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Senate Employment, Workplace
Relations and Education Legislation
Committee

Higher Education Funding
Amendments Bill 2002

Bond University
Submission
July 2002

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Introduction

Bond University was granted university status by the Queensland Parliament with the passage of the Bond University Act on 23 April 1987. The University is a self-accrediting tertiary institution set up as a 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee.

Since Bond University's first intake of 322 students in May 1989, it has grown steadily in size and stature to now have nearly 2400 enrolled students and has awarded more than 7000 degrees to PhD level since its formation. Bond University continues to achieve steady growth in the increasingly competitive global higher education environment.

The University's *Growth to Greatness 2002-2004* planning document sets a target of 2850 students by 2004.

Bond University has a total staff of approximately 460, including 225 academic staff. The University has achieved levels of teaching excellence that set benchmarks for other providers in good teaching, graduate satisfaction and employment outcomes.

Legislative and regulatory decisions of the Federal and State Parliaments and Governments can and do have an impact on Bond University, its students and its growth and the development. For that reason, Bond University takes an active interest in public policy formulation, development and implementation.

This submission argues that, in seeking to formulate consistent higher education policy, the Federal and State Parliaments must recognise that Bond University is now an integral part of Australia's higher education system.

Bond University is a fully accredited member of both the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

Private providers are essential to any government's long-term planning and investment in higher education. Bond University, as Australia's only truly private university, demonstrates an example of an alternative funding model. The Parliament must recognise that private investment in higher education will deliver the best returns through encouraging healthy competition, enhancing the performance of both the public and private sectors.

Executive Summary

As Bond University is an active and integral part of Australia's higher education sector and as legislative and regulatory decisions have an impact on its operation, the University makes this submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee's review of the *Higher Education Funding Amendment Bill 2002*.

Bond University argues that:

- there is a need for consistent policy affecting all students and all universities;
- all tertiary students should have the option to defer payment of their fees through an income contingent loans scheme, such as PELS, and therefore supports the passage of the *Higher Education Funding Amendment Bill 2002*;
- the University applies and maintains strict accountability requirements through rigorous selection and assessment criteria;
- the University ensures the quality of the courses offered and the degrees awarded through a commitment to continuous improvement including full participation in the Federal Government's Quality Assurance processes (AUQA);
- the University offers a full range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses to PhD level; and
- the University encourages and undertakes significant research, including operating a wide range of specialist research centres.

The Need for Consistent Higher Education Policy

As part of Bond University's submission to the Federal Government's review of Higher Education, the university strongly argues that a world class, quality education system serves the public good by providing a better educated, more intelligent and more employable population. The undeniable benefits for graduates include better employment prospects and higher earning capacity. This is especially so in the context of today's knowledge based economies.

However, when it comes to financing the necessary investment in higher education current government policy is inconsistent. While the government is willing to seek payments from those individuals who benefit from higher education, however provided, it still largely clings to the belief that public good is only served by public institutions.

Ironically, this further limits choice in that the now paying students, however much subsidised, are denied access to the full range of public good higher education services available within the system.

This approach is also inconsistent with policy that prevails in the provision of other levels of education. In the areas of primary and secondary education, Australia has long recognised and encouraged the contribution of private providers.

The passage of the *Innovation and Education Legislation Amendment Bill (no.2) 2001* that established the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS) provides further evidence of the inconsistency in higher education policy. Students wishing to undertake postgraduate studies at Bond University have been denied access to PELS, something that is inequitable if the 'playing field is level'. Bond believes that it has proven its unique place in the tertiary education sector and fulfils, and in many cases exceeds, the criteria set by the Government for its publicly funded higher education institutions.

From the outset Bond has focused on treating students as customers, given that they made a free choice to come to Bond and were paying for their education. The public good that Australia has derived from this approach is considerable. Apart from the quality of the higher education provided over this period, Bond has graduated more than 7000 students, contributed significantly to the economic and social well being of these individuals and their communities, particularly the Gold Coast region, and has saved the Australian taxpayer many millions of dollars.

Moreover, Bond has set standards that have helped to focus public universities on their service delivery.

Bond University argues that the quality of public good delivered through higher education could be further enhanced by the removal of policy inconsistencies that restrict the choices of those who are paying. As a first step the government could simply make privately provided tertiary education services more widely accessible by giving the choice of all options to those who are, at least in part, paying for their education.

The passage of the *Higher Education Funding Amendment Bill 2002* which would enable Bond students to gain access to PELS would remove one of these policy inconsistencies.

By denying student access to quality providers such as Bond University by only making PELS available to those who attend publicly funded universities the Parliament would in essence be saying to a student: "Here is a minimum amount of money to pay for your university tuition, which you will have to repay when you are working and earning a salary. Repayments will be added to your annual tax bill. And by the way you can only use the money for tuition at a public university."

Any PELS debt is a real debt. Students incurring that debt or any debt to the government for tuition should have the freedom of choice to spend that money at an institution they choose.

Selection, Accountability and Accreditation

Selection Criteria

Bond University assesses each and every application on an individual basis. The following is a guide as to how applicants are assessed for undergraduate admission.

- High School Leavers

Applicants are assessed based on their academic achievements across the final two years of Senior High School, as well as other factors that we consider important indicators for success at Bond University. This assessment is made based on academic results from Year 11 and Year 12, an overall assessment from the student's High School, personal attributes, and involvement in extracurricular and other activities. Applications can be assessed once students have received their mid Year 12 results.

- Previous Tertiary Studies

Students who have successfully completed a Diploma at a TAFE or another institution, are generally eligible for entry into Bond undergraduate programs. Students who have successfully completed at least one year's study towards a Bachelor degree are eligible for entry. Students who have completed previous tertiary studies may also be eligible for credit toward their chosen Bond University program.

- Mature Age Entry

Bond University encourages mature-age applicants, even if they do not have any recent educational qualifications. We consider work experience, employee references and results from any previous studies. We encourage all mature-age applicants to include an up-to-date resume in their application.

- Postgraduate Entry Requirements

Requirements for postgraduate programs vary between programs and schools. In general, for applicants to be considered for Postgraduate Diploma or Masters level programs they must have completed a bachelor degree or equivalent. Postgraduate applications are all assessed on an individual basis.

Accountability

Bond University will participate in the audit process conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in the same way as all public sector universities. As part of its ongoing, self imposed review of performance, Bond surveys teaching performance in every semester to obtain student feedback on syllabus and on the teaching performance of individual staff members. We have also surveyed satisfaction levels of graduating students over a number of years via the Graduate Careers Council of Australia Course Experience Questionnaire. Bond is in the process of developing its own instrument to obtain more meaningful feedback. Teaching performance is a major element of the annual performance review process for academic staff.

Postgraduate Diplomas and Degrees

Bond University offers a full range of postgraduate diplomas and degrees across the spectrum of schools established within the University. These include:

Business

Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship & Family Business
Graduate Management Qualification
Postgraduate Diploma in Management
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Master of Accounting
Master of Commerce
Master of Electronic Commerce
Master of Finance
Master of International Business
Doctor of Philosophy

Health Sciences

Postgraduate Diploma of Behaviour Management
Postgraduate Diploma of Counselling
Postgraduate Diploma of Pain Management
Master of Behaviour Management
Master of Counselling
Master of Health Sciences
Master of Pain Management
Doctor of Counselling
Doctor of Health Sciences

Information Technology

Postgraduate Diploma in Information Technology
Master of Information Technology
Master of Information Technology Management
Master of Science (Information Technology)
Research higher degrees

Humanities and Social Sciences

Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) with Honours
Graduate Certificate in Criminology
Graduate Certificate in TESOL
Graduate Certificate in Applied Psychology
Postgraduate Diploma of Arts (in many subject areas offered by the school)
Postgraduate Diploma of Communication
Postgraduate Diploma of Criminology
Postgraduate Diploma of Professional Psychology
Executive Master of Forensic Criminology
Master of Chinese Studies
Master of Communication
Master of Criminology
Master of Film and Television
Master of Global Governance & Regional Politics
Master of International Diplomacy
Master of International Relations
Master of Journalism
Master of Arts (Language Teaching TESOL or LOTE)
Master of Multimedia Production
Master of Psychology
Doctor of Psychology
Research higher degrees

Law

Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice
Graduate Diploma in Law
Graduate Diploma in Advocacy
Graduate Diploma in Common Law
Graduate Diploma in Corporate and Commercial Law
Graduate Diploma in Dispute Resolution
Graduate Diploma in International Trade Law
Master of Laws
Master of Business Law
Master of Jurisprudence
Master of Jurisprudence (Corporate and Commercial Law)
Doctor of Legal Science
Doctor of Philosophy

Combined degrees

The flexibility of Bond University programs allows much scope for combined degrees. Students can combine degrees within a school or across different schools, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level, to suit their individual interests and career goals. Bond's three-semester academic year also allows students to complete two degrees in minimal time.

Research Centres and Other Activities

Through its various schools Bond University encourages and undertakes significant research.

In addition, the University has established a wide range of specialist research centres including:

- The Tim Fischer Centre for Global Trade and Finance is Bond University's first interdisciplinary research centre. Its focus on global trade and finance issues draws upon expertise from each of the four faculties of the University.
- The Australian Centre for Family Business was formed in 1994 to enhance the prospects for profitable continuity of family businesses for the benefit of family members, shareholders and non-family staff, and in this way contributes to the economic and social development of Australia.
- The Centre for Executive Development strives to provide high-quality management development programs to external clients. By liaising directly with middle and senior level managers in Australian and international businesses, the Centre serves to enhance the reputation of the Business School in the field of management education.
- The Centre for Applied Psychology and Criminology especially reflects the applied and professional nature of the disciplines, as taught at Bond, and the research and teaching interests of a number of Staff members. The Centre, with its emphasis on applied Psychology and Criminology, differentiates itself from other tertiary education research organisations throughout the country. It is a vehicle for interaction with the wider community, presenting established research findings in ways that are of clear practical value to the community, enhancing community activities through the provision of relevant education and training programs, fostering research into issues of community importance, and drawing support and resources from the community for these activities.
- The Institute for Corporate Governance provides insight into and advice about corporate governance and the role, duties and powers of directors and managers including duty of honesty; duty of care; duty to avoid conflict of interest; corporate opportunities and insider trading; role of the Australian Stock Exchange; and the requirements and responsibilities of self regulation.

- The Centre for New Media Research and Education (CNMR) provides a focus for research, short courses, entrepreneurial and broader educational endeavours in new media. The Centre serves the research and education community by linking applied and theoretical models of mass communication with emerging innovations for communication. It conducts research and short courses and offers for sale a number of publications.
- The Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies provides a focus for research, teaching, interdisciplinary applications, and public education on the interactions among culture, society, economics and politics in the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. The Centre is particularly concerned to examine the changes at the cultural and political levels that have radically altered international, strategic and economic relationships on a global basis. Interactions between 'East' and 'West', as well as the future direction of Australia in its relations with Asia are fundamental aspects of the Centre's activities.
- The Dispute Resolution Centre was established in 1989 and has a national reputation in training, teaching, research and mediation practice. It is based in the School of Law and has an inter-disciplinary focus.
- The Transnational Business Law Centre is engaged in teaching and research in the areas of transnational law, especially trade law, investment law, banking and finance law, labour law and environmental law. Particular emphasis is placed on continuing legal education programs to meet the needs of the legal profession.
- The Commercial Law Centre is a centre of excellence for research, teaching, conferences, seminars and publications in the area of commercial law. It encourages and organises visits by Australian and overseas scholars, legal and business practitioners, and related professional groups.
- Bond University English Language Institute (BUELI) is an on-campus centre that offers a full range of English language programs. The courses are designed to provide language training that is geared to real-life tasks and learning methods. Courses range from general language programs, through to academic preparation programs. BUELI is a member of the ELICOS Association and fully accredited by the National ELICOS Accredited Scheme (NEAS).