountability framework. As established under the Act, publicly funded institutions must submit annually an 'educational profile' to the Commonwealth that outlines their strategies to achieve outcomes in a variety of key areas, information regarding previous and projected student load, as well as a detailed financial report. A condition of receipt of operating funding is that institutions must spend financial assistance received only in accordance with the educational profile provided to the Commonwealth.

Through the profile process DETYA collects an array of information from universities. Information provided in preparation for these meetings enables DETYA to review the performance of institutions on a number of levels, and provides a means of assessing their resource needs. As part of the profile process each institution is required to submit plans in the areas of quality assurance, research, indigenous education and equity. The Commonwealth publishes annually universities' Institutional Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans, their Indigenous Education and Equity Plans and, from 2001, their Research and Research Training Management Plans.⁵

Quality assurance and improvement plans

As indicated above, since 1998 all triennially funded institutions have been required to submit an Institutional Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan to the Commonwealth as part of the educational profiles process. The plans outline the university's goals and aims in the key areas of teaching and learning, research, management and community service. Each institution is required to provide detail of the strategies that have been adopted to achieve their goals and the indicators used to assess their success.

The plans are expected to include the outcomes data from two national surveys which assess the employment success of recent graduates, as well as graduate perceptions of teaching.⁶ The plans have enabled the Commonwealth to report to the wider community on the quality and quality assurance processes of Australian universities. More importantly they are a means of public accountability in the area of quality assurance for Australia's publicly funded universities, and enable students to make more informed choices about the institution that best suits their particular needs.

⁵ The Indigenous Education Plans, Equity Plans and Research and Research Training Plans are not covered in this paper. Further information on these plans can be found at <www.dest.gov.au>.

⁶ These indicators are derived from the Graduate Careers Council of Australia's Graduate Destination Survey and the associated Course Experience Questionnaire, which are sent to all graduates of participating Australian higher education institutions.

Performance management tools

The Commonwealth Government provides tools, incentives and information to encourage the improvement of outcomes within Australian universities. In 1999 the Commonwealth funded the development of a benchmarking manual for higher education institutions.⁷ The manual provides sixty-seven benchmarks that universities can use to assess themselves against like institutions. The benchmarks cover the spectrum of university activities from teaching and learning to research, finances, internal management and internationalisation.

A system wide survey of the employment success of students after graduation, known as the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), has been conducted since the 1970s by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia. The Commonwealth Government funds the survey and institutions provide the necessary administrative support. The survey is completed by graduates four months after completion of their courses. It provides information on the proportion of graduates in full-time employment (including industry, occupation and salary level) and full-time study (including level and field) from each institution. The survey provides valuable comparative information to the public, and useful benchmarking information to universities themselves to help them assess the success of their graduates in the competitive labour market. GDS data are also published annually by Commonwealth Government.

The Commonwealth funds the annual undergraduate Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) as well as the newer Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). Both of these student surveys are disseminated by the Graduate Careers Council and are a valuable source of information on student perceptions of their experiences at university. The CEQ covers teaching, goals and standards, workload, assessment, generic skills and overall satisfaction. The Commonwealth is currently funding the development of additional scales for the CEQ which will measure broader aspects of student experience in the areas of student support, learning resources, learning community, graduate qualities and intellectual motivation.

The PREQ was created by the Australian Council for Educational Research in conjunction with the Graduate Careers Council and was administered nationally for the first time in 1999. It measures research graduates' satisfaction with supervision, skills development, intellectual climate, infrastructure, thesis examination and goals. Both CEQ and PREQ data are collected from institutions annually as part of the profiles process and are included in their Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans.

Another Commonwealth-funded instrument to measure performance is the Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA), which has been designed to assess the generic skills of university graduates. This voluntary instrument, developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research, tests the generic skills of university students, both at point of entry to and exit from university. The components of the test are critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal understanding and written communication. The GSA was piloted in early 2000 with the assistance of universities and was taken in late 2000 for the first time by graduating Australian students. At entry level the test might be used by institutions to assist poorly performing students. At exit level the results could be used by institutions to determine graduate entry and by employers to make judgements about generic skills for

⁷ K.R. McKinnon, S.H. Walker, & D. Davis, *Benchmarking. A Manual for Australian Universities 2000*, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra.

employment purposes. The GSA could also be used to measure the value added by institutions or to compare the differences in student profile between fields of study.

The Commonwealth publishes *The Characteristics and Performance of Higher Education Institutions* which provides a range of indicators that illustrate the diversity of the sector. The indicators cover student characteristics, staff, research, finances, as well as some outcome measures. These measures include retention rates and the graduate outcome data referred to earlier.

Outcomes data are used by institutions to review their own performance (benchmarking within and across institutions) and by the Commonwealth to monitor quality across the higher education sector. The data are included in commercial student guides and help to inform student choice.

Programmes to support quality

The Commonwealth Government established the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) in 2000 as part of its commitment to promoting quality and excellence in university teaching and learning in Australia.

The AUTC has been briefed to:

- identify emerging issues in teaching and learning in Australian universities and propose strategies for dealing with these issues;
- identify and support effective methods of enhancing learning;
- encourage dissemination and adoption of these methods across the Australian university sector;
- promote collaboration and exchange of information in teaching and learning both nationally and internationally, and encourage and foster innovation in higher education teaching and learning; and
- manage the prestigious Australian Awards for University Teaching.⁸

The Australian Universities Quality Agency

The elements of the quality assurance framework discussed above, those employed by the higher education sector and State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments, were developed and refined largely over the last two decades. However, universities and governments recognised the need for a means of independently verifying these quality assurance arrangements and agreed to the establishment of a new audit agency.

The establishment of the Australian Universities Quality Agency was endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs in March 2000 as an independent national agency to monitor, audit, and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education. The new agency commenced its first round of audits in 2002.

⁸ More information on the AUTC can be found at <www.autc.gov.au>.

The Agency is responsible for:

- conducting quality audits of self-accrediting institutions and State and Territory accreditation authorities on a five-yearly basis;
- providing public reports revealing the outcomes of these audits;
- reporting on the criteria for the accreditation of new universities and non-university higher education awards, as a result of information obtained during the audits of institutions and State and Territory accreditation processes; and
- reporting on the relative standards and international standing of the Australian higher education system and its quality assurance processes, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

Audits of the State and Territory higher education accreditation authorities pay particular attention to their processes, consistency with agreed higher education quality standards, and consistency with comparable judgements made in other States and Territories.

Academic audits of self-accrediting institutions are whole of institution audits based on a self-assessment and a site visit. They focus on the key areas of teaching and learning, research and management and on the adequacy of an institution's quality assurance arrangements. They assess the institution's success in maintaining standards consistent with university education in Australia. The Agency makes use of panels of experts with substantial senior academic and administrative experience in higher education to undertake the audits. The Agency endeavours to ensure that audits are not overly burdensome on universities and that sufficient attention is given to maintaining the diversity of the higher education sector.

The Agency does not have responsibility for investigating complaints about institutions or accrediting agencies. Action taken in response to negative audit reports is the responsibility of the governing body of the institution concerned or in the case of State and Territory accreditation authorities, of the relevant Department and Minister. However, reports are publicly available on the AUQA web site <www.auqa.edu.au> and failure to respond appropriately to negative reports can exceptionally result in funding sanctions by the Commonwealth or regulatory action by the relevant State or Territory.

The Agency is an independent not-for-profit company owned by members of the Ministerial Council. It operates independently of governments under the direction of an appropriately structured Board of Directors. The Agency receives funding from the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and the costs of audits are to be met by the entities subject to audit.

The Board has a membership of:

- five persons elected by the Chief Executive Officers of higher education institutions (four by self-accrediting institutions including universities, and one by non-self-accrediting providers of higher education courses);
- six persons nominated by Ministers (three by the Commonwealth Education Minister and three by State and Territory Higher Education Ministers) and
- a Chief Executive.

The first Chair of the Board was nominated by the Commonwealth Minister, and subsequent Chairs will be elected by the Board.

Conclusion

This brief examination of quality assurance arrangements in Australian higher education does not seek to provide an exhaustive description of action that is occurring across the sector in quality assurance and improvement. It seeks to provide a snapshot of the broad quality assurance framework for the benefit of interested parties in Australia or overseas.

The Australian Qualifications Framework provides award descriptors and a list of Ministerial Council-endorsed accreditation authorities and recognised universities. It helps maintain the quality and integrity of Australian higher education.

At the institutional level there are a variety of quality assurance arrangements in place. Institutions are assisted in the task of quality improvement and assurance by the accreditation activities of professional bodies and registration boards, by the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee's various codes of practice and guidelines, and by the contributions of employers to the identification of skills needed by graduates to perform effectively in the world of work.

The Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans submitted to DETYA for the 2001–2003 triennium show that Australian universities have developed a number of approaches to assuring and improving the quality of their operations. Within a diverse higher education system, quality management is becoming an increasingly important part of the strategic planning process and institutions are highly conscious of the need to deliver optimal outcomes in a competitive national and global environment. That Australian graduates are performing successfully in a demanding and dynamic labour market is a strong indication that our universities are succeeding in this endeavour.

State and Territory Governments are responsible for the legislative arrangements which protect the integrity of Australian universities and higher education award nomenclature.

At the national level, the Commonwealth Government monitors progress across the sector and reports publicly on the quality of the system, to help potential students make informed choices and to provide the necessary assurances to the national and international community about the standard of Australia's universities. The Commonwealth actively encourages enhanced performance through initiatives such as the Australian Universities Teaching Committee and the development of sector-wide efficiency and effectiveness indicators.

The new Australian Universities Quality Agency audits universities and accreditation authorities to verify the quality of the system.

Overall, Australia has a robust but flexible approach to quality assurance. It recognises that our universities are diverse organisations which best meet the challenge of maintaining and enhancing the quality of their provision if they are able to operate in a framework of government encouragement without unnecessary intervention. Within this framework, universities are expected to engage in a pro-active, rigorous and ongoing process of planning and self-assessment which will enable them to ensure the quality outcomes expected by their students and the wider community.