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Robert Little
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
PO Box 6021
R1.110 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

31 January 2017

Dear Mr Little

RE: INQUIRY INTO INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY – SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

Thank you for your advice of 10 November 2016 about changes to the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training and to the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity: Workforce for the New Economy. Please find attached Charles Darwin University's Supplementary Submission to the Inquiry, which should be read in conjunction with our previous Submission from March 2016.

Yours sincerely

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CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

Supplementary Submission

To the Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity: Workforce for the
New Economy

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1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2016 Charles Darwin University (CDU) made a Submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Employment Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity: Workforce for the New Economy, with the following recommendations.

1. The AQF be expanded to allow a greater range of qualifications with different volumes of learning (e.g. undergraduate Certificates at AQF Level 5, equivalent to 0.5 EFTSL).
2. Government funding be uncapped for all undergraduate courses, recognising that qualifications of a lesser volume of learning than a 3 EFTSL bachelor degree can still add value to the population and can be more attainable for many people particularly those from LSES backgrounds.
3. Universities be permitted to enrol domestic students into individual credit-bearing units, on a full fee basis, without having to be enrolled into a course.
4. Where professional accrediting bodies are established in legislation or regulation, their accreditation remit is considered in the light of universities' (and TEQSA's) academic accreditation remit.
5. VET Fee Help caps are reconsidered for higher level qualifications such as Diplomas.
6. Government further invests in facilitating collaboration between universities and industry on innovation.

This Supplementary Submission responds to the new Standing Committee's Terms of Reference as of November 2016, in particular to clause 4 –

Opportunities for generating increased economic activity, including further investment and jobs through greater synergies among publicly funded research agencies, universities and other Australian research institutions with business and industry: including but not limited to: co-location, cluster formation and development of precincts between universities and industry.

CDU's previous Submission to the Inquiry in March 2016 should be read in conjunction with this Supplementary Submission in relation to other clauses in the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry.

2. SUBMISSION

CDU is a leading provider of education and research services to the mixed economies of the Northern Territory and its Asian neighbourhood. The region is characterised by challenging geography, as well as remarkable social and cultural diversity. CDU's Casuarina campus is the nerve centre for the expertise and technology that enables this service delivery. Within the footprint of the CDU Casuarina campus and the nearby Royal Darwin Hospital lies a significant majority of the Territory's highly qualified research and development personnel, creating a

concentration of expertise in vitally important fields such as health and medicine, environment and livelihoods, resources and energy, and social and political sciences. The footprint also covers the major concentration of highly qualified tertiary educators in the region, as well as being the major student hub for the University. Co-located with CDU at its Casuarina campus is the Darwin laboratory of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and adjacent to the campus is the North Australia Research Unit (NARU) of the Australian National University, strengthening the University's research and development capacity in marine studies and indigenous and social policy.

There are emerging opportunities to co-locate and increase collaboration with other Territory-based and national scientific research units at CDU's Casuarina campus in particular, which would further strengthen the research capacity and capability of the University, as well as that of the Northern Territory generally, to respond to the knowledge and research needs of the region and around Government's 'developing the north' agenda. This approach is particularly important in a region with a small, widely dispersed population and relatively undeveloped resources, so that the development mistakes of the past are not repeated in Australia's north and so that the Territory can become a regional, Asia Pacific centre of expertise and excellence in tropical and desert research spanning health, environment and society. Co-location of research capability is also important where research infrastructure and resources are limited, so that these are optimally utilised, the ability to leverage additional resources is maximised and the potential for creative and innovative thinking is enhanced.

As a powerful, dynamic and stable economic presence within the region, CDU is eager to work with the Territory and Australian governments, public and private funding agencies, and business and industry to capitalise on the opportunities that exist on and around the CDU Casuarina campus as the major hub in particular, and at other CDU campuses as appropriate into the future. A critical factor to success will be the establishment of a technology incubator and business innovation centre at CDU's Casuarina campus, designed to launch new ventures, grow existing firms, and co-locate service providers in a business setting that can draw on CDU's and co-located collaborator's technology, knowledge and human capital.

CDU is strongly identified as the Territory's university. It can confidently and competently lead the development of an incubator/innovation centre both in practice and symbolically. The University has an exemplary reputation for the management of facilities and funds in a challenging operating environment, and a strong track record for delivering on its commitments to and plans for economic and social development. CDU's leadership has the vision, drive, profile, experience and support to build a vibrant and successful interface between the public and private sectors to drive economic growth and new employment opportunities for the region.

Co-locating research units and, potentially, selected industry groups at CDU would also have the advantage of fostering co-engagement of students within a vibrant and active research/industry

environment addressing real world issues, and enhancing student engagement with potential employers and career opportunities.

CDU recognises the opportunities that can be created by successful marketing and delivery of its high value products and services. Through simplified and streamlined business models, including best practice approaches to the management of intellectual property and commercialisation, CDU is already enabling easier access to its R&D expertise and skills-specific training capabilities. In particular, CDU's Business School is growing rapidly, and can provide broad marketing expertise and managerial skills to regional firms with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises that often lack such resources. Further enhancing these kinds of services would become an important part of any incubator / innovation centre established at CDU.