Mission Possible? An analysis of

Australian universities’ missions

Dissertation submitted by

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Statement of Originality

The dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my dissertation, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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SYNOPSIS

This dissertation represents the first comprehensive study of Australian university mission statements and mission-related documents. It comes at a time when universities are experiencing global challenges presented by the knowledge economy, global competition and rapid advances in information and communication technologies. In Australia, further pressure on universities has resulted from a government policy that attempts to align universities with these global challenges and to extend the traditional purpose of a university into new areas. The Australian Government’s introduction of Mission-based Compacts has provided an opportunity to address a deficit in Australian university mission document research. Hence the aim of this research is to compare a major Government policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* (Australian Government 2009), with university mission statements and Mission-based Compact documents in order to evaluate the extent of alignment between the two. Content analysis is used to analyse the universities’ mission-related documents in relation to three specific questions: the extent to which universities specify formal mission statements; the extent to which mission-related documents reflect the government policy directive; and the extent to which mission-related documents demonstrate institutional diversity. The analyses find that: one, although Australian universities are reluctant to use the label ‘mission statement’, their statements include the majority of mission components required of corporate mission statements; two, with the exception of academic freedom, universities have complied with the government policy directive to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to extend their functions to incorporate greater access and equity, contribute to the economy and enhance Australia’s international standing; and three, institutional diversity within the mission-related documents is limited. Overall the university mission-related documents comply with the government policy directive and address the global challenges. However, the extent to which their stated goals are realisable is questionable given the Government’s contradictory and unitary policy settings and funding mechanisms. As the research is the first of its kind in Australia, it raises a number of important questions and opens the way for further mission-related research in Australian higher education.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are facing unprecedented challenges as they enter the 21st century. The landscape of higher education around the world is undergoing profound changes. Not only must universities respond to dramatic changes arising from globalisation, the knowledge economy and rapid technological advances, but their traditional role as a social institution has to expand to meet new expectations. Governments now expect universities to generate both intellectual and economic capital. Universities are regarded as engines of innovation which need to contribute to the national economy and international standing of their countries.

As universities are increasingly corporatised, they are required to produce mission statements and strategic plans to qualify for government subsidy. Although these documents represent an excellent source of data for understanding the changing roles of universities, there is a paucity of Australian research in this area. In 2009 the Australian Government announced that universities had to enter into Mission-Based Compacts in order to receive Government funds. The publication of the Interim Agreements (2010) and Mission-Based Compacts (2011-2013) provided the opportunity to address the deficit of research on Australian university mission-related documents. Hence the current study analyses these two documents, herein referred to as the ‘mission-related documents’ in terms of their compliance with a major government policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education. The policy directive involved substantial reform aimed at encouraging universities to address the global challenges of
the 21st century. This chapter provides the context and background for the research and introduces each of the six chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Globally, the current climate in higher education has been described as tumultuous (Kinser & Hill 2011). Universities are buffeted by the rapidity of change and uncertainty. They are torn between market forces and increasing public expectations and accountability, struggling with declining funding and increased cost scrutiny. Universities are challenged on multiple fronts and faced with conflicting agendas. They are expected to develop world-class reputations, while teaching increasing numbers of students. They are required to serve as engines of economic growth while maintaining a comprehensive scholarly profile (Kinser & Hill 2011). In developed countries there has been a general trend of higher education systems adopting an economic and market model, with a commitment to globalisation and to more private funding. Public funds from national governments are closely tied to performance targets and goals.

In Australia, based on a 2008 review known as the Bradley Review (Bradley et al. 2008), the Government issued the Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System policy directive (Australian Government 2009) to reshape higher education and to position Australia to compete effectively in the 21st century. The directive required universities to enter into Mission-based Compacts with the Government, and to articulate how their missions would contribute to the Government’s vision for higher education. The Compacts specifically required universities to provide clearly articulated mission statements defining their missions and strategic positions in the new higher education environment. The articulation of a mission is viewed as the foundation for setting priorities, strategies and plans (Pearce & David 1987).
The Australian Government’s policy directive (Australian Government 2009) was a direct response to the new landscape in global higher education. Universities around the world are facing unprecedented challenges as they enter the 21\textsuperscript{st} century (Salmi 2001; World Bank 2002). These challenges are a result of profound changes sweeping the world and include the growing importance of knowledge as a commodity, the globalisation of financial and labour markets, the preeminence of neoliberal philosophies, and the information and communications revolution. In every country, these far-reaching changes pose challenges as well as create opportunities for the higher education system (Salmi 2001). The key challenges for universities include globalisation (Sabour 2005; Marginson 2007a) and the consequent marketisation and competition (Dill 2003; Hazelkorn 2009). The rise of the knowledge economy and knowledge society (Hargreaves 2003) necessitates new methods of knowledge transfer and engagement (Etzkowitz 2008). Technological advances enable new ways of serving the community (Atkins 2005; Larsen & Vincent-Lancrin 2005). The implications of these converging challenges provide opportunities for universities to meet new research and learning needs, to respond to new forms of competition, and to explore new modes of operation (Salmi 2001).

The Australian Government’s policy directive (Australian Government 2009) is aimed at addressing these 21\textsuperscript{st} century challenges and is in line with the international policies of the OECD and UNESCO. To this end, universities must observe the funding principles as part of their Mission-based Compacts. The principles under which Government funding is provided include improving access and equity; conducting world-class teaching and research; upholding academic freedom; contributing to economic and social needs of regional, state, national and international communities; and maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector. However, while successive governments have been strong on rhetoric in promoting a diverse higher education system, they have lacked specific
policy initiatives to ensure institutional diversity in the higher education system (Codling & Meek 2006). Instead, initiatives such as the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA), performance-based funding and quality audits have resulted in the loss of diversity as institutions compete for a finite pool of resources by imitating the performance of more successful institutions (Codling & Meek 2006; Marginson & Considine 2000).

The need for universities to develop a mission statement was introduced in 1988, as a requirement for government-funded student places. This requirement was reiterated in subsequent Higher Education Support Acts (Australian Government 2012). Despite these requirements, there has been a lack of empirical data and research on the mission statements of Australian universities. In contrast, there has been considerable research in the United States and the United Kingdom. This research gap along with the Mission-based Compacts provides the motivation for this dissertation and the opportunity to address the following research questions within the context of unparalleled challenges to Australia’s higher education environment.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall research question is:

To what extent do the mission-related documents of Australian universities reflect the Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System policy directive (Australian Government 2009)?

The specific questions arising from the general research question are:

RQ1. To what extent do universities articulate a formal mission statement?
RQ2. To what extent does the content of university mission-related documents reflect the Government policy directive?

RQ3. To what extent do university mission-related documents reflect a diversity of institutional missions?

The research employs qualitative content analysis to analyse the mission statements and mission-related documents of Australian universities to examine the universities’ responses to the Australian Government policy directive (Australian Government 2009).

1.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

The dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter One, the current chapter, provides the background and context to the research, and presents an overview of the dissertation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review
Chapter Two has five sections. The first focuses on literature related to the definitions, functions and components of mission statements in the business sector. While the term ‘mission’ broadly refers to the purpose of a business (Drucker 1973), there is no universally accepted definition of a mission statement (Davies & Glaister 1996). Mission statements are variously referred to as: ‘aims and values’, ‘purpose’, ‘principles’, ‘objectives’, ‘goals’, ‘responsibilities and obligations’, ‘statement of purpose’ and ‘values and beliefs’ (Baetz & Bart 1996; David 1989; Klemm, Sanderson & Luffman 1991). Although mission statements perform multiple functions, the most common is a first step in directing the strategic planning process. Research on business mission statements identified nine essential components: customers, products or services, geographic markets, technology, sustainability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public
image and concern for employees (David 1989 & 2007). These mission components are still found to be current and essential (Williams 2008).

The second section is concerned with the development of university missions over the centuries leading to their current uses and controversies. Beginning with an overview of the evolution of university missions from the middle ages to the present, this section demonstrates how the relatively recent introduction of mission statements has been problematic for universities. As social institutions, the traditional purpose of universities has been clear and unquestioned for centuries. At the present time, universities have difficulty in breaking away from their traditional missions, leading to criticisms of their formal mission statements being bland, overly general and homogeneous.

Section three reviews literature on the following three global trends and consequences that impact upon universities and their missions in the 21st century: global knowledge economies and competition; technological advances; and the adoption of neoliberalism and New Public Management practices. Globalisation has impacted on universities in many ways (Sabour 2005; Marginson 2007a), including global competition, global comparisons and university rankings, competition for funding, quality assurance, privatisation and regulation. The globalised economy and global expansion of the knowledge industry have also eroded the monopolistic position previously enjoyed by universities (Barnett 2000; Gibbons et al. 1994; Jarvis 2001; Nowotny et al. 2001). The liberalisation of higher education services under the World Trade Organization (WTO) has resulted in the emergence of new types of providers, including for-profit providers which pose direct competition to universities, especially public institutions (OECD 2004).
Advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are an important driver of the globalised knowledge economy. The impact of ICT is becoming critical to higher education in the 21st century (Oliver 2002), as advanced technologies transform teaching and learning, fundamentally altering the way that universities offer and deliver programs. Universities are facing growing expectations to deliver services, content and media to mobile and personal devices to meet students’ expectations of ‘anytime, anywhere’ access (Horizon Report 2007). Digital technologies also transform research activities, allowing researchers access to global information and data to simulate, model and visualise complex sciences and systems (OECD 2005).

Neoliberalist ideologies are based on free trade and market economy, and limited roles for governments. Promoted by institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, neoliberalism has been increasingly embraced by international governments to reform and re-position their countries’ economies to respond to global competition (Roberts & Peters 2008). The resultant neoliberal reforms corporatised the public sector, especially universities, because of their potential economic contribution through development of human capital, research, innovation, and knowledge creation and diffusion (Small 2009). With corporatisation, increased accountability and competition, university management imposes greater controls over academic work and behaviour, to the extent that academic freedom is threatened (Marginson & Considine 2000). Similarly, the traditional tenet of institutional autonomy is uncertain when governments closely steer universities through performance funding, research priorities and funding criteria, all in the name of accountability (Marginson 2006).

Section four is a summary of the changing landscape for higher education in which similar issues confront universities around the world. These include: growth in student enrolments, increased student diversity, new sources of
revenue, and new types of activities (OECD 2008; Santiago et al. 2008). Each of these issues is explored, along with its impact on the capacity of universities to sustain themselves.

The final section of the literature review specifically examines the situation in Australia, by providing an overview of the reforms and resultant changes in Australian higher education over the past four decades. It reviews the pressures on Australian universities from international bodies and national governments to expand their missions to incorporate commitments beyond the traditional functions of a university. Non-traditional functions include improving access and equity, the ‘third mission’, institutional diversity, sustainability, and governance.

Chapter Three: Current Structure and Policy of the Australian Higher Education System

Chapter Three outlines the existing structure of Australian universities and discusses the key policy directive driving current reform in higher education. The chapter commences with a brief background of the legislative base for the establishment of Australian universities. The Australian Higher Education System is then described, including its structure and groupings. The differences in student enrolments, disciplines, and research strengths of universities are identified. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the current Government policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System (Australian Government 2009), which is a result of the Bradley Review (Bradley et al 2008).

Chapter Four: Method

Chapter Four commences with a discussion of content analysis as a dominant method for this research. This is followed by specific details on
data sources, coding units and processes, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion on validity, reliability, authenticity and the limitations of the study.

Research from the USA and the UK demonstrates the usefulness of university mission statements as a source of information to understand the purposes of, and differences between, institutions (Stemler, Debell & Sonnabend 2011). Besides being a requirement for accreditation or compliance with government directives, the statements can be systematically and reliably coded using content analysis to obtain meaningful results for analysing institutional purposes and intentions. Given the emphasis the Australian Government places on university missions, the current study focuses on mission-related statements and documents, including the 2009 Interim Agreements and Mission-based Compacts (2012-2013) as its research subject.

The research uses qualitative content analysis to analyse the mission statements and mission-related documents of the 39 universities which are members of Universities Australia, the peak body representing the sector. The mission statements and mission-related documents were sourced from individual university and government websites, in a manner similar to the method of Hegeman et al. (2007). *A priori* coding is used to analyse both the mission statements and mission-related documents based on David’s (2007) mission components and themes derived from Australian Government policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* (Australian Government 2009).

The first research question was addressed by identifying the use of the formal label *Mission Statement* and by coding mission-related statements in accordance with David’s (2007) nine components of a mission statement: *customers, products or services, markets, technology, sustainability,*
philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image and concern for employees. The second research question was addressed by coding the content of the two mission-related documents based on themes identified from the Government policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* (Australian Government 2009). The themes in the policy directive include: improving equity and access; high quality teaching and excellent research; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy and social needs of the community; maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector; and commitment to upholding the academic freedom and values. To answer the third research question, the mission documents of individual universities were compared in order to find similarities and differences.

Chapter Five: Findings

In line with the three research questions, there are three sections in this Chapter. The first section provides the findings on the adoption of a formally labeled *Mission Statement* by Australian universities and inclusion of David’s (2007) nine mission components. The analysis finds that half of the universities had a formally labeled *Mission Statement* while the other half preferred to use other labels such as purpose, vision, and intent. For the analysis of the mission components, references to six of David’s (2007) nine mission components were found in 85 percent or more of the mission-related statements, while reference to concern for employees was lower at 59 percent and references to both technology and sustainability were below 50 percent.

The second section of Chapter Five provides findings in relation to the extent that the university mission-related documents responded to the Australian Government policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* (Australian Government 2009). The findings confirm
that, based on their written mission-related documents, Australian universities complied with political expectations within the policy directive, with the exception of \textit{upholding academic freedom}. Australian universities were cognisant of their roles in the knowledge economy and largely addressed the challenges of increasing globalisation and competition, as well as the impact of information and communication advances on their operations. They have complied with the Government’s directive to improve access and equity; conduct world-class teaching and research; contribute to the economic and social needs of regional, state, national and international communities; and to maintain a sustainable institution. Less than half of the universities chose to mention \textit{upholding academic freedom}.

The third and final section of Chapter Five reports on whether the university mission-related documents reflect institutional diversity. The study finds a limited degree of institutional diversity, mainly in the areas of philosophical approach, geographical distinctiveness, structural factors (whether higher education only or multi-sector), and research strengths.

\textit{Chapter Six: Discussion}

Chapter Six discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and in the context of prior research covered in Chapter Two, and additionally addresses the implications for policy and further research. The chapter and the dissertation close with the contributions of the research. Based on the universities’ stated missions, the study finds that Australian universities have embraced the Australian Government policy directive, \textit{Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System} (Australian Government 2009). However, in doing so, universities have failed to clearly differentiate themselves through their mission-related statements and documents, thus presenting the appearance of a homogeneous higher education sector. Structural differences between universities, conflicting policy settings and
resource limitations are not acknowledged adequately within the mission-related documents, so that the mission-related documents tend to reflect a mixture of aspirations and compliance with government requirements.

The implications of this research for government policy and universities are twofold. Firstly, contradictions and restrictions in government policy settings over the past decade are not conducive to a diverse and world-class higher education system (Gallagher 2011). Government needs to revise its policies and funding conditions to promote institutional diversity, and universities need to have the courage to recognise their limitations and their strengths rather than comply with a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Secondly, rather than an emphasis on competition, both Government and universities should consider promoting synergies and collaborations between Australian institutions to allow the possibilities of becoming ‘world-class’ in the most appropriate areas.

Suggestions for further research arising from this dissertation include: investigating the process and intent of developing university mission statements; evaluating the utility of mission statements as strategic tools for university planning; employing this work as a benchmark for examining future changes to mission statements; and further exploring why universities are reluctant to acknowledge the importance of academic freedom in their mission-related documents.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This research represents the first complete analysis of university mission statements and mission-related documents in Australia, and does so within the latest wave of reform in higher education. The introduction of Mission-based Compacts gives considerable significance to university missions beyond simply normative statements of purpose. From a policy perspective,
the research suggests that the Government’s strongly centralised steering of universities via controlled funding mechanisms is creating, on the surface at least, a homogeneous sector lacking the necessary autonomy and diversity required to meet the challenges of 21st century. A further contribution has been to extend the available research on university missions, generally and in Australia specifically, and to suggest important questions for further exploration in the field of university mission research and academic freedom.
chapter two: literature review

2.1 introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter is set in the context of the changes and global challenges to the mission of universities. In particular the importation of language and practice from business into university has been a relatively recent phenomenon spurred on by the adoption of neo-liberal reform agendas by governments. The links between government policy and university responses, including the rise of mission statements, is explored both globally and in Australia. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section provides a background on mission statements in the business sector. The second section discusses the evolution of universities and their missions, and reviews the literature on the use of mission statements in universities. The third section reviews the challenges to universities in the 21st century presented by the knowledge economy, globalisation, and information technological advances. The fourth section summarises the new pressures on university missions arising from these challenges. The fifth section outlines reforms to Australian higher education over the past four decades. The last section provides a summary of the literature and directions for the research.

2.2 mission and mission statements

The term ‘mission’ has a Christian origin that can be traced back to the Jesuit mission in Spanish America: the concept of an important assignment abroad (Merino & Newson 1994). The word is derived from the Latin word missio(n-), from mittere ‘send’. It also means a strongly-felt aim, ambition,
or calling (Oxford Dictionary). It was adopted by the military in their operations, where strategic planning and mission planning were considered imperative by top management in allocating limited resources for strategic operations (Smalter 1964).

The definitional differences, calling or strategy, are reflected in business literature where mission is used as a strategic tool or a statement of philosophy. In management terms, Drucker (1973) first described ‘mission’ as simply what the business was about. Within this broad definition, there is a diversity of opinion about the essence of ‘mission’ (Campbell & Yeung 1991). One approach describes ‘mission’ in terms of business strategy, while another in terms of philosophy and ethos. The strategy school views ‘mission’ as a strategic tool defining the business’ value proposition. In this context, ‘mission’ is linked to strategy at the top level and is considered to be the first step in strategic management (Campbell & Yeung 1991).

Conversely, the philosophy school defines ‘mission’ as a cultural glue to bind the organisation through unity of purpose. Research on American corporations by Campbell (1992) found that ‘mission’ included organisational culture, behavioural norms and values. He listed the four dimensions of ‘mission’ as purpose, strategy, values and behaviour standards. While values and behaviour are part of the organisation's culture, purpose defines the reason for the organisation’s existence, and strategy puts forward the value proposition and means to achieve competitive advantage. As such, ‘mission’ is the cultural linchpin that unifies employees and stakeholders’ efforts towards achieving a shared organisational vision (Campbell 1992).

While some missions are taken for granted, organisational missions increasingly are made explicit through written statements or mission statements. Similar to the word ‘mission’, there is no universally accepted
definition of a mission statement (Davies & Glaister 1996). In addition to stating what an organisation is and does (Drucker 1973; Falsey 1989), it can be seen as a means to define the unique purpose of a business to differentiate it from similar organisations (Bart 2000; Pearce 1982). The mission statement has variously been referred to as: ‘corporate statement’, ‘aims and values’, ‘purpose’, ‘principles’, ‘objectives’, ‘goals’ and ‘responsibilities and obligations’ (Klemm, Sanderson & Luffman 1991); ‘creed statement’, ‘statement of purpose’, ‘statement of philosophy’, ‘statement of beliefs’, ‘statement of business principles’, ‘statement defining the business’, ‘long-term vision’ (David 1989 & 2007); and ‘values and/or beliefs’ (Baetz & Bart 1996). In the discipline of management, mission statements are generally considered by researchers and organisations to be the most important public and visible statements that reflect organisational aspirations and strategic plans (McGinnis 1981; Pearce & David 1987).

2.2.1 Functions of Mission Statements

A mission statement is the text which outlines and captures the essence of an organisation’s mission. The possible functions of mission statements are many. The most commonly articulated functions are to provide a foundation for setting priorities, strategies and plans, and as a basis for the design of managerial structures (David & David 2003; Drucker 1973). Further uses of mission statements include: reconciling diverse stakeholder interests to create unanimity of purpose; motivating action and inspiring support and commitment; balancing actual and future prospects (David & David 2003); promoting internal and external corporate communication and reinforcing corporate identity (Leuthesser & Kohli 1997); and providing corporate guidelines to encourage employee identification (Swales & Rogers 1995). Essentially mission statements are used to serve multiple purposes, both strategic and inspirational.
2.2.2 Mission Statement Research

Seven broad areas of mission statement research were identified by Smith et al. (2002). These include: motivations for development of mission statements (Campbell & Yeung 1991; Hackley 1998; Klemm, Sanderson & Luffman 1991; Pearce & David 1987); methods of communicating mission statements (Bart 2000a, 2000b & 2001a); attitudes towards mission statements including efficacy and utility (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman 1991; Mrozinski 2010); effect of mission statements on performance (Bart 1997a, 1998b & 2001b; Bart & Baetz 1998; Campbell 1993 & 1997); content analysis of mission statements (Bart 1997b: David 1989; Pearce & David 1987); and mission statement components against measures of organisational performance (David 1989; Williams 2008). The following discussion focuses on mission statement components.

Components of Mission Statements

Eight key components in mission statements were first identified by Pearce and David (1987) in their study on Fortune 500 companies. These components were: customers, products or services, geographic markets, technology, survival, growth, and profitability, philosophy, self-concept, and concern for public image. This list was later modified by David (1989 & 2007) when he added a ninth component, concern for employees. Not only do these nine mission components remain current but they integrate both the strategic and philosophical approaches to mission and mission statements (Williams 2008) and provide a benchmark for analysing mission statements.

The nine mission components espoused by Pearce and David (1987), David (1989 & 2007) and David & David (2003) are summarised as follows. Customers refer to the organisation’s customers, anticipating their
expectations and needs. *Products or services* identify the organisation's major products or services, as well as the offerings and values provided to the customers. *Markets* relate to the geographic areas where the organisation wishes to compete and seeks customers. *Technology* describes how current technology is used to produce and market products. *Concern for survival, growth, and profitability* clarifies the organisation’s commitment to growth and financial sustainability. *Philosophy* refers to the basic beliefs, values, aspirations, and ethical priorities of the organisation. Managerial philosophy should reflect social policy, responsibilities to consumers, the environment, minorities and communities. *Self-concept* elucidates the distinctive competence or major competitive advantage of the organisation and how it is different from or better than competitors. *Concern for public image* articulates the organisation’s contribution to community and its responsiveness to social, community, and environmental concerns. Lastly, *concern for employees* describes how the organisation values the contribution of the staff and nurtures them as a valuable asset.

### 2.3 UNIVERSITY MISSIONS

As social institutions dating back to medieval times, the mission or purpose of the university has evolved, albeit slowly. The core purposes have been the production and dissemination of knowledge through teaching and research. Until recently, the university mission has been assumed rather than written in the form of a mission statement. The first part of this section traces the evolution of the idea of a university through the centuries from the *medieval university*, the *cultural university*, the *modern university* and *multiversity* to the *university in late modernity* (Perkin 2007; Sabour 2005). It attempts to demonstrate how the university’s basic missions of teaching and research have evolved over time in relation to the attendant academic values and prevailing social and economic conditions. The second part of the section reviews research on university mission statements.
2.3.1 Evolution of the University

Universities are products of their social context and past histories (Burgess 2007). Their missions have been reconstituted, reshaped and transformed through the centuries according to the societal needs and expectations of the time (Barnett 1990). The following overview traces the evolution of the university from its medieval beginnings to the present.

The medieval university, based on the Aristotelian perception, was pre-eminently a place of instruction rather than of teaching and research (Delanty 2001; Sabour 2005). It was free of hierarchy and had a relatively autonomous position from political power and the Church. Knowledge was detached from social struggles and universities made peace with the state by fulfilling their roles in granting degrees of distinction and accreditation, and providing education in the learned professions of law, medicine, theology and scientific disciplines (Delanty 2001; Fallis 2004; Sabour 2005). The mission of the medieval university was essentially to teach.

The cultural university in the German tradition, referred to as the Humboldtian model, was a meeting-point of knowledge, an intellectual preoccupation for elevated and autonomous knowledge (Sabour 2005). The Humboldtian conception advocated the practice of science *per se* in all its purity, and unity of research and teaching, with little consideration of its utility. Humboldt defended the autonomy and academic freedom of the scholar in discovering the Truth against any constraint or imposition from outside (Renaut 1995 cited in Sabour 2005). This image of an ivory-tower institution that was mainly concerned with the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was glorified to a large extent by Cardinal Newman’s ‘idea of a university’ – the kind of ‘academic paradise’ offered by the medieval university (Newman 1852; Readings 1996). Newman’s belief in
discoveries that would be revealed by the collision of human minds and knowledge upon knowledge, echoed Humboldt’s unity of research and teaching (Boulton & Lucas 2008). Among many other contributions, the cultural university expanded the university mission to include both teaching and research.

The modern university had its roots in the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment (Delanty 2001). It became concerned with its social, cultural and scientific missions. The production and elaboration of knowledge was seen as a means of achieving social progress, and the university became highly political and politicised (Fallis 2004). Protected by academic autonomy and freedom, the university played an important role in bringing about social change. Its progress in sciences and technologies brought the university influence and power with business and governments. The modern university had a unity of purpose to pursue excellence. It was also responsible for the emergence of the multiversity (Kerr 2001), a three tier system with multi-locations and functions, including research and specialisation, and undergraduate and postgraduate teaching (Fallis 2004; Kerr 2001; McCaffery 2004). Yet the influence, power and multiple functions gained by the modern university would cause problems and confusion for the post-modern university (Barnett 2000). The mission of the multiversity had become complex with multiple stakeholders and functions, and an overriding aspiration to excellence. In the memorable words of Kerr (1963, p 8), by the 1960s, the university meant “so many different things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself”.

The 1970s saw the beginning of the end of the modern university as it was increasingly subjected to the expectations and aspirations of prevailing politic, cultural and social values, as well as labour market demand (Sabour 2005). In this period of late modernity, governments began to view
universities as sources of highly specific benefits and marketable commodities, as they came to assume the main function of the university to be the provision of direct benefits to economic prosperity, innovation and national wealth (Boulton & Lucas 2008). In making these assumptions, governments ignored that such benefits were only by-products of the deeper and more traditional functions of a university that are required to sustain its beneficial contribution to society. Government focus on universities as purely economic instruments threatens these traditional functions, and would ultimately undermine the university’s beneficial contribution to society and diminish its future potential (Boulton & Lucas 2008).

In the last decades of the 20th century, universities have been subjected to multiple pressures from governments to improve their performance in exchange for public support. They have become more like corporations and in doing so have difficulty in clearly defining their missions (Barnet 2000; Jarvis 2001). Amid the tension between the teaching and research missions, Boyer affirmed that university missions had to be redefined and the meaning of scholarship reconsidered to meet today’s urgent academic and social mandates (Boyer 1990). Boyer rejected the dichotomous nature of teaching and research through advocating a broader notion of scholarship to reflect more realistically the range of academic and civic mandates: “the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching” (Boyer 1990, p 18). Boyer’s vision of multiple scholarships encompasses a number of imperatives to meet the challenges of the 21st century. To this end, universities inspire and transform students, educating them to serve the greater community; to explore the frontiers of knowledge in the appropriate interdisciplinary context, integrating and synthesising ideas, and applying them to action (Boyer 1990).
Boyer’s visionary interpretation of the university mission has been taken up by higher education institutions and national higher education systems. They are manifest in UNESCO’s World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action (UNESCO 1998). Boyer’s ideas of convergence and interdisciplinary approaches to discovery, student-centred learning, internationalism, diversity, and service to society (Boyer 1990) are reflected in many national and international higher education policies (Australian Government 2009; BIS 2011; Boulton & Lucas 2008; LERU 2008; UNESCO 1998).

2.3.2 University Mission Statement Research

The practice of writing university missions into mission statements began in the 1980s. In a number of countries, the practice was prompted by government funding requirements. In the United States, mission statements were widely used in higher education institutions as part of the strategic planning requirement by accreditation agencies (Morphew & Hartley 2006). In the United Kingdom, the mission statement requirement was introduced as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988 (Connell & Galasiski 1998). Similarly to United Kingdom, mission statements were introduced to Australian public universities in 1988 as part of the negotiation with government for funded student places. It is no coincidence that the introduction of university mission statements arrived with the onset of what Keller (1983) described as the academic management revolution but is now known by a host of other names such as: the neo-liberal project, new public management, managerialism, corporatisation (Sauntson & Morrish 2010). Regardless of the labels used to describe the changes to higher education that accompanied the introduction of mission statements, their presence and purpose have continued to be controversial since their first appearances.
University Mission Statement Controversies

Research on university mission statements has three broad areas: the role and efficacy of mission statements in strategic planning processes (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman 1991); assessment of institutional strategies and policies such as access, diversity, and service (Hegeman, Davies & Banning 2007; Smith, Scott & MacKay 1993); and the diversity of missions (James & Huisman 2009; Morphew & Hartley 2006; Smith, Scott & MacKay 1993; Stemler & Bebell 1998; Stober 1997). Research in the first two areas is based on the assumption that university mission statements have a strategic purpose, while the third area on institutional diversity is less concerned with the purpose of the mission statement than with the contents. In line with these research areas, debates on university mission statements most often concern their purpose and diversity.

Mission statements had been important tools to explore the impact of government and market demands on higher education institutions (James & Huisman 2009). Mission statements can be driven by both internal circumstances and external demands. The primary external drivers such as the market, government directives and funding policies shape universities and their mission statements (James & Huisman 2009). Based on a discursive analysis of Australian university discourses including mission statements, Westerhuis (2006) traced the genealogy of mission statements in Australian universities. The author concluded that government asserted its power through funding agreements and requirements for a mission statement in the management of universities.

Despite pressure from governments that universities have mission statements, not all universities have complied. Among universities in the United Kingdom, Smith, Scott & MacKay (1993) found some institutions refused to adopt the formal label ‘mission statement’ preferring more
traditional words such as purpose, intent, aims, and objectives, while others simply refused to engage with mission statements at all regardless of government directives and funding requirements.

University mission statements have become complex as institutions try to address external challenges and demonstrate relevance to multiple stakeholders and constituents such that Morphew and Hartley (2006) conclude that university mission statements could be normative, political and utilitarian, singly or in combination. Given the multiple functions of university mission statements, it is not surprising that a comparison of university and corporation mission statements by Cochran and David (1986) found corporate mission statements to be more readable and inspiring than those of universities.

The functions of university mission statements are multiple and include planning, accountability and marketing. A study of strategic planners at US colleges found that while the planners well understood the role of mission statements in planning, they accepted that the emerging roles of their mission statements were to meet accreditation requirements and foster institutional team building (Mrozinski 2010). In Australia, mission statements as instruments of accountability for providing quality programs in higher education is emphasised by Gallagher (2010a). Mission statements are supposed to describe the characteristics that became part of the criteria against which institutions are judged by their stakeholders, especially government regulators. In the US, other non-traditional roles of mission statements have been identified as being marketing tools, fulfilling political demands, and defining market position (Kosmützky 2012; Lang & Lopers-Sweetman 1991). From another perspective, Peeke (1994) argues that universities may be able to do without mission statements in periods of stability, but in turbulent times a declaration of purpose and strategic direction is essential.
The success of mission statements in fulfilling their various roles is questioned on the grounds of their failure to articulate institutional differences. However, if mission statements are normative and a result of societal expectations, then the statements would naturally incorporate common elements expected of a university (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Other than distinguishing regional identity, university mission statements are weak in defining strategic position and distinctive competence because such differences are incompatible with their normative role in society (Davies & Glaister 1996). Similarly, in studying the mission statements of 16 universities in seven countries (Australia, UK, Canada, Ireland, France, New Zealand and Hong Kong), Richter and Buttery (2005) identified that despite the new challenges facing universities, their basic purposes in knowledge accumulation and diffusion did not change from past histories, aside from the inclusion of a globalised context. Hence it is not surprising that university mission statements are found to be too general, too similar, unrealistically aspirational, and too vague to be meaningful (Connell & Galasiiski 1998; Davies 1986; Davies & Glaister 1996; Delucchi 1997). Institutions, through mission statements, try to maximise their scope and capabilities while ignoring institutional limitations and differences that should guide strategic planning (Davies & Glaister 1996).

Conversely, others have found mission statements to represent institutional uniqueness and to guide decision-making (Keller 1983). For example, Morphew and Hartley (2006) argue that while the language used might seem superficially similar and generic to outsiders, there are meanings and nuances in the language of mission statements that clearly differentiate them from each other. This was demonstrated in a study of student access and widening participation in the mission statements of colleges and universities in the United States. Smith et al. (1993) found the themes of access and participation to be reflected in most institutional mission statements but with
observable differences in emphases that could be attributed to the history and position of the institution under the former binary system of higher education.

2.4 NEW CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

This section reviews the literature on global trends and challenges that impact on universities in recent decades. The main trends include the growing importance of knowledge, globalisation, information and communication revolution, and the spread of neoliberalism. The literature on the challenges faced by the universities as a result of these trends is explored. These challenges include marketisation and competition; global competition; third mission and the entrepreneurial university; and mission and governance. The impacts of these challenges have irrevocably changed the landscape of the university in its core functions of teaching and research and in the focus of its mission.

The 2002 World Bank Report, ‘Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education,’ highlighted a number of challenges facing higher education institutions in the new century. These challenges are a result of the profound changes sweeping the world and include the growing importance of knowledge, the globalisation of financial and labour markets, and the information and communication advances. These changes pose challenges as well as create opportunities for higher education in all countries (Salmi 2001).

These challenges for the universities in the 21st century were echoed by Van Damme (2001) and Marginson (2006a) in their respective reports to UNESCO and OECD. The reports placed in context the challenges of global competition to universities. The rise of the knowledge economy necessitates universities to provide lifelong learning. The growing
economic and social demands for higher education pressure universities to provide greater and more equitable access for a more diversified student body. Furthermore, innovations in communication technologies have led to changing student expectations requiring new learning environments as well as research collaboration and knowledge sharing between universities, industries and communities (Marginson 2006). And importantly, the earth’s limited resources require a more sustainable way of life that higher education is obliged to address in its teaching, research and operation.

2.4.1 The Rise of the Knowledge Economy

The concept of a knowledge economy was first espoused by Drucker (1969) who foreshadowed the increasing role that knowledge would play in the modern economy. Where previously human labour, natural resources, and capital were the basic production factors, in the decades ahead, these traditional factors would become secondary to knowledge. The application of knowledge is increasingly recognised as the driver of productivity and economic growth (OECD 1996). Over the last few decades, the economies in many developed countries have become more driven by technologies based on knowledge (Powell & Snellman 2004). The term ‘knowledge economy’ now refers to the overall economic structure that has a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (Sheehan & Tegart 1998).

The knowledge economy is driven by two crucial forces: the increase in knowledge intensive economic activities and the globalisation of these activities (Houghton & Sheehan 2000). The increase in knowledge intensive economic activities is in turn driven by the information technology revolution and the acceleration of technological advances. As such, employment in the knowledge-based economy is characterised by increasing demand for more highly-skilled workers, known as ‘knowledge
workers’ (Drucker 1993). As a result, research and education in knowledge production and dissemination are required to maintain the momentum of the knowledge economy.

Although, the term ‘knowledge society’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘knowledge economy’, Hargreaves (2003) makes a clear distinction between the two terms. While the knowledge economy is driven by creativity and innovation; it exists primarily for the generation of private goods through the economic exploitation of knowledge (Hargreaves 2003). The knowledge society on the other hand encompasses the inclusion of knowledge for the public good. A knowledge society recognises the importance of knowledge and learning. It involves its citizens in creating, distributing, diffusing, exploiting, and integrating knowledge in the pursuit of economic, political, and cultural activities, ultimately benefiting the organisations and the community at large (Hargreaves 2003). While the concept of ‘knowledge worker’ flows from the knowledge economy, so the concept of ‘life-long learning’ flows from the knowledge society. Although all these terms have been subjected to critique (Carnoy & Castells 1997; Hargreaves 2003), an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made university education a central motivation for nations to raise the education level of their citizenry and encourage a competitive research sector thus more overtly aligning universities to the ‘knowledge economy’ than a ‘knowledge society’.

2.4.2 Global Competition and Internationalisation

Globalisation refers to the increasing worldwide interconnectedness to facilitate the flow of goods, services, capital and labour without the barriers of national borders (Held et al. 1999). It also describes the integration of economies, societies, and cultures through a global network of communication, transportation, and trade. The impacts of globalisation on
universities are multi-dimensional (Marginson 2007a; Sabour 2005). Not only are universities subjected to the effects of globalisation, they are also active participants in the globalisation of higher education (Marginson & van der Wende 2009).

The effects of globalisation include intensive competition for students and research reputation leading to global comparisons and rankings, national quality assurance regimes, and new and privatised entrants into the field. Globalisation and competition also have the effect of engaging universities in co-operative endeavours such as cross-border co-operation, knowledge exchange, transnational education, and student and staff mobility (Marginson & van der Wende 2009). The increasing focus on internationalisation has been identified in the 3rd Global Survey of the International Association of Universities (Egron-Polak & Hudson 2010). Survey responses from 745 institutions in 115 countries indicated that 87 percent of the institutions include internationalisation in their institutional strategic plans and 78 percent had increased their focus on internationalisation.

The combined effect of the knowledge economy and global competition is transforming education into a lucrative business that is attracting new competitors. It has eroded the monopolistic position previously enjoyed by universities (Barnett 2000; Gibbons 1994; Jarvis 2001; Nowotny et al. 2001). Universities no longer have the monopoly on knowledge production, as new knowledge producers emerge from non-university sites such as research centres and think-tanks. These new producers are increasingly focused on commercial application (Delanty 1998a & 1998b), such that it threatens the scholarly quest for knowledge as an end in itself. The liberalisation of higher education services under the World Trade Organization (WTO) has resulted in the emergence of new types of
providers, including for-profit providers that pose direct competition to universities, particularly the public institutions (OECD 2004).

Global competition is most visible in research rankings and university league tables which have become proxies for university reputation. The various rankings attempt to measure the knowledge-producing and talent-catching capacity of universities (Hazelkorn 2009). Despite strong criticism of the methodologies used in global rankings (Hazelkorn 2007, 2008 & 2009; Marginson 2005; Marginson & van der Wende 2007; Salmi & Saroyan 2007; Tapper & Filippakou 2009; Taylor & Braddock 2007), some universities have allowed rankings to impact on institutional strategic direction as well as mission statements (Hazelkorn 2007, 2008 & 2009). Essentially global rankings highlight reputational differentiation and intensify competition for students, faculty, funding and researchers (Hazelkorn 2007 & 2009). While the OECD has warned that global rankings and league tables should not be taken as accurate measures of the quality of education (OECD 2008), universities remain strongly influenced by them.

Global rankings encourage universities to be ‘world-class’. A global survey of university ranking systems by Usher and Savino (2006) found that despite the large differences in methodology between rankings, they were generally consistent in awarding top status to the same universities in specific countries (Usher & Savino 2006). Such evidence can be interpreted in two ways: benchmarks of what it is to be ‘world-class’ are set by the established system and for others to follow; or, the rankings simply reflect the status quo. It would seem that most universities have bought into the former interpretation encouraged by national governments keen to have world-class university status (Salmi 2009b).
However, world-class universities are more than just excellent educational institutions, they require resources and autonomy. Altbach (2004) identified the following criteria for universities to qualify as world-class: excellence in research; ability to attract and retain top-quality faculty; academic freedom in an environment conducive to research and intellectual excitement; and institutional autonomy. Salmi and Saroyan (2007) presented a similar list based on three sets of complementary factors: a concentration of talented faculty and students; abundant resources offering a rich learning environment conducive to cutting-edge research; and a flexible governance structure that encourages strategic vision and innovation without the burden of onerous bureaucracy. Above all, world-class universities require strong leadership, a bold vision of institutional mission and goals, and a clearly articulated strategic plan (Salmi 2009b). However, few of these resources would be available to most universities that struggle with limited funding and increased demands from government.

In an era of global competition, Marginson (2007) highlights two important but opposing influences on universities, global rankings and emphasis on diversification. While the former tends to normalise the institutions, the latter requires them to be differentiated and specialised (Tapper & Filippakou 2009). Amid the momentum towards deregulation and corporatisation, these two opposing influences create difficulties for universities to define a clear mission and strategy while balancing conflicts between public purpose and institutional aspirations (Marginson 2007a).

2.4.3 Advances in Information and Communication Technologies

Advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are key drivers of the globalised knowledge economy. The impact and role of ICT is becoming more important in higher education in the 21st century (Oliver 2002). The technologies transform teaching and learning and fundamentally
alter the way that universities offer and deliver programs and carry out research. ICT enhances the student learning experience and allows researchers access to global information and data to simulate, model and visualise complex sciences and systems (OECD 2005).

However, these transformations also pose challenges to universities that reflect the changing nature of how information is sought, classified, and perceived (Horizon Report 2007). For example, technology has enabled a range of online delivery options that are revolutionising teaching and learning and enabling new types of students to participate in tertiary education (Larsen & Vincent-Lancrin 2005). While the ubiquity of ICT is creating an imperative and opportunity for the university to renew its core activities (Kinser & Hill 2011), constantly having to adopt new forms and methods to galvanise their scholarly communities (Atkins 2005) is a significant resource cost. In sum, the advent of ever changing new technologies brings with it redefinitions of the core university roles of teaching and research.

2.4.4 The Spread of Neoliberal Ideology

Neoliberalism is an ideology that combines the doctrines of political and economic liberalism (Roberts & Peters 2008). Based on the ideologies of free trade and market economy, and the recognition of the limited role of governments, economic rationalists abolished subsidies and tariffs, floated exchange rates and freed up control of foreign investment, as well as corporatised and privatised public services. These policies were designed to reform and re-position national economies to respond to the growing competition among countries in free trade and the increasing global connectedness of the economies accelerated by the advances in information and communication technologies (Roberts & Peters 2008).
Publicly funded universities were an obvious target for neoliberal reforms in view of their economic value through the development of human capital, knowledge creation and diffusion, research and innovations (Small 2009). Furthermore the emphasis on knowledge as capital in the 21st century led to the wide adoption of the neoliberal project of globalisation by international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank (Roberts & Peters 2008). As a result, the World Bank has urged higher education systems to adopt an economic and market model, with a commitment to globalisation and to more private funding (Marginson 2001). Critics however, argue that knowledge is a global public good and its non-rivalrous properties defy the scarcity characteristics of other goods (Stiglitz 1999). Stiglitz (1999) urged a rethinking of the economic fundamentals in relation to ‘knowledge capitalism’ because it differs from other resources in terms of its abundance that defies distance, space and national borders.

As part of the neoliberal reforms, the role of national governments was to create the requisite conditions for free enterprise to thrive including the redefinition of education in terms of its economic value (Soucek 1995a & 1995b). Education has been progressively commodified to become a marketable service. Defined as a service by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), education is subject to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that promotes global deregulation of service industries. The pragmatic neoliberal approach is not to immerse universities completely in knowledge-production capital markets but to take control of knowledge production from academics to allow government and business to gain access and to influence such production (Marginson 2006). Governments use performance-based funding, output monitoring and performance management in the name of accountability to govern universities from a distance (Marginson 2006). Small (2009) argued that neoliberalism had usurped the social democratic and egalitarian model of education and changed its fundamental mission.
In line with neoliberal thinking, governments replace public funding to universities with new ‘user-pays’ funding models using catchwords like fairness, freedom, choice, standards and excellence. The call for universal education has to be balanced against the withdrawal of public funds for higher education (Hill & Kumar 2008). For example, the recent white paper for United Kingdom’s ‘Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System’ (BIS 2011) focuses heavily on user-pays and on students as consumers. Education is viewed as a private investment for individual gain rather than a public investment for the public good. Similarly, Australia has also moved away from direct funding for universities to a student demand or consumption-based model (DEEWR 2009) as the debate over public versus private benefits opens up. Using the principle of ‘fairness’, Norton (2012) argues that government tuition subsidies are not justified on the grounds that tuition charges deter those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds from entering higher education; such subsidies merely redistribute income to students and graduates at the expense of the general public. Although Norton’s (2012) views have been generally rejected by universities and the Government, as universities come under greater competitive pressure to provide quality higher education at a lower cost, privately subsidised fees may become more appealing.

Under the neoliberal plan, the university is governed by senior executives whose aim is to build the university’s reputational, financial and competitive position rather than fostering academic values and generating public good (Harman 2003). Such short-term and utilitarian aims strengthen the production of private goods while weakening the long term sustainability and intellectual capacity of the university and its ability to produce public goods (Marginson 2001).
Two important offshoots of the neoliberal project have been the marketisation of higher education and its corollary, educational consumerism. Marketisation is seen as a means of containing costs in the face of growing demands for universal access to higher education (Dill 2003). The rising costs of the expanding higher education systems have outstripped national governments’ capacity to pay and governments are anxious to offload some of this cost burden (Lynch 2002; Steier 2003). Besides being a means of sustaining growth without cutting costs, marketisation is used as a mechanism to improve economic efficiency, stimulate quality improvements, raise standards and drive down input costs (Dill 2003; Foskett 2010).

Neoliberal ideology centres on the belief that individuals have a personal responsibility for their own well-being (Sauntson & Morrish 2010). This idea is seen in play in the introduction of cost sharing between student and state where national governments have conceptualised the relationship between students and universities as those of customer-provider (Foskett 2010), with the role of government as a facilitator and enabler for the consumer and market-led citizen (Lynch 2006). However, in higher education, a pure market mechanism does not exist because there is always some form of government subsidy, control and regulation (Brown 2010; Jongbloed 2003). This kind of market has been coined a ‘quasi-market’, a market propped up by state subsidies and government intervention in coexistence with genuine market driven activities such as international student recruitment, consulting and other commercial activities (Foskett 2010).

No major higher education system in the world is fully marketised as there is always some form of government control and public funding (Jongbloed 2003), but there are also other factors that hinder the operation of a market in education. First, the higher education market lacks the necessary
information symmetry, as students and their parents cannot objectively evaluate the quality of the product and services until they have actually purchased it. This information asymmetry is exploited when universities invest heavily in creating perceptions of prestige at the cost of education and research (Dill 2003). Second, the idea of what the ‘product’ constitutes is arguable. Furedi (2010) questions if marketisation of higher education has led to a market in academic education or simply the purchase of a professional credential whereby the student consumer has the power to purchase what they want regardless of what they might need. Despite the critiques of student consumerism (for example, Molesworth, Scullion & Nixon 2010), universities appear to have accepted them as such and continue to use questionable indicators of quality for branding and marketing purposes (Furedi 2010).

2.4.5 Changing Landscape of Higher Education

The 2008 OECD’s Thematic Review of Tertiary Education (Santiago et al. 2008) found that the scope and impact of higher education had changed drastically in the last few decades. Tertiary institutions are much more diversified and include new types of institutions to cater for labour market needs. There is a diversification of funding sources for universities, and public funding has been tied increasingly to competitive performance. There is a growing focus on accountability, performance and quality assurance. In line with these changes, new forms of university governance and academic leadership and management have been introduced. Universities are much more connected with the wider world through regional integration, formation of networks, research collaboration, student and staff mobility and transnational education (Santiago et al. 2008). Based on an extensive review of 24 countries, a number of new trends in higher education have been identified: growth in student enrolments, increasing diversity, diverse funding and activities (OECD 2008; Santiago et al. 2008).
In an international study involving 125 organisations in seven countries, Brown, Lauder and Ashton (2008 & 2010) found a global doubling of university enrolments in both developed and developing nations. The explosion in graduate numbers along with the globalisation of labour markets put pressure on universities to provide for growth, to prepare graduates for a globalised workforce, and to adopt less nation-centric views (Brown et al. 2010).

Globalisation, universal access and growth in higher education have resulted in changes in the composition of student bodies. The student body is more heterogeneous with respect to gender, age, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. There is greater participation by women and an increase in the number of mature-aged students, leading to a rise in the average age of student bodies (OECD 2008). Such massification of higher education places significant demands on universities to develop new models to service growing and diverse student needs at a time when resources are strained (Kinser & Hill 2011).

The commercialisation imperative has had an equally significant impact on universities. While universities have been critical to the development of research and innovation through autonomous freedom to pursue research for its own sake, universities are increasingly encouraged to pursue applied research that can be commercialised. Both governments and university managements are keen to exploit and commercialise the universities’ discoveries into innovations (Santiago et al. 2008). The decline in public funding combined with rising costs had forced universities to seek additional revenues from external sources such as student fees and commercial activities (Marcucci & Usher 2012) as well as engaging in activities and services beyond teaching and research. They provide
consultancies, industry training and professional services to industries and governments (OECD 2008).

The current climate in higher education has been described as tumultuous, as universities are being buffeted by the rapidity of change and uncertainty (Kinser & Hill 2011). They are torn between market forces and increasing government expectations and accountabilities, struggling between declines in funding and increased cost scrutiny. Universities are challenged on multiple fronts and faced with conflicting agendas. They are expected to develop world-class reputations, while teaching increasing numbers of students. They are required to serve as engines of economic development while maintaining a comprehensive scholarly profile (Kinser & Hill 2011). The essential purpose or mission of a university has rarely been under such challenge.

2.5 CHALLENGE OF NEW EXPECTATIONS

In proclaiming its 17 Articles on the missions and functions of higher education for the 21st century, the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action UNESCO (1998) reinforces the traditional purpose of a university. The core missions for higher education are to educate, and produce highly qualified graduates to be responsible citizens, able to meet the present and future needs of all aspects of human activity and to undertake research in order to contribute to sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole. Higher education has an obligation to advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research and scholarship (UNESCO 1998). Moreover, the Articles emphasise the universities’ role in upholding ethical values and intellectual rigour in fulfilling their core missions by demonstrating commitment to values such as integrity, autonomy, responsibility, equality, equity, and diversity. These pronouncements by UNESCO underline the long held but
usually assumed social contract between university and society whereby the university is granted freedom from the interference of church, state or industry in return for contribution to the public good, a contract befitting a social institution with societal obligations.

However, as outlined in the previous section, global changes have placed additional pressures on universities such that the social contract and with it the university mission is evolving and transforming to accommodate new realities and imperatives. Universities, especially those funded by the state, were founded on the principle of a social contract whereby their missions must respond to the nature and needs of the society at the time (Douglass 2007; Horne & Sherington 2010). Thus the social contract requires continuous reflection and dialogue between the university and society as each era renews the social contract according to its needs (Fallis 2004). Increasingly, the state has become the proxy for society so that government policy acts as the main informant of changing social needs.

The following sections review the imperatives for change in the university mission as advocated by international bodies and national governments. These changes cover the following imperatives: access and equity; research and the third mission; institutional diversity; sustainability; quality; governance; and academic freedom.

2.5.1 Access and Equity

According to UNESCO’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and World Declaration on Higher Education for The Twenty-First Century (1998), admission to universities for those seeking access should be based on academic merit and capacity to learn without discrimination based on race, gender, language, religion, economic, cultural and social backgrounds, and disability. Access to and participation in higher education for the
disadvantaged should be actively encouraged and facilitated. Yet in reality, university admission policies which are based on meritocracy tend to favour socially privileged groups, which have a better chance of gaining admission (Horne & Sherington 2010).

Despite higher education moving from elite to mass education, demographic imbalances in some developed and most developing nations persist (James 2008). An international study by Clancy and Goastellec (2007) found that demographic change over the last two decades has been uneven across countries. While there have been significant reductions in socio-economic group inequalities in Finland, USA, UK, and Ireland, and modest reductions in France and Norway, the study found no reduction in social group inequalities in Australia (Clancy & Goastellec 2007). Overall, policies and initiatives to address the problems of low socio-economic and minority group participation have had little success with under-representation particularly in the elite, world-class, universities (James 2008). Strategies aimed at increasing the recruitment and retention of students of low SES backgrounds and other minority groups are resource intensive and require resource trade-offs from investing in other areas of university mission. Thus the dilemma for universities is to reconcile mission tensions between access and equity and other imperatives such as quality and excellence in the face of diminishing public funding (Douglass 2007).

2.5.2 Research and the Third Mission

In the 21st century, the research mission is being transformed to connect the university to society in a fundamentally new way. Universities are expected to produce knowledge of immediate benefit to society and/or the economy (Laredo 2007). The emphasis is increasingly on application, problem solving, innovation, and economic and social impact rather than pure research and discovery for its own sake (Martin & Etzkowitz 2000). The
movement towards this type of research brings with it a requirement to commercialise, innovate and accelerate research output, through direct collaboration with industry.

The ‘triple helix model’ of innovation, involving close links between university, industry, and government to stimulate economic development was proposed by Martin and Etzkowitz (2000). Its inclusion in the traditional mission of the university is referred to as the ‘third mission’ of universities (Etzkowitz et al 2000) and those universities that actively pursue this mission are the ‘entrepreneurial’ universities (Etzkowitz et al 2000). In an era of decreasing public investment in higher education, the pursuit of the third mission can be attractive to universities (Martin & Etzkowitz 2000).

The concept of a ‘triple helix’ relationship between universities, government and industry represents a significant shift in the ‘social contract’ between universities and the state. Universities are now expected to contribute to the national priorities. There are more explicit and higher expectations for universities to contribute tangible benefits to society: universities are expected to contribute to technology transfer, innovation, the economy and society, in addition to their teaching and research missions. As such, the role of the university is becoming more central to society in generating not only intellectual but also economic and social capital (Martin & Etzkowitz 2000).

However, there are financial, human and resource risks in becoming an ‘entrepreneurial university’ (Barnett 2005). There is also a ‘mission risk’, in which the university puts its image, reputation and position on the line (Barnett 2005; Barnett & Phipps 2005). Tensions between the third mission and the traditional missions of the university are also highlighted by Laredoa (2007). In a recent case study, Philpott et al. (2011) found that the
third mission had failed to synergise with the traditional missions of teaching and research. Instead, the study identified a divide between academic disciplines, which had the potential to cause disharmony in the academic community. The study also revealed a strong top-down management push towards the implementation of the entrepreneurial university model. It is feared that this hard-line approach could be counter-productive and might actually reduce overall entrepreneurial activity and impede progress towards the achievement of the third mission (Philpott et al. 2011).

2.5.3 Institutional Diversity

Institutional diversity has been identified as a key challenge for universities in the 21st century (Van Damme 2001; Marginson 2006). Post-war governments have consistently espoused support for and commitment to the notion of diversity within their higher education systems (Codling & Meek 2006). Diversity has been highlighted in higher education literature as one of the major factors associated with the positive performance of the systems (van Vught 2008). The rationales for diversity are to meet diverse student needs, promote social mobility, serve the needs of labour markets and interest groups, enable the combination of elite and mass higher education, increase institutional effectiveness, and provide opportunities for experimenting with innovations (Barth et al. 2007). Institutional diversity can also manifest itself in different and distinctive missions, different forms of training and programs, styles of instruction, and funding bases (Trow 1995).

Institutional diversity, as a principle of social sustainability, affects almost every aspect of higher education: access and equity, teaching methods and student learning, research priorities, quality, management, social relevance, and resources (Stadtman 1980; UNESCO 2008). There is strong evidence to suggest that world-class systems of higher education are differentiated
systems that address the diversity of student backgrounds and the diverse needs of society (Meek & Davies 2009). Most writers assume that there is an inherent good in diversity, based on biological analogies (Huisman, Meek & Wood 2007); but it could prove difficult to achieve.

Based on an extensive literature review, Huisman, Meek and Wood (2007) identified five variables to signify diversity between universities: size; institutional controls; range of disciplines; degrees awarded; and modes of study. Using these five variables, Huisman et al. (2007) conducted a comparative study in ten OECD countries. Their findings demonstrated that on the whole, the higher education systems of the countries studied were highly diverse. The degree of diversity ranged from low in Australia and Denmark and high in the United Kingdom. However, the researchers warned that both national and international diversity was threatened by the implementation of agreements such as the Bologna Agreements (1999) because of the convergence effect it might have on national higher education systems (Huisman et al. 2007).

Despite a possible desire for diversity, there are strong forces encouraging convergence of mission. Interdependent factors such as the environment, government policy, funding, ranking, competition, and co-operation can impact on the degree of institutional diversity or convergence within a higher education system (Codling & Meek 2006). Environmental homogeneity, deregulation, unitary system, financial incentives based on generic performance indicators, competition in periods of high demand, co-operation, and ranking, tend to lead to convergence, in which institutions mimic each other in order to maximise their position in the system. Eckel (2008) offered insights from the US experience, proposing that clear and helpful public policies play an important role in contributing to mission differentiation. More importantly, it is the interplay between public policy and market forces that will ultimately determine the degree of diversity.
2.5.4 Sustainability

The UNESCO (1998) declaration of the UN Decade (2005 – 2014) of Education for Sustainable Development confirms the importance of higher education in shaping how future generations learn to cope with the complexities of sustainable development. ‘Learning our Way to Sustainability’ is UNESCO’s theme to promote learning our way out of current global social and environmental problems in order to live sustainably without compromising future generations (UNESCO 1998 & 2011).

The characteristics of a sustainable university as defined in the broad UNESCO declaration were identified in an international comparative study (Ferrer-Balas et al. 2008). These include transformative education as opposed to transmissive learning, which prepares students to deal with complex sustainability challenges; more interactive and learner-centric education which emphasises critical thinking (Sterling 2004; Wals, Walker & Corcoran 2004; Wals and Corcoran 2006); strong emphasis on inter- and trans-disciplinary research; and science with a societal problem-solving orientation (Neef 2005; Van Dam 2006). Networks of scholars can be established to tap into wide expertise and to share resources and information. However, these characteristics require strong leadership and vision to promote the needed changes (Lozano 2006). There are, however, numerous barriers to transforming institutions into sustainable universities, including conservative management, absence of an incentive structure, and lack of pressure from government (Holmberg & Samuelsson 2006; Lozano 2006; Velazquez et al. 2005). Sustainability in relation to university mission is more commonly used in the narrow senses of financial, environmental and workforce sustainability.
Ensuring financial sustainability is critical to achieving all other aspects of university mission, including the new imperatives of expanding access and improving program quality and relevance (Salmi 2009a). Sustainable financing is pivotal to a sustainable higher education system, especially in an era of worldwide rising costs in higher education that have outpaced inflation and average family income (Johnstone & Marcucci 2007). These costs are the result of additional spending on technology, research, marketing and facilities to compete in the global higher education market. The focus on financial sustainability has led some to argue that ‘financialisation’ has become the prime mission of universities, over and above teaching and research (Parker 2012). Clearly the financial position of an institution will determine the realisation of its missions, or at least the priority given to each mission. However, financial sustainability is increasingly becoming almost a mission in its own right (Parker 2012).

Two other areas of sustainability are environmental and workforce. Although UNESCO (1998) advocates a holistic view of environmental sustainability that involves the interlocking systems of nature, social and cultural, economic, and political, this is often interpreted in a narrow sense of nature and environmental protection in relation to campus and facility management. Sustainable human capital policies and practices (Bassi and McMurrer 2007) are particularly relevant to universities, especially so with the aging of academic workforces in many developed countries where the challenge is to ensure a sustainable academic workforce to maintain knowledge and skills (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley 2009; Hugo & Morris 2010; Edwards, Bexley & Richardson 2011).

2.5.5 Quality

According to Article 11 of the World Declaration on Higher Education (UNESCO 1988), quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept,
embracing all university functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarships, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, as well as services to the community and the academic environment. Evidence of quality involves instituting internal self-evaluation and external reviews, as well as independent national bodies to assess standards of quality, having regard to the specific institutional, national and regional contexts, to ensure diversity rather than uniformity. Quality also requires higher education be characterised by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students, and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances.

The UNESCO 1\textsuperscript{st} Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications (UNESCO 2002) and the Forum on Globalisation and Higher Education (UNESCO 2004) recommend the development of international networks of quality assurance and accreditation systems to safeguard academic standards of provision and qualifications and to protect learners from the risks of misinformation, low-quality programs and qualifications of limited validity. As such, qualifications should be intelligible in order to increase their international validity and portability to facilitate recognition arrangements (UNESCO 2003). These declarations along with actions by national governments to implement and abide by them are arguably a strong force for convergence within and among higher education systems. The once assumed attribute of quality in higher education is now clearly defined by assurance measures and accreditations directives.

2.5.6 Institutional Governance

Given the global and national changes outlined in this and previous sections, it is not surprising to find a shift in dynamics among the three determining
forces of higher education governance depicted in Clark’s triangle of coordination (Jongbloed 2003). Clark (1983) argued that the interplay between state authority, the market and academe determined how a nation’s higher education system was co-ordinated and governed. When the academy has power, governance tends to be collegial and self-governing compared to the managerialist type of governance that occurs when government holds power. Recent decades have witnessed a significant decrease in the power of academe in favour of government and to a lesser extent the market, with the current model of governance moving closer to a market-oriented model (Dobbins, Knill & Vögtle 2011).

In this market-oriented model of governance, the institutional balance of power resides with executive management (Dobbins et al. 2011) to the extent that it determines institutional policy and direction, including taking responsibility for the appointment of academic managers, positions that were previously filled by collegial elections (Dobbins et al. 2011). Structurally, this form of centralised management parallels that of a corporation and replaces traditional decentralised collegial governance structures (Bleiklie & Kogan 2007; Trakman 2008). As governance structures converge, so too do university missions, lessening the ability of institutions to provide individual responses to unique circumstances.

With the strengthening of managerial control and weakening of academic affiliation, universities are moving away from the traditional idea of academic self-governance and the Humboldtian idea of a university (Musselin 2005). Under the influence of neoliberal philosophies, national governments pressure their universities to align their missions and institutional priorities with national economic and social goals. Highly structured and managerialist governance of institutions makes such alignment more possible, while at the same time it threatens institutional
autonomy and academic freedom (Coates et al. 2009) and hence the
traditional missions of the university.

2.5.7 Academic Freedom

The concept of academic freedom has its origins in medieval universities,
which had considerable autonomy from the church and state (Delanty 2001;
Sabour 2005). The idea was reinforced by Humboldt in the 19th century: to
 preserve the autonomy and academic freedom of scholars in discovering the
Truth against any constraint or imposition from outside (Renaut 1995 cited
in Sabour 2005). Academic freedom is a freedom unique to academic
institutions that enables academics to undertake their work free from
coercion from the state or other agencies and improper interference by
university management (Nelson 2010). It is the ‘key legitimating concept of
the entire enterprise’ of the university and lies at the ‘heart of political
battles over the future of the public university’ (Menand 1996, p 3).
However, the freedom is confined only to academic commitment in the
pursuit of knowledge and performance of academic duties in teaching and
research. The freedom is not absolute but guided by an implicit code of
conduct which includes integrity, honesty, neutrality and testifiability
(Macintyre 2010; Nelson 2010). It exists at the very core of the university

The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher
Education Teaching Personnel provides basic guidelines for maintaining
academic freedom to safeguard the freedom in teaching and discourse,
freedom in research and knowledge dissemination and publication, freedom
to express opinions about the institution or system in which personnel work,
freedom from institutional censorship, and freedom to participate in
professional academic organisations (UNESCO 1997). Despite these
guidelines, academic freedom is under threat in the 21st century (Coates et
al. 2009; Nelson 2010), especially from government and its increased steering and scrutiny of universities (Gilbert 2000). The corporatisation of university management further imposes control on academics as their individual performance is closely monitored and scrutinised (Marginson & Considine 2000; Nelson 2010). Yet governments continue to pronounce their commitment to upholding the values of academic freedom, while steering universities from a distance through performance funding and setting research priorities and criteria for funding.

2.5.8 Summary of Missions of Universities in the 21st Century

The public service mission of universities which underpinned medieval times has come under pressure in the 21st century (Scott 2006). Universities are expected to educate and produce highly qualified graduates to be responsible citizens, able to meet the present and future needs of all aspects of human activity. Universities have the obligations to advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research and scholarship and promote innovation and development. Through these core activities, universities reinforce their roles of service to society.

Along with these core missions, there is a mixture of demands on universities including clearer accountability to society; contribution to equity and expanded access; ensuring quality of teaching and learning are relevant to learner and market needs; research feeding into industry and community engagement; and contributing to internationalisation and international competitiveness (Marginson & van der Wende 2009). To this end, universities in the 21st century are expected to be more responsive and more engaged with their students and communities, understanding their changing needs and expectations (Power 2011). Through rigorous and high quality teaching and research activities, universities contribute to the
protection of human rights, the environment and sustainable development, as well as promoting peace and democracy (Power 2011).

While the current climate uses higher education as a means to enhance global competitiveness, universities must maintain their critical business, promoting critical thinking, self-reflection and critical action (Barnett 2000; Power 2011). Amid status competition and economic considerations, universities need to create the public sphere and space for independent criticism and discourse in producing their public goods in order to remain relevant to society (Marginson 2011).

2.6 BACKGROUND TO CHANGES IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Australian universities have undergone considerable transformations in the last four decades: changing from elite to mass education, from a binary to a unified national system, from a publicly funded system to one of mixed funding, from a loose network of autonomous institutions to a centrally controlled higher education system that is market-oriented, competitive and highly corporatised. Although most, if not all, OECD countries have experienced similar reforms in higher education; the “Australian transformation is marked by its speed and compliance” (Ryan, Guthrie & Neumann 2008, p 172). From 1973 until 2007, the reforms came in four waves: massification; marketisation; corporatisation; and regulation (Ryan et al. 2008). The fifth wave, from 2007 is noted for its focus on global competition, increased and deregulated student access and mission-based funding arrangements. This section provides a brief overview of the four waves of change and their impacts as a background to the current structures and policies in Australian higher education discussed in the following Chapter 3.
2.6.1 From Elite to Mass Education and Markets 1973-1995

Radical change to Australian universities began in 1973 with the abolition of student fees and a shift in responsibility for university funding from State governments to Federal government. All students eligible to attend a university could now do so with full fee subsidy from the government. This first wave of change heralded in the first steps away from elite education and towards control by the Federal government (Ryan et al. 2008). By the mid-1980s, it was clear that the government could not sustain the cost of full fees, and prevailed upon by OECD directions for higher education, furthered the second wave of major reforms that commenced in the late 1980s.

At the same time, Australia, influenced by international developments, embarked on significant microeconomic reforms of the public sector in the late 1980s in order to integrate Australia more competitively into the world economy. Universities, as public institutions deemed instrumental to economic reform, were a clear target for further change (Dawkins 1998; Harmon 2003). In 1987, the OECD report, *Universities under Scrutiny* (OECD 1987) recommended greater career-focused courses of study, stronger public accountability and new forms of university governance, as well as closer interaction between universities and their communities. The report was used by the then Minister for Education, John Dawkins, to justify far-reaching reforms to higher education: to end the binary system of universities and colleges, reintroduce partial fees for students and introduce competition and international student markets (Dawkins 1998).

The Unified National System further massified higher education by reducing 70 higher education institutions, including universities and colleges, to 35 universities in the period between 1987 and 1991. To help pay for this new system, two policy initiatives were put in place. One, the
Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was introduced whereby Australian students were expected to pay part of their fees. Two, universities were allowed to recruit a limitless number of international students and fee-paying students for postgraduate courses. The effect of these changes was to put in place a competitive and market-orientated higher education system in addition to assuring a central role for universities in economic reform (Harmon 2003; Ryan et al. 2008). Although the subsequent large influx of university students increased participation among females and students from non-English speaking backgrounds, participation from low socio-economic groups remained static (Harmon 2003). This second wave of reform marked the beginning of a more corporatist and entrepreneurial approach to university management and governance (Harman 2003), an approach that was reinforced during the third wave of reforms from the mid-1990s to 2003.

2.6.2 The Shift to Corporatisation 1996-2003

From the mid-1990s, Government focussed its attention on reinforcing the marketisation, both internationally and domestically, of higher education. It also introduced stronger measures of central government control, including greater requirements for accountability from universities but with reduced public funding. The allocation of public funds to universities is closely tied to the compliance behaviours. With the expansion of the higher education system, public expenditure per student in universities declined by 27% in Australia between 1995 and 2004, with the corresponding rise of private funding (Marginson & van der Wende 2009).

Declines in government funding forced Australian universities to rely on international student income, making Australia a major student-importing country. International students comprised 19.3 percent of the student population in 2005 and exceeded the OECD average of 6.7 percent.
(Hazelkorn 2009), making Australia the third largest exporter of higher education services (Harmon 2005). Education was its third largest export sector replacing tourism as Australia's number one services export (IDP 2008; Verbik & Lasanowski (2007). However, the new sources of revenue were expensive to generate and much of the new money was absorbed by the marketing, recruitment and administrations costs in generating the incomes (Marginson 2001). Cost efficiency came from containing academic employment, resulting in rising student-staff ratios and casualisation of the academic workforce (Bexley, James & Arkoudis 2011; Marginson 2007; May 2011). With unrestricted numbers of international students and reductions in the full-time academic workforce, complaints about falling standards emerged and with them the rise of ‘quality assurance’ regimes.

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) was established in 2001, in part in response to Australia being a signatory to the international recognition of higher education qualifications (AUQA 2010). As an instrument of the Federal government, AUQA carried out two cycles of university audits over the period of 2002-2010 (AUQA). Audits were based on evaluating the institutional procedures for monitoring the achievement of each institution’s objectives and missions and examining how the university assured and enhanced quality across its activities (AUQA 2010).

In response to public funding reductions and greater demand for accountability, universities were encouraged to adopt the behaviours of corporations with a keen focus on the bottom line through the generation of revenues and reduction in costs. Australian universities embraced the new ideas on public sector management, especially in their application of competition and market mechanisms such that they became acknowledged leaders in the implementation of these directions (Harmon 2003). Reductions in public funding and the use of tied and negotiated grants to
gain universities’ compliance reached its zenith in 2003 with the introduction of the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003. It marked the advent of the fourth wave of reforms.

2.6.3 Centralised Management 2003-2007

In return for government funds, the HESA 2003 demanded that universities provide performance reports across all areas of their activities. This created unprecedented changes in institutional governance, labour relations and productivity and the nature of academic work (Ryan et al. 2008). University governing bodies were required to specify and approve their institutional mission statements and strategic plans as well as reduce their membership. Essentially the university governing bodies are required to govern in accordance with the Corporations Act of Australia, thus cementing their status as corporations and hence the corporatisation of universities that began in the third wave of reform.

Under the productivity incentives directives in HESA, the nature of academic work and culture was to change to include greater casualisation, higher workloads, larger classes, various teaching terms, new forms of teaching technologies and individual performance measurement (Bexley et al. 2011; Larkins 2011; May 2011; Ryan et al. 2008). In a comparative study on university governance, Bleiklie and Kogan (2007) found that Australia had pursued the ‘new public management’ policies more radically in comparison with other OECD countries. It was no surprise then that the culmination of these policies was increased tension between academic staff and executive management. This, in turn, contributed significantly to poor staff morale (Fredman & Doughney 2011; Meek 2002) and a lower research output.
Australia’s relative standing in research performance is being threatened by new entrants in the new century. Marginson (2007) warned that Singapore, Taiwan and China were strategically repositioning their leading universities’ research capabilities. It was feared that Australia would miss the 21st century opportunities and be left behind despite its extensive regional activity in teaching programs. Government reaction to a weakening research output was to introduce a system to measure and assess research performance, namely the introduction of a Research Quality Framework (RQF) in 2004. The RQF brought with it not only further scrutiny and expensive measurement exercises, but it was the beginning of a change in emphasis from teaching to the research function of universities.

The intensively competitive environment of the Australian higher education system had resulted in a greater degree of uniformity in the sector (Marginson 2009). While the competition directive was intended to encourage institutions to find their own particular market niche, it appeared that institutions were more inclined to imitate each other’s teaching and research profiles in order to comply with government directives. Moreover, in attempting to attract fee-paying and overseas students, many institutions had engaged in course duplication leading to programmatic convergence (Harman 2003). Codling and Meek (2006) observed a vocational drift in the more traditional universities to meet student choice, while newer universities exhibited an academic drift by employing more traditional university-trained staff and targeting students who normally would enrol in traditional universities. Thus, in terms of the type, range and structure of programs offered, Australian universities did not fall into distinct categories (Huisman, Meek & Wood 2007). While the Australian Government had been strong in its rhetoric in promoting diversity, it lacked specific policy initiatives to ensure institutional diversity in its higher education system (Codling & Meek 2006). However, the emphasis on competition and private income generation has produced a form of stratification in the
system based on the institutions’ resource positions and capacities (Marginson 2007). The election of a new Federal government with promises of an ‘Education Revolution’ marked the end of the fourth wave and the commencement a new era of reform.

2.6.4 New directions or more of the same? 2007 to the present

The ‘Education Revolution’ was a key political platform for the incoming Labor Government at the 2007 Australian Federal Election. Apart from promises to increase domestic student numbers and funding to universities, the visions appeared similar to those of the previous government in relation to quality assurance, world-class research and international rankings and competition. The Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System reform agenda was released by the Government in September 2009 (Australia Government 2009). The Government, recognising higher education as key to achieving its vision of a stronger nation to compete effectively in the 21st century, recommended wide-ranging reforms in higher education to transform the scale, capacity and quality of the nation’s universities. In particular, as reviewed in the following Chapter 3, the most recent wave of reforms has intensified the competition and regulation of higher education.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As universities have expanded their central purpose of creating and transmitting knowledge, the role of formally written mission statements has taken on a new significance. The mission statements are modelled on those of the corporate sector and include a wider range of functions, stakeholders and externalities. Mission statements are relatively new to universities, whose traditional missions have been assumed or prescribed by law. Research on the purpose and utility of mission statements for educational
institutions is mixed. While such research has been plentiful in the United States and the United Kingdom, there has been a paucity of similar research in Australia.

At the same time, universities are facing global challenges, financial considerations and government pressures. Global challenges have presented in the form of knowledge economy, international competition, technological advances and the spread of neoliberalism. In meeting these challenges and fulfilling their core missions, universities have been met with the following conflicting demands: competition between resources for teaching and research; pressures to compete as well as to collaborate; need to be locally relevant yet globally active; and complying with government directives while protecting institutional autonomy.

Australian Higher Education has been at the forefront in facing these challenges, reacting speedily to government policies and funding incentives. In the last two decades, from 1990 to 2011, the student numbers have grown from 485,066 to 1,221,008 (DEEWR), and Australia has the highest proportion (21.5 percent) of international students of any higher education system (Walter 2012; OECD 2011). Within this context, new Government policy directive requires universities to go further and extend their missions. The introduction of Mission-based Compacts provides the opportunity to address the lack of mission statement research in Australia and to use these documents to provide insight into how universities respond to government directive. The following Chapter outlines the current structure of Australian universities and discusses the key policy directive driving the current reform of higher education.
CHAPTER THREE: CURRENT STRUCTURE AND POLICY OF AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background to the legislative base for the establishment of Australian universities, a summary of the structure and characteristics of the Australian Higher Education System (AHES) and an overview of relevant government policy initiatives, including the 2009 policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System, and the Mission-based Compacts.

3.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Australian universities derive their name and authority from State Government statutes (Meek & Hayden 2005). Established as statutory institutions, individual universities have varying degrees of specificity in their legislated objects, or missions, depending on the legislative responsibility of the states. Differences are generally related to governance issues (Coaldrake, Stedman & Little 2003). The universities are authorised by law to award higher education qualifications across a range of fields and set standards for those qualifications. To be eligible for the title of University, universities have to satisfy specific criteria for teaching and learning in advanced knowledge and inquiry, and activities in scholarship and research.

In addition to matters set out in State enabling Acts, Australian universities are accountable to both levels of government, especially to the Federal
Government, the major provider of public funds. The Federal Government’s power to control funding has made it the most powerful controlling influence on universities (Rochford 2006). The Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003 (Australian Government 2009) sets out the conditions for eligibility to be a ‘higher education provider’ which is a requirement for receiving public funds and government subsidy to students. Thus, the Act, whilst not requiring universities to carry out tasks, essentially bars institutions from receiving government support if they do not comply with Federal Government guidelines (Rochford 2006).

3.3 AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: STRUCTURE AND GROUPINGS

The 39 universities that exist in Australia today are established by specific legislation of the State or Commonwealth governments. These include 37 public universities and two private, not-for-profit universities. They are located in all seven States and two Territories in Australia. All 39 universities are members of the umbrella organisation, Universities Australia, which is the peak body representing the university sector in the public interest, advancing and promoting the benefits of Australian universities and supporting universities in enhancing their performance (Universities Australia 2012).

Among the 39 universities, distinct and formal groupings have emerged to promote the mutual objectives of member universities. These include marketing advantages, practical benefits of collaboration, and the increased lobbying power that comes from being part of a group. The groupings represent member universities that have a similar approach and aspirations and the aim of formation of these groups is to accentuate these similarities (Universities Australia 2012).
Until recently, there were four main groups: Group of Eight (Go8); Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU); Australian Technology Network (ATN); and New Generation Universities (NGU). The last group, the New Generation Universities, was disbanded in 2011. The list of Australian universities by state and grouping is contained in Table 3.1. Further details on each of the university groupings are provided in Appendix A.

### Table 3.1
Australian universities by state and grouping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>Group of 8 (Go8)</th>
<th>Australian Technology Network (ATN)</th>
<th>Innovative Research Universities (IRU)</th>
<th>New Generation Universities (NGU post 1970 accredited universities now disbanded)</th>
<th>Non-aligned universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>University of Technology Sydney</td>
<td>University of Newcastle</td>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>University of Technology Sydney</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
<td>Southern Cross University</td>
<td>University of New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>Bond University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>University of Southern Queensland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>Flanders University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>University of Tasmania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>Victoria University</td>
<td>Swinburne University of Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Catholic University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Universities Australia website (2012)

These formal groupings tend to reflect institutional age or status and/or shared purpose. A summary of each of the three active groups is as follows.
Group of Eight (Go8)

The Group of Eight markets itself as the group of ‘Australia’s Leading Universities’ in relation to their research outputs and comprehensiveness and professional education. The eight universities are among the most research intensive, oldest and elite universities in Australia. Together they form a powerful bloc in lobbying government for increased support and developing their own standards framework. Their aim is to enhance member contribution to the nation’s social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing and prosperity; generation and preservation of knowledge; global engagement; and improved access for Australian students (Go8 2012).

Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU)

The seven IRU universities were all established in the 1960s and 1970s as the ‘new’ research universities. The members share a common desire to create opportunities for students and stakeholders through collaborations and partnerships. The IRU aims to establish research concentrations and investment across universities, including: benchmarking and collaborating in professional development initiatives; e-learning and new information and communications technology; collaborative course delivery and work-integrated learning; income generation; and industrial issues (IRU 2012).

Australian Technology Network (ATN)

The Australian Technology Network is a coalition of five Australian universities with a common background as technical colleges before becoming accredited universities. Their focus is on the practical application of tertiary studies and research that are closely aligned to the needs of industry and the wider society through solution-based research and strategic partnership with industries and communities (ATN 2012).
3.3.1 Characteristics of Australian Universities

In addition to the above groupings of universities, individual universities display both common and unique characteristics. Although institutional control is used as differentiating characteristics in some countries, in Australia, all but two of the 39 universities are public universities; the remaining two are private, not-for-profit institutions. The following comparisons between universities are based on: longevity, size of student enrolments, locations, range of disciplines, and research strengths.

*Longevity*

Longevity is an indicator of reputation and resources, as the oldest universities commonly have the highest status. Members of the Go8 are the oldest universities and the oldest among them are the universities of Sydney and Melbourne. The list of Australian universities and their establishment dates are given below. An increase of over 100 percent in the number of universities since 1985 is indicative of government policies aimed at massifying higher education.

**1851 – 1900 (4 universities)**

- 1851 University of Sydney
- 1853 University of Melbourne
- 1874 University of Adelaide
- 1890 University of Tasmania

**1900 – 1950 (4 universities)**

- 1909 University of Queensland
- 1911 University of Western Australia
- 1946 Australian National University
- 1949 University of New South Wales
1950 – 1985 (11 universities)

1954  University of New England
1958  Monash University
1964  Macquarie University
1965  La Trobe University
1965  University of Newcastle
1966  Flinders University
1970  James Cook University
1971  Griffith University
1973  Murdoch University
1974  Deakin University
1975  University of Wollongong

Post 1985 (20 universities)

1987  Curtin University of Technology
1988  Charles Darwin University
     Queensland University of Technology
     University of Technology Sydney
1989  Bond University
     University of Western Sydney
1990  Charles Sturt University
     University of Canberra
     University of Notre Dame
1991  Australian Catholic University
     Edith Cowen University
     University of South Australia
1992  Central Queensland University
     RMIT University
     Swinburne University of Technology
     University of Southern Queensland
Size of Student Loads

Australian universities vary widely in the size of their student enrolments. The following Figure (3.1) illustrates the total effective full-time student loads by university based on Australian Government student statistics (DEEWR 2013).

Figure 3.1
Total Effective Full-Time Student Load By University in 2011

Source: uCube (DEEWR 2012)

The size of student loads ranges from 4,559 at Charles Darwin University to 49,540 at Monash University. The average student load in 2011 was 21,432 and the median was 19,567. Figure 3.2 illustrates the number of Australian universities with the specific range of student loads.
Geographical Diversity

In terms of the geographic locations of campuses, universities exhibit a fair degree of diversity. As highlighted in Table 3.2, a large number of the universities had multiple campuses, either within their home state, in other Australian states, or at international offshore locations.
### Table 3.2
Campus location by university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACU</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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Source: Universities’ websites 2012

While a majority (22) of the universities confine their campuses to their home state, 10 universities have international campuses, and 7 universities have interstate campuses.

**Range of Disciplines and Program Diversity**

Based on the broad field of education, Australian universities do not exhibit a significant level of diversity. In 2011, most universities offered a full range of disciplines except for Food Hospitality and Personal Services, as depicted in Table 3.3.
Table 3.3
Field of Education with corresponding number of universities in 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Natural and Physical Sciences</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Engineering and Related Technologies</td>
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<td>Food Hospitality and Personal Services</td>
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</table>

Source: based on uCube (2012)

Program diversity
While all Australian universities offer a broad range of disciplines, there are professional programs such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Pharmacy, Architecture, Engineering, Nursing and Law which are only offered by a limited number of universities. For example, there are 20 medical schools in Australia, three of which were postgraduate (Melbourne, Macquarie and Wollongong), seven in New South Wales, three in Victoria, four in Queensland, two each in Western Australia and South Australia, and one each in ACT and Tasmania. Similarly there are 10 dental schools, three each in New South Wales and Queensland, two in Victoria, and one each in Western Australia and South Australia. Again, there are 5 veterinary schools, two each in New South Wales and Queensland, and one in Victoria.

Research Strengths
The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) presents a comprehensive assessment by discipline of the quality of research activity conducted in

Three of the 39 universities had all 22 Fields of Research assessed. Two of these three universities had 21 Fields of Research assessed to have performance above world-standard (ERA 2012). Melbourne, Sydney, UQ, and ANU were found to stand out as having the more comprehensive range of research strengths. This incidentally correlated with the league table of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) which is primarily based on research performance. This further demonstrates that the older and better resourced universities have greater breadth and quality in their research.

The share of Australian universities in the World’s top 100 research universities has improved from 2% in 2006 and 2007, to 3% in 2008, 2009 and 2010, 4% in 2011, and most recently to 5% in 2012 (ARWU 2012). The number of Australian universities in the top 500 ranking has also increased from thirteen (13) in 2006 to nineteen (19) in 2011 and 2012. In 2012, there were five Australian universities in the top 100 list in the Academic Ranking of World Universities - Melbourne, ANU, UQ, Sydney, and WA (ARWU 2012).
3.4 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

This section provides a background on the Government’s ‘Education Revolution’ manifesto, the ensuing Bradley Review of Higher Education and the subsequent policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*, and Mission-based Compacts, as well as the establishment of Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

3.4.1 ‘Education Revolution’ and Bradley Review

‘Education Revolution’ was a key political platform for the incoming Labor Government at the 2007 Australian Federal Election, as part of its Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (DEEWR 2009). In March 2008, the newly elected government initiated an extensive review, known as the Bradley Review, to determine the future direction of the Australian higher education system. The Bradley Review, named after its chair, Professor Denise Bradley, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Australia, found that Australia’s higher education system was underperforming. The Review highlighted a number of areas in which Australian universities required improvement, such as in the attainment levels and graduate outcomes in producing a highly skilled workforce, and in the participation of low socio-economic and regional populations (Bradley et al. 2008). Australia was falling behind other OECD countries both in performance and in investment in higher education. The Review also found that the Australian higher education system lacked adequate competition and proper regulation. It was feared that Australia might be left behind in the global economy in the 21st century. The Review made 46 recommendations designed to reshape the higher education system to position Australia to compete effectively in the 21st century. Two major
changes to the higher education system emanated from the Review: the policy directive *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* that led to the introduction of Mission-based Compacts; and the establishment of the regulatory body, the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA).

3.4.2 *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System – a Policy Directive*

In response to the findings of the Bradley Review (Bradley et al. 2008), the Australian Government released the *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* reform agenda in September 2009 (DEEWR 2009). In the policy document, the Government acknowledges that higher education is key to achieving Australia’s vision of a stronger nation to compete effectively in the competitive and globalised environment. To this end, the Government began implementing sweeping reforms in higher education to transform the scale, capacity and quality of the nation’s universities to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* outlines the Australian Government’s direct response to the three major challenges of the 21st century: the knowledge economy; the technology revolution; and global competition. First, to address the rise of the knowledge economy, the Government’s goals for Australian universities are: to improve access and participation; produce graduates at international standard with the knowledge and skills for full participation in society and the economy; and strengthen the nation’s research and innovation capabilities to contribute to the country’s international standing. Second, in recognition of the technological revolution, Australian universities are to be transformed into 21st century technology-rich environments and deliver a sustainable future through teaching and research. Finally, in response to
intensified global competition, the Government adopts a more marketised model, moving from direct funding to a model based on student demand without Government-imposed caps on student numbers.

In exchange for Government funding, universities were required to enter into Mission-based Compacts, achieve agreed performance targets and articulate goals on how their mission contributes to the Government’s vision for higher education. Specifically, universities had to observe the Principles of Commonwealth Funding Support: improving access and equity; conducting world-class teaching and research; contributing to economic and social needs of regional, state, national and international communities; as well as maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector. In spite of these generic requirements, the government further desired that Australian higher education be differentiated and diverse with institutions having distinctive missions (Australian Government 2009).

The *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* policy directive departs from previous government policy in three important ways: quality assurance measures for teaching; research measurement; and a new funding model. First, in relation to quality assurance, the current government replaced AUQA with the more powerful Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in 2010 to provide an independent assessment of institutional teaching and learning performance (DEEWR 2011). Under AUQA, the approach to teaching quality had been regarded in terms of ‘fitness for purpose’, allowing individual institutions to define their purpose in terms of their mission and objectives and to demonstrate ‘quality’ through achievement of their objectives (Gallagher 2010). Thus quality assurance operated largely around internal reference points, potentially allowing for institutional diversity. In contrast, the current concept of standards places emphasis on agreed, external points of reference in measuring and improving quality (DEEWR 2011). This change in approach by TEQSA
sets a new framework of measuring quality and setting standards against minimum benchmarks. Critics of this standards-based approach view it as a constraint on institutional diversity, with the consequential reduction of learner choices and lessening of competitive pressure to innovate, leading to overall mediocrity of the higher education system (Gallagher 2010a).

Second, the previous government’s research measurement exercise, RQF, was replaced with a similar but stronger exercise, the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) in which university research output is measured and ranked in order to award performance-based funding for research. The advent of ERA has seen universities focus on research output and international rankings such as the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities (SJT) and the Times QS World University Ranking. As all universities invest in improving their research profiles, there is a risk of them forsaking even further institutional diversity as they compete for a finite pool of resources by imitating the performance of more successful institutions. A further impact of ERA has been not only to place additional pressure on academic staff but to clearly divide them into research intensive and teaching intensive groupings (Larkins 2011). Recent surveys by Bexley et al. (2011) and Fredman and Doughney (2011) found high levels of dissatisfaction among Australian academic staff, especially with institutional leadership and management of their universities.

Third, the funding to universities was changed to a consumption model based on student demand, whereby universities and other recognised providers are free to enrol as many eligible domestic students as they wish in eligible courses and will receive government funding for these students. This shift in funding model has intensified competition between universities, strained university resources and in many cases lowered the entry scores for commencing students.
While the Government’s *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* agenda (Australian Government 2009) may have laudable aims, the Government had yet to develop a clear strategy on how to achieve the aspirational target of having 40 percent of 25 to 34 year olds with a qualification at bachelor or above level by 2025. Gallagher (2010b) questions the Government’s plan to meet the increasing demand within the existing capacity of universities. Moreover, the over-reliance on market forces driven by student demand may also induce growth in elite and metropolitan universities at the expense of regional and less popular institutions. Students from low SES backgrounds may also have difficulty in accessing the prestigious universities and popular programs. Low SES students are found to be most under-represented in the nation’s prestigious Group of Eight universities (Phillimore & Koshy 2010).

### 3.4.3 Mission-based Compacts

The use of mission-based compacts was first signalled by the then Australian Labor Opposition in 2006 in its White Paper: *Australia’s Universities: Building our Future in the World* (Macklin 2006). This was subsequently confirmed in the 2008 budget paper when the Australian Labor Government announced the introduction of a new funding framework using mission-based compacts (Australian Government Budget 2008-09). The compacts were to be developed collaboratively with universities in recognition of their individual missions and designed to facilitate diversity. The intention was to give universities greater operating autonomy to pursue their own distinctive mission based on their strengths. Such an approach was supposed to give universities the freedom to frame their strategies in a competitive global environment while safeguarding the public benefits produced by the universities. Despite the emphasis on differences among universities in the initial Compact discussions, the arrival of the policy
directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*, provided a clear message of what the government wanted from all its universities.

The Mission-based Compacts came in two phases: the 2009 Interim Agreements and the final 2011–2013 Mission-based Compacts. The Interim Agreements, signed between universities and Australian Government at the end of 2009, were transitional arrangements as a prelude to the 2011-2013 final Mission-based Compacts, and provided a basic level of funding that covered only the calendar year of 2010. The final Mission-based Compacts, on the other hand, were three-year agreements and included details of funding and performance targets and goals on how each university’s mission would contribute to the Government’s vision for higher education.

The template for the Mission-based Compacts, developed by the Government (DEEWR 2009) contained seven Principles of Commonwealth Funding Support along with a statement about the Government’s ambitions for higher education, aimed at addressing the challenges of the 21st century. The Government acknowledges that universities are vital to the building of a stronger and fairer Australia and in boosting Australia’s productivity and high skilled workforce. To this end, universities should produce graduates with the knowledge, skills and understanding for full participation in society and the economy; provide educational opportunities for people from all backgrounds; provide students with a stimulating and rewarding learning experience; generate and disseminate new knowledge; and be amongst the leading OECD countries in terms of participation and performance.

The seven principles under which Commonwealth funding for universities would be provided strongly reflect the themes in the policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*. The principles include: improving equity and access; conducting world-class teaching and learning
to advance the international standing of Australian education; conducting world class research and research training to advance knowledge and Australia’s international standing; being responsive to the economic and social needs of the community, region, state, nation and the international community; maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector; and upholding academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The mission-based compact template required each university to state its mission, setting out its values and aspirations, its purpose and operation in serving students, staff and key stakeholders. The compacts focussed on two main areas: teaching and learning; and research, research training and innovation.

In Teaching and Learning, the Government required universities to provide strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, student engagement and outcomes, and equity, access and participation. The Government was committed to the development of world class higher education infrastructure with contemporary, technology rich campus environments that would act as a positive influence on staff and student performance and satisfaction. Universities were encouraged to invest in e-learning and other information and communications technologies (ICT).

The Government encouraged excellence in research performance and the strengthening of research capability. It required universities to provide strategies on increasing the number of research groups performing at world class level, and on promoting collaboration between researchers within Australia and internationally. For innovation, the Government required universities to provide strategies to improve research incomes, contracts and consultancies; collaboration with international and local industries; patents and spin-offs.
As part of the *Transforming Australian Higher Education System* agenda to strengthen the regulation of higher education, the Government replaced the previous Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) with the more powerful Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in 2010. The Agency was to provide an independent assessment of institutional teaching and learning performance (DEEWR 2011).

The teaching and learning performance indicators currently used in Australian higher education are measured via the self-reporting Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) which measures the student response to good teaching; generic skills; appropriateness of assessment; appropriateness of workload; clarity of goals and standards; and overall student satisfaction. However, there are criticisms of such surveys (DEEWR 2011). For example, the survey does not provide information on student attainment nor the appropriateness of learning objectives. In addition to the CEQ, the Graduate Destination Survey measures graduates’ destinations four months after completing their courses. The survey provides information on the type of employment, salary level, and destinations of graduates, including details on further study arrangements (Harman 2003).

Following in the footsteps of the United Kingdom’s external examiners’ system, there is a growing interest in Australia of having a more systematic process of peer review and external assessment of learning standards (DEEWR 2011). Cognisant of the tensions between the Government’s desire for a diverse system and the need for comparability and common points of reference, TEQSA sets out the following principles in its approach to the national teaching quality and standards. TEQSA promises to recognise the diversity of institutions and programs; respect the autonomy of institutions; and accommodate the diversity of stakeholders. TEQSA
maintains that while institutional standards for teaching and learning may differ, it expects all institutions to meet or surpass the minimum national standards.

In summary, Australian universities have undergone considerable transformations in the last four decades: the Australian higher education system has transitioned from elite to mass education, from a binary to a unified national system, and from a publicly funded system to one which is market-oriented, competitive and regulated. The system has seen the intensification of global competition, a decline in public funding, and the corporatisation of university management. Australian universities are undergoing yet another transformation in response to government policies and the challenges of the 21st century. Universities are expected to generate not only intellectual but also economic and social capital and contribute to the international standing of the nation. In order to gain compliance from universities in accepting change, the Government has tied its funding to universities to their articulation of missions through Mission-based Compacts.

3.5 SUMMARY

The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of mission statements in corporate strategic planning and their increasing significance for universities as they become more corporatised. This Chapter has focussed on the Australian higher education system to show that, although the purpose and function of each university is enshrined in State law, this is no longer sufficient. The role of the Commonwealth Government in funding universities has allowed it to have much greater control over them and what they do. The emphasis on university mission is reinforced in the Government’s policy directive, Transforming Australian Higher Education System (Australian Government 2009), and through its use of Mission-
based Compacts (DEEWR 2009) to grant funding to universities. The Chapter further provides an overview of the history and structure of Australian universities as a platform from which to assess mission statements and mission-related documents.

While the literature provides a mixed picture of the use of mission statements in universities, it nonetheless demonstrates that mission documents represent a useful source of information in understanding the direction of universities. The following Chapter Four explains how mission statements and mission-related documents have been used to carry out research into the extent to which Australian universities have complied with the Government directive to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHOD

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research aims and questions and discusses the dominant methodology, content analysis, and the theoretic framework. This is followed by specific details on data sources, coding units and processes, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the validity, reliability, authenticity and limitations of the study.

The subjects of the study were the Australian Government policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System, the Australian universities’ mission-related statements and Mission-based Compacts. As all documents were publically available, ethics approvals were not required for this research. The researcher had striven for honesty, integrity, and objectivity in the conduct of this research.

4.2 Research Aim and Research Questions

This research is motivated by the lack of research on Australian universities’ mission-related statements and documents. The research is made more pertinent as the Australian Government embarked on wide-ranging reforms as part of the Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System agenda (Australian Government 2009). These reforms were designed to address the global challenges of the new century and to position the Australian higher education system to compete globally in the 21st century. Thus the primary aim of the research is to examine the mission-related statements and documents of Australian universities to assess their compliance with the

**Research Question**

The primary research question of the study is:

*To what extent do the mission-related documents of Australian universities reflect the Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System policy directive (Australian Government 2009)?*

Associated with this research question are three specific sub-questions:

1. To what extent do universities articulate a formal mission statement?
   
   1.1. How many universities have a formally labeled *mission statement*?
   
   1.2. To what extent do university mission-related statements exhibit David’s (2007) nine mission components (*customers, products or services, markets, technology, sustainability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees*)?

2. To what extent does the content of university *mission-related documents* reflect the government policy directive through references to the following commitments?
   
   2.1. improving equity and access
   
   2.2. quality in teaching and learning
2.3. excellence in research

2.4. maintaining a sustainable higher education sector

2.5. contributing to Australia’s international standing

2.6. contributing to the economy

2.7. responding to the social needs of the community

2.8. upholding academic freedom

3. To what extent do university mission-related documents reflect a diversity of institutional missions?

4.3 Content Analysis

The focus of this dissertation is the analysis of university mission-related statements and documents. As such the primary method employed is content analysis as this is the most commonly used method for such work (Newsom & Hayes 1990; Davies & Glaister 1996; Stober 1997; Sidhu 2003; Smith et al 2002; Morphew & Hartley 2006; Hegeman, Davies & Banning 2007; James & Huisman 2009). The study also uses SPSS frequency analysis to analyse the data obtained from the content analysis.

Content analysis does not fit easily into the usual research paradigm typologies as it contains elements of both positivist and interpretist methods. Whilst it is concerned with words, or other visual-audio measurement, content analysis also makes interpretations of words or groupings of words to allocate them to specific criteria for analysis.

Content analysis is a research approach based on the systematic analysis of written words of selected textual materials (Krippendorff 1980). The
analysis can be used to evaluate and classify key ideas from a variety of sources such as documents, reports, and written communications, in newspapers, books, and websites (Stemler 2001). Content analysis can range from simple coding of words or phrases according to coding scheme, to elaborate and complicated computer-aided analyses of content. The central idea is that many of the words and phrases in the text can be classified and distilled into fewer numbers of content categories with similar or related meanings in order to identify and quantify specific ideas.

Content analysis can be based on inclusions as well as omissions of the studied components. It is a form of secondary data analysis and is often a starting point for social science research. The results of content analysis allow researchers to identify specific ideas, concepts, patterns, and trends of ideas in a specific context. Some of the most common areas of research employing content analysis include corporate, social, ethical and environmental reporting (Guthrie & Abeysekera 2006), and mission statements studies (Stemler & Bebell 1998; Stemler 2001). The current study is confined to the content analysis of the text of mission statements and mission-related documents.

Content analysis has the advantage of systematically analysing a vast amount of text data in a cost-effective and unobtrusive manner. It allows for both qualitative and quantitative analyses as well as statistical testing of hypotheses. The disadvantage of using content analysis is that the method only applies on manifest text, that is, examining the words or texts themselves, not the latent or underlying meaning of the words. The most common method in content analysis is word or component frequency count based on coding and categorisation of data (Stemler 2001).

There are two approaches to coding: emergent and a priori coding. Emergent coding involves developing categories based on preliminary
analysis of data. The classification is derived inductively from interpretive content analysis and open coding of the test documents. In *a priori* coding, the categories are developed prior to the analysis based on literature, theory or an established model (Elo & Kynga 2008).

There are two techniques used in content analysis: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative content analysis has the benefit of being able to assign a unit of text to more than one category simultaneously to enable the identification of significant ideas involving two or more categories. This is different to quantitative content analysis, in which categories must be mutually exclusive (Weber 1990). Qualitative analysis has the advantage of providing a rich and useful description of the settings and environment (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). This is the method employed in this study in examining the mission-related statements and documents of Australian universities.

Defining the units of analysis and coding criteria are essential in content analysis (Guthrie & Abeysekera 2006). Units of analysis or recording units (Stemler 2001) refer to the basic units of text to be classified in the content analysis. In qualitative content analysis, individual specific ideas are usually used as the unit for analysis. As such, a unit of text can be expressed in a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph. It represents a specific idea that can be assigned to a code, or a category in the classification (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009).

In mission statement research, various kinds of units of analysis have been used and named: from being termed components (David 2007; Newsom & Hayes 1990; Campbell 1992; Bart 1997; Bart & Baetz 1998; Smith et al 2002; Hegeman et al 2007); themes (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009); elements (Stemler & Bebell 1998; Morphew & Hartley 2006; James & Huismman 2009); to keywords (Davies & Glaister 1996; Stober 1997). For the analysis of the mission *statements* in the present study, the term ‘component’ was
used in line with David’s (2007) mission components. However, for the analysis of the mission-related documents, the term ‘theme’ was used in relation to the Government policy directive and the challenges of the 21st century.

In summary, the study employed qualitative content analysis using *a priori* coding to examine the mission statements and mission-related documents of Australian universities. *A priori* coding based on the government policy directive was used in order to answer the research question - to what extent do Australian university mission-related documents reflect the *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* Government policy directive?

### 4.4 Theoretical Framework

Mission statements are a useful and convenient research focus for assessing the direction and purpose of an organisation, as mission statements are regarded as the most visible and public part of institutional strategic plans (Mrozinski 2010). The finite and precise nature and accessibility of the statements facilitate research using content analysis in the form of coding and categorisation according to themes and components (Stemler 2001).

Most research on mission statements employs content analysis (Smith, Heady, Carson, & Carson 2002). The majority of mission statement research involved the analysis of key terms, components, themes or elements (Newsom & Hayes 1990; Davies & Glaister 1996; Stober 1997; Sidhu 2003; Morphew & Hartley 2006; Hegeman, Davies & Banning 2007; James & Huisman 2009). It is used to identify the presence and absence of specific themes or components (Newsom and Hayes 1990; Davies and Glaister 1996; Stober 1997); compare frequencies of mission elements (Stemler & Bebell 1998; Morphew & Hartley 2006; James & Huisman 2009); or interpret and analyse specific messages (Hegeman, Davies &
Banning 2007). To illustrate, James and Huisman (2009) examined the mission statements of the higher education institutions in Wales using content analysis based on the assumption that universities’ missions were shaped by external drivers such as market, government and funding policies. The authors identified the mission elements of the Welsh higher education institutions and compared them with the mission elements identified from the policy and funding documents to look for the degree of alignment between the three sets of missions.

The present study consists of two parts: the analysis of the mission statements and the analysis of the mission-related documents. The first part is concerned with the analysis the formally labeled mission statements and, in the absence of a formal mission statement, the analysis of university mission-related statements. Besides examining the presence or absence of a mission statement, the statements were analysed for their inclusion of David’s (2007) nine mission components. The mission components were: customers, products or services, markets, technology, sustainability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees. These mission components were adapted to the Australian university context in the following way.

The primary customers of the universities are students. The main products or services of the universities are teaching and research. Markets refer to the geographic areas where the university wishes to compete and seek students. Technology refers primarily to the digital technology used in teaching and research. Sustainability relates to the university’s commitment to financial, environmental and workforce sustainability. Philosophy refers to the basic beliefs, values, aspirations, and ethical priorities of the universities particularly in their social responsibilities. While self-concept in the business sector implies the distinctive competence of the organisation and how it is different or better than competitors, literature has revealed that
university mission statements are generally weak in defining the university’s strategic position (Davies & Glaister 1996). Hence any distinctiveness in identity will be considered as a form of self-concept. Concern for public image refers to the university’s contribution to community and its responsiveness to social, community, and environmental concerns. Concern for employees defines how the university values the importance of the staff and nurtures them as a valuable asset.

The second part of the study involves the analysis of the mission-related documents, the Interim Agreements and the Mission-based Compacts, for the presence or absence of the themes derived from the government policy directive Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System (Australian Government 2009). Based on the global challenges to higher education in the 21st century outlined in the literature and the themes in the Australian Government policy directive, the mission-related documents were examined for the inclusion of these integrated themes. The global challenges relate to the knowledge economy, globalisation and competition, and technological advances. The themes relate to improving equity and access; high quality teaching and excellent research; maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy and social needs of the community; and commitment to uphold the academic freedom and values.

4.5 Content analysis process

The following section addresses the important factors essential in content analysis. These factors are based on Krippendorff’s (1980) inferential and constructive logic in understanding and reducing complexity in content analysis (Stemler 2001). The factors include data sources, location of the data, unit of analysis, coding process, and data analysis.
Data sources

Preliminary examination found that not all Australian universities had a formally labelled *mission statement*. A similar situation in UK led researchers to delve deeper into the strategic and corporate plans to gain a better insight into the universities (Smith et al. 1993). Likewise, the limited number of universities with a formally labeled mission statement necessitated extending the data collection to include other mission-related documents such as the strategic plans of universities.

University mission statements and their alternatives were obtained from the websites of Australia’s 39 universities. Strategic plans were the most common document used to locate mission statements (Smith Scott & MacKay 1993; Westerhuis 2006). As highlighted in Chapter 2, mission statements have different titles (David 1989, 2007; Klemm et al. 1991; Davies & Glaister 1996; Baetz & Bart 1996) since there has been no universally accepted definition of mission statements. Mission statements have been variously entitled as: ‘corporate statement’, ‘aims and values’, ‘purpose’, ‘principles’, ‘objectives’, ‘goals’ and ‘responsibilities and obligations’ (Klemm et al. 1991); ‘creed statement’, ‘statement of purpose’, ‘statement of philosophy’, ‘statement of beliefs’, ‘statement of business principles’, ‘statement defining the business’, ‘long-term vision’ (David 1989 & 2007); and ‘values and/or beliefs’ (Baetz & Bart 1996). For the purpose of this study, all of the above statements were included in addition to the formally labelled ‘mission statement’. However, the titles of these statements were noted and recorded to distinguish if they were formally labeled as mission statement or otherwise.

The Mission-based Compacts came in two stages: the 2009 *Interim Agreements* and the final 2011–2013 *Mission-based Compacts*. The *Interim Agreements*, signed between universities and Australian Government at end of 2009, were transitional arrangements and provided a basic level of
funding for 2010. The final Mission-based Compacts were three-year agreements and included details of funding and performance targets. The two-phase approach by Government provides an opportunity to examine the changes to the Mission-based Compacts documents over time between 2009 and 2011. The signed 2009 Interim Agreements and 2011-2013 final Mission-based Compacts were obtained respectively from the Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR 2010) and Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISR 2012) websites.

Location of mission statements and mission-related documents
The mission statements and mission-related statements were sourced from individual universities' websites, similarly to the method described by Hegeman et al (2007). As mentioned above, the key government documents, the policy directive, the Interim Agreements and the Mission-based Compacts were obtained from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR 2010) and Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISR 2012) websites respectively.

The university website addresses (URL) were obtained from the website of Universities Australia, the peak body representing the university sector. Each university homepage was drilled down to locate the mission statements and strategic plans. They were usually found in the section ‘about the university’. For example, the mission of the University of Adelaide was found in the following website location:

University of Adelaide > About the University > Mission, Vision & Values

Where the mission statements were not found, efforts were made in locating the statement of purpose, intent, vision or other alternative statements and documents such as strategic plans or annual report as identified in the
literature review. For example, the Australian National University was found to have no mission statement on its website, but the statement of purpose was found to be embedded in the strategic plan available on the webpage under ‘About ANU’

http://info.anu.edu.au/ovc/assets/Executive/Files/ANU_by_2010.pdf, where ‘the distinctive nature and purpose of ANU’ was located.

The presence or absence of a formally labelled ‘mission statement’ was recorded, as was its location on the website. In the absence of a formally labelled ‘mission statement’, the alternative statement and its title was also recorded. All data were captured in Word or Adobe Acrobat file with date of access and URL recorded.

The Interim agreements of the universities were downloaded from the website of DEEWR at

www.deewr.gov.au/.../Policy/Pages/InterimAgreements.aspx. The Interim agreements made frequent mention of the university’s strategic plans which were also downloaded from universities own websites. The final 2011-13 compacts were released in June 2012. They were downloaded from the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education website at


Data collection

Whilst the researcher has been collecting the universities’ mission-related statements and strategic plans from the universities’ websites between December 2008 and June 2011, only the June 2011 statements and strategic documents were used for the analysis.
The Interim agreements were downloaded in April 2010 and the final 2011-13 Mission-based Compacts were downloaded immediately after they were publicly released on the Government Department website in June 2012.

Unit of Analysis
The units of analysis were the specific responses identified from the universities’ mission statements and mission-related documents. To examine the applicability of David’s (2007) mission components, the responses from the mission statements were grouped under these mission components to facilitate categorisation and identification.

In addition, to examine if the universities mission-related documents reflect the Australian Government’s policy, the responses from the mission-related documents were grouped under specific themes identified from the policy directive Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System document. These themes are based on the Principles of Commonwealth Funding Support and include: improving equity and access; excellence in teaching and learning; commitment to excellence in research; commitment to maintaining a sustainable higher education sector; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy; responsiveness to the social needs of the community; and commitment to upholding the academic freedom and values. This is outlined in the coding scheme below.

Coding process
The study employed a priori coding for the content analysis of the universities’ mission statements and mission-related documents. The coding consists of two parts: the university mission statements and the mission-related documents. The first part involved the coding of the statements using David’s (2007) nine mission components as the codes to examine the applicability of these mission components to the mission statements of
Australian universities. The second part involved identifying the responses from the universities which were grouped under the specific themes identified from the policy directive *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*. This is illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes based on Australian Government Policy Directive</th>
<th>Specific texts identified from <em>Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improve access and equity</td>
<td>• educational opportunity for all, especially for those students from groups under-represented in higher education;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improve access and outcomes for students from low socio economic backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• student income support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increase scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve attainment, access and engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access, Equity and Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improving Tertiary Pathways: building stronger connectivity between the higher education and vocational education and training sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outreach partnership programs with low SES school and training providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>• high-quality educational experiences and student outcomes - world-class teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student-centered and choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student Engagement - positive student experience - improving quality of teaching, learning, lower student to staff ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• boost retention, progress and completion rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• flexibility in teaching - new models of delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainability</td>
<td>• Sustainable Higher Education System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustainable investment for research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration - promote collaboration, including collaboration between researchers within Australia and internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve institutional infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmental sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workforce sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• contribution to Australia’s international standing</td>
<td>• world class tertiary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• globally competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sustain the international education export industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• top group of OECD countries in terms of participation and performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribution to Australia’s economy</td>
<td>• Contribute to Australia’s economic and social prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A stronger Australia with a highly skilled workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• enlarge Australia’s economic potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improve Australia’s economic and social progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribution to the social needs of the community</td>
<td>• A fairer Australia – equitable access to diverse tertiary education sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• responsive to the specific needs of regional Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• academic freedom and values</td>
<td>• Academic freedom and institutional autonomy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A pilot study was conducted on a small sample of the documents in consultation with the supervisor to test the validity of the categories and
coding scheme. The mission statements and mission-related document texts were analysed with repeated reading and keyword search, and the responses categorised according to the coding scheme. The presence or absence of the components and responses under the relevant themes were recorded. The data were entered into a spread sheet and SPSS data for frequency analysis.

Data Analysis
The process for obtaining results to answer each of the three research questions was as follows.

1. *To what extent do universities articulate a formal mission statement?*
   To answer this question, the presence or absence of a formally labelled ‘mission statement’ as well as the alternative statement and its title were recorded. To examine the applicability of David’s (2007) mission components, the statements were examined for the inclusion of students, teaching and research, geographic markets, technology, sustainability, university philosophy, self-concept, contribution to community, and concern for employees.

2. *To what extent does the content of university mission-related document reflect government policy directive?*
   To answer this research question, the responses identified from the mission-related documents were grouped under the specific themes identified in *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*. The themes relate to equity and access; quality in teaching and excellence in research; contribution to the economy; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the social needs of the community; commitment to maintaining a sustainable higher education sector; and commitment to upholding the academic freedom and values.
3. To what extent do university mission-related documents reflect a diversity of institutional missions?

To answer this question, the content of the two mission-based documents were qualitatively analysed by repeated reading to identify the distinguishing features, distinctive competence or strategic position of the universities. These were compared with statistics and information on: the size of student enrolments, programs and disciplines offered, geographic location, and research strengths as described in Chapter 3.

4.6 Validity and reliability

Qualitative content analysis has different criteria of validity and reliability to those used in quantitative analysis. As an interpretive method, it differs from the quantitative approach in its basic assumptions, approach and research processes. The conventional criteria are therefore not appropriate for judging its research results (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in assessing qualitative studies. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest alternative ways to evaluate qualitative data and findings to increase their robustness, such as representativeness of case selection, elimination of bias in researchers, and checking out negative cases. Bryman and Bell (2007) propose the trustworthiness criteria, which include credibility that is enhanced by validation, triangulation and relevance to demonstrate the importance of the topic and its contribution to the literature and knowledge of the relevant area. The following sections address the sampling validity, authenticity, reliability and creditability criteria of the study.

Sampling validity

As the number of Australian universities is under 50, the census approach of using the whole population was employed (Saunders et al. 2007).
Therefore, to ensure the robustness of the study, all 39 Australian universities that are members of Universities Australia were included to ensure representativeness of samples and elimination of sampling bias (Miles & Huberman 1994).

**Authenticity, reliability and credibility**
While complete objectivity was impossible, the researcher attempted to overcome any subjectivity by being transparent and impartial. The researcher addressed the dependability issues by making available a complete set of records of research raw data for audit purposes and providing comprehensive explanation and balanced viewpoints. The researcher who works in and has developed a good understanding of the higher education environment, attempts to bring ontological as well as educative authenticity to the study (Mathison 1988: Creswell & Miller 2000: Patton 2001). The coding and analysis were checked and validated by the researcher’s supervisor who has extensive research and working experience in the Australian higher education sector.

In addressing the credibility, competence, and perceived trustworthiness of the qualitative researcher, Patton (2003) stresses the importance of the search for negative cases. To this end, any negative cases were followed up exhaustively.

**Relevance**
The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted the importance of universities’ missions and mission statements. Furthermore, the new government policy directive presents an opportunity to examine the missions of Australian universities in their response to the challenges of the 21st century, as reflected in the Government’s agenda for transforming Australian higher education system. To this end, the research has
considerable relevance to universities, government policy makers and the Australian public.

4.7 Limitations

There are four limitations of this study. First, the lack of consistency between mission-related statements and mission-related documents made exact comparisons difficult. Second, the content analysis only applied to manifest text, that is, the words or texts themselves not the latent or underlying meaning of the words. Third, the study is confined to Australian universities and the policy directive seen from the Australian Government perspectives. Fourth, as the choice of variables and methodology used in examining university mission diversity can be extensive, the selection of appropriate analytical methodology can affect the interpretation of results as highlighted by Huisman (2000). Nevertheless, the researcher has provided sufficient data, descriptions and findings to enable others to apply the study to different settings and contexts.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in Chapters Two and Three, the Australian Government designed a policy directive, *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* (Australian Government 2009), to position Australian universities to respond effectively to the challenges of the 21st century. The policy directive relates to improving access and equity; excellence in teaching and learning; commitment to excellence in research; commitment to maintaining a sustainable higher education sector; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy; responsiveness to the social needs of the community; and commitment to upholding academic freedom and values. The directive is aimed at equipping Australian universities to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the knowledge economy and global competition. The findings outlined in this Chapter are organised around the three research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do universities articulate a formal mission statement?
RQ2. To what extent does the content of university mission-related documents reflect the government policy directive?
RQ3. To what extent do university mission-related documents reflect a diversity of institutional missions?

Interpretations of the findings in response to these three questions and the overall research question in the context of prior research are discussed in Chapter 6.
5.2 QUESTION ONE: ARTICULATION AND FORM OF MISSION STATEMENTS

Based on the mission-related statements, this section provides findings in relation to the first research question and its two sub-questions.

RQ1. To what extent do universities articulate a formal mission statement?

1.1 How many universities have a formally labelled mission statement?

1.1. To what extent do university mission-related statements exhibit David’s (2007) nine mission components (customers, products or services, markets, technology, sustainability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees)?

The first sub-question relies on a count of statements formally labelled Mission Statement and identifies alternative labels. The second sub-question examines the inclusion of David’s (2007) nine mission components in the university mission-related statements.

5.2.1 Adoption of a formally labelled Mission Statement

Of the 39 universities, 51.28% (20) had a statement formally labelled as Mission Statement, while the remainder used a range of headings, as summarised in Table 5.1 below. Among the 19 universities without a formally labelled Mission Statement, 15 universities use the three words, vision, purpose or intent, either singly or in combination.
Table 5.1

Frequency and Title of Mission-related Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of mission-related statement</th>
<th>Number of universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose (&amp; Intent)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision &amp; Purpose (&amp; Value)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive Nature and Purpose</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision &amp; Values</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision &amp; Goals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Intent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects &amp; Goals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘about’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Universities’ websites (2011)

During the collection of data for the study, 11 universities were found to have changed their mission statements between November 2008 and November 2011. To illustrate, Swinburne had a Mission Statement in November 2008 which disappeared and was replaced by a Statement of Direction in 2009 and then by a Vision in 2010. UTS had two slightly different versions of Mission in November 2008, which were then replaced by a Vision & Purpose in 2009. Flinders had Missions & Aims in 2008 but changed to Visions & Values in 2009. Murdoch had a Mission Statement in 2008 and 2009 but changed to Our Purpose and Intent in 2010. These examples served to demonstrate that some universities appeared reluctant to use the label ‘Mission Statement’. This reluctance was explained by the Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University in the following words:

Because they all use the same clichés about “creating” and “disseminating” knowledge and “engaging with their community”, university mission statements sound depressingly alike. Similarly,
Vice-Chancellors’ vision statements—in which all universities expect to be the best—often seem more like hallucinations than real-world aspirations.

(Source: Mission-based Compact of Macquarie, 2012)

5.2.2 Components of Mission-related Statements

Each mission-related statement was analysed for the presence of the nine essential mission components recommended by David (2007): customer, product or service, geographic market, technology, sustainability, philosophy, self-concept, contribution to communities, and concern for staff. The frequency of the specific mission components present in the university mission-related statements is summarised in Figure 5.1. The most frequently cited components were: customers (100 percent); community contribution (97.5 percent); products and services (95 percent); and self-concept (95 percent). The least cited components were: technology (33 percent); sustainability (43.5 percent); and concern for staff (59 percent). The frequency tables are found in Appendix B.
Customer

All university mission-related statements referred in some form to customer, most commonly the students. In the university context, ‘customer’ includes students and other stakeholders such as certain groups of persons or communities with whom the University might have a servicing relationship. Students were included in the mission-related statement of 77 percent (30) of the universities while 23 percent (9) made mention of individuals, groups or communities in their statement. Students were most often referred to in terms of the positive impact on their lives as result of higher education.
Products or services
Teaching and/or research was included in 95 percent (37) of mission-related statements. University products or services are most often defined as teaching and research. Reference to quality teaching and research was made by 92.3 percent (36) universities. One university referred only to quality teaching while two universities omitted any mention of teaching or research.

Geographic markets
A reference to geographic markets was included in 85 percent (33) of mission-related statements. Geographic markets refer generally to the university's reach in teaching and research. Most commonly, both international and national markets were included in 69.2 percent (27) of the universities. One university included national reach only, five universities referred to local and regional reach, while six universities made no reference to geographic markets in their statements.

Technology
Technology was included in 33.3 percent (13) of the mission-related statements. Technology includes information and communication technology, e-learning, digitisation of information that reflect the changing nature of how information is sought, classified, and perceived in teaching, learning and research. Despite its importance, the term received the lowest recognition in terms of inclusion in mission-related statements.

Sustainability
Reference to sustainability was identified in 43.5 percent (17) of mission-related statements. Sustainability includes financial, environmental and workforce sustainability, but the most comment type of sustainability mentioned was sustainable futures.
Philosophy
Reference to institutional philosophy was made by 87 percent (34) of universities in their mission-related statements. Philosophy was interpreted to mean the basic beliefs, values, aspirations, and ethical priorities, and responsibilities to students and staff, environment, and communities.

Self-concept
Self-concept was included in 95 percent (37) of mission-related statements. While self-concept in the corporate world means the distinctive competence or strategic competitive advantage of the organisation and how it is better from competitors, in the university context, this intensely competitive language was not apparent in the statements. Rather, self-concept was reflected in the university’s specific aspirations such as ‘highest quality educational experiences’, ‘pursue excellence in all that we do’, ‘a community characterised by free inquiry and academic integrity’, ‘most inclusive university in improving access and participation’; special partnership or affiliation; multi-sector; geographical; special community served; or specific focus of teaching or research.

Contribution to communities
Contribution to communities was mentioned by 97% (37) of the universities. It refers to the organisation’s contribution to local, regional, national and international communities and its responsiveness to social and community concerns.

Concern for staff
Inclusion of a concern for staff was contained in 59 percent (23) of mission-related statements. References to staff welfare and value were interpreted as a concern for staff.
In summary, with the exceptions of technology and sustainability, the other seven components of David’s (2007) mission components were included in more than half of the mission-related statements, including six of the components being included in 85 percent or more of the statements. Hence, university mission related statements have largely come to resemble those being used in the business and corporate world.

5.3 QUESTION TWO: RESPONSIVENESS TO GOVERNMENT POLICY DIRECTIVE

The second research question is concerned with the extent to which the content of university mission-related documents reflects the government policy directive. The findings presented in this section are based on an analysis of the two mission-related documents, the interim and 2011-2013 Mission-based Compacts. These documents are more comprehensive than the mission-related statements employed in answering Question One above.

5.3.1 Inclusion of Government Directed Themes

Using the global challenges to higher education in the 21st century outlined in the literature and the themes in the Australian Government policy directive *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System*, the mission-related documents were examined for the inclusion of these challenges and themes. The global challenges relate to the knowledge economy, globalisation and competition, and technological advances. As a response to these challenges, the Australian Government directive relates to the following themes: improving equity and access; excellence in teaching and learning; excellence in research; maintaining a sustainable higher-education sector; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy; responsiveness to the social needs of the community; and commitment to uphold academic freedom and values. It is relevant to note
from the outset that global challenge presented by advanced technology was not included in the Mission-based Compact funding principles. However, the Government has stated its commitment to the development of world-class infrastructure with a technology rich campus environment. The inclusion of the specific Government policy themes are summarised in Figure 5.2, which illustrates the percentage of universities that included the various themes in their mission-based documents. This is followed by the findings for each theme. The frequency tables are found in Appendix C.

**Figure 5.2**
Total Percentage of Universities with Government policy themes contained in their mission-related documents (interim and final 2011-13 Mission-based Compacts)

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**Access and Equity**

All universities included a reference to improving access and/or equity. 34 (87.2 percent) universities mentioned widening access and improving
equity, 3 (7.7 percent) mentioned only improving equity, and 2 (5.1 percent) mentioned widening access only. Examples expressing widening access and improving equity include:

- making higher education and research more accessible and relevant to all people, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds
- most inclusive university in improving access and participation
- scholarships targeted at specific low-SES schools
- improve retention and success outcomes for equity group students with financial, learning and peer support
- improve pathways

To widen access and improve equity, universities specifically provide flexibility in their offering including alternative entry pathways and mode of delivery; form partnerships with communities to encourage access; and provide additional support to improve the access and outcomes of low SES students. Flexibility in learning to accommodate students with different needs was included in 75 percent (29) of the mission-related documents. Examples include: improvement of online, mixed mode or cross campus teaching and learning; ensuring that students can study flexibly and in a supportive and engaging learning environment

Ninety-two percent (36) of the universities referred to the provision of alternative entry pathways to improve access and equity. This is expressed in phrases such as: enhance and develop access pathways and equity initiatives that minimise the impacts of disadvantage; expand articulation arrangements with TAFEs. Likewise all of the universities referred to forming partnerships with communities and schools to encourage access to higher education and to providing student support to increase retention. Provision of support is evidenced in the following phrases: effective student support, regardless of study mode; provides high-quality mentoring support
for first year students. Finally, all the universities referred to the provision of good learning experiences and student engagement to improve learning outcomes. This includes: establishment of a teaching and learning development and support centre, provide work-integrated learning to assist student with excellent graduate outcomes.

Teaching and Research Excellence
All 39 universities included the provision of high quality teaching and research activities in their mission-related documents. Examples expressing teaching and research excellence are:

- distinctive learning experience and excellent learning outcomes
- personalised, innovative teaching in small classes
- flexible, workplace relevant, outcome focussed programs
- promoting excellence and creativity in learning and teaching
- embed ‘real world’ learning and to maintain excellent graduate outcomes
- continuous improvement of teaching and learning practice
- transdisciplinary teaching and research
- commitment to the education of future leaders
- globally competitive research
- achieving excellence through scholarship, teaching, learning, and research
- world’s best universities at understanding, researching and educating for responsible public administration and services
- comprehensive research and teaching university of international standing
- have no area where national and international distinction is not achieved or where there are few prospects of achieving that distinction
Although technology was not specified in the government policy themes, 85 percent of universities included the use of technology to enhance their teaching and research. This is expressed as: to increase even more the use of technology; provide online resources and integration of remotely located students synchronously and virtually into physical campus spaces.

**Sustainability**

Thirty-seven (95%) universities included issues relating to sustainability in their mission-related documents. Specifically, 92 percent of universities referred to staff and workforce sustainability, 87 percent stressed the need for environmental sustainability and 79.5 percent cited the importance of financial sustainability. General references to environmental sustainability include: promoting academic, economic, environmental and social sustainability; commitment to sustainability in all our activities, including teaching, research and campus management and to the development of practical solutions to environmental, economic and social challenge. Specific references to workforce sustainability include: support and reward staff excellence to attract, retain, develop, recognise and reward the best staff; growth and renewal of the University’s workforce; and be responsive to the interests of our staff and to changing labour market conditions. References to financial sustainability include: continuing focus on sustainability will ensure we are financially sustainable and in a position to respond proactively to change and opportunity.

**International Standing**

All 39 (100%) universities referred to having an international perspective, most commonly alongside a national perspective. One university only referred exclusively to have a wholly international outlook. Additionally, all universities cited their contribution to the international standing of Australia, including 15 (38.5%) universities making reference to global rankings.
Contribution to economy
Thirty-five (90%) universities included contribution to the economy in their mission-related documents. Examples of this include: provide research services to the resource sector; knowledge transfer to industries; and committed to facilitating the diffusion of knowledge from “the lab” to the wider economy through its focus on excellence in research, teaching and best practice management of research outcomes.

Responsiveness to communities
All universities expressed a commitment to contributing to their communities. This commitment encompasses many dimensions of interaction between university and society, including knowledge partnerships, advancement and international activities as illustrated in the commitment to contribute: to community health research, intercultural and international education research.

Academic Freedom and Values
Fewer than half of the universities (43.6%) expressed a commitment to upholding academic freedom. Where it was included, it was expressed as: intellectual creativity, academic freedom and integrity; and freedom for individual researchers to pursue their own lines of enquiry.

Overall, support for the Government policy directive was unanimous for five of the eight themes, and 95 percent for sustainability. Only academic freedom was included in fewer than half of the universities’ mission-related documents. Despite technology not being included in the Government policy directive themes, it remains an identified global challenge that 85 percent of universities included in their mission-related documents.
5.3.2 Differences between 2011-13 Mission-based Compacts and 2009 Interim Agreements and Strategic Plans

The final 2011-2013 Mission-based Compacts on which universities would receive triennium funding were submitted by universities in April 2011 and published on Government website in June 2012 (DIIRST 2012). Universities had been strongly guided by the Government directive; therefore improvements to their earlier 2009 Interim Compacts were expected. The following figure (5.3) outlines changes in the final 2011-13 Mission-based Compacts relative to the interim agreements and strategic plans. As can be seen in Figure 5.3, the changes were minimal, with the exception of Academic Freedom.

![Figure 5.3](image-url)

Source: Universities’ Interim Agreements and strategic plans, and Mission-based Compacts

It can be seen from Figure 5.3 that the inclusion of some themes has increased slightly, these being: access and equity; contribution to economy; and international standing. On the other hand, frequencies for the inclusion
of sustainability, and academic freedom have reduced. The reductions in frequencies are not large except for academic freedom, the inclusion of which dropped from 43 percent to 10 percent. The change may be the result of the lack of attention to the funding principles of the Mission-based Compact by some universities.

5.4 DIVERSITY OF INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

While all 39 universities shared the similarities of being comprehensive research universities, and offering doctoral, masters and bachelor level programs, a limited degree of diversity was discerned from a more detailed analysis of the mission-related documents. This section provides the findings to the third research question, to what extent do university mission-related documents reflect a diversity of institutional missions? This was done by a qualitative analysis of the documents to identify the distinguishing features, distinctive competence or strategic position of the universities.

5.4.1 Content Similarities in Mission-Related Documents

As all universities are comprehensive research universities within a national unitary system, there are more similarities than differences within their missions. All reflect quality and excellence in their core missions of teaching and research, are international, and are committed to access and equity, and providing social and economic contributions to their communities. Within these broad missions, there are some differences in emphases. For example, ANU emphasises postgraduate research and graduate coursework, while Notre Dame concentrates on undergraduate teaching. Despite the formal groupings of universities, there was insufficient commonality in their mission-related documents to identify the groupings, only those in the Go8 referred to the membership of this group, but there were few similarities apart from their obvious breadth of research.
5.4.2 Content Differences in Mission-Related Documents

The areas of specific differentiation in the mission-related documents were found in institutional philosophy and self-concept; geographical distinctiveness (campus locations); program model; sector coverage (whether higher education only or multi-sector); and research strengths. A table of distinguishing features in the mission-related documents is contained in Appendix D.

Philosophy & self-concept
The philosophical approach and self-concept of the institutions is a good differentiator, especially for research intensive institutions and those with religious affiliates, as illustrated in the following examples:

ANU is research-intensive and research-led, with ‘the notion of discovery pervades all that we do’. Its ‘educational values lie in providing a broad based research and discovery-led education’.

ACU has a distinctive spiritual perspective and upholds its Catholic intellectual tradition. The university ‘explicitly engages the social, ethical and religious dimensions of the questions it faces in teaching and research, and service’.

Geographical diversity
This geographic distinctiveness was clearly articulated in the mission-related documents. The following examples illustrate this point:

Monash aims to be Australia’s largest university with multiple suburban, regional and international campuses. The University has campuses and centres in Malaysia, South Africa, Italy, and India.

ACU is a multi-State, multi-campus, national Catholic university

JCU is a tri-city university across three tropical cities - Townsville, Cairns and Singapore
**Program Model**

The majority of universities articulate their distinctiveness through the manner in which they offer programs. This is illustrated in:

*Melbourne prides itself on its Melbourne Model that combines broad and deep undergraduate study with specialised and professional graduate programs at Masters and PhD level. Melbourne’s strategy ‘Growing Esteem’ is grounded on the principle of the triple helix – three intertwined strands comprising of research, teaching and engagement.*

*UNSW’s B2B strategy aims to ‘enhance effectiveness and interdisciplinarity, minimising the barriers between faculties and disciplines, research and practical applications. It is the only Australian research intensive university established with this unique focus, modelled on US universities such as MIT’.*

*Newcastle ‘pioneered problem-based learning, forming the basis of the university’s degree programs.’*

*CSU aims to be Australia’s largest provider of online and distance education*

**Sector coverage – Higher Education or Multi-Sector**

While the Australian higher education system has changed from a binary to a unified national system in the 1990s, six of the Australian universities are still multi-sector, comprising Higher Education, Technical and Further Education, or Vocational Education and Training, and Foundation studies. The six multi-sector universities are Ballarat, Canberra, Charles Darwin, RMIT, Swinburne and Victoria University. Four of these six universities are in the state of Victoria. All six highlight their multi-sector status in their mission-related documents as illustrated by the following:

*VU’s multi-sector nature facilitates students moving across its further, vocational and higher education sectors to customise their formal learning, to ‘differentiate the University as Australia’s best-integrated tertiary provider’.*

*Ballarat is ‘Australia’s only regional, multi-sector university’.*
Notre Dame is a dual sector not-for-profit private university with the Catholic universities traditions.

Diversity of research strengths

Different research strengths and foci were found to be strong differentiators. The findings confirm the dominance of the Group of Eight universities in research performance. It was noted that Melbourne, Sydney, ANU, and UQ stood out as having a more comprehensive range of research excellence (ERA 2012). This finding also correlated with the league table of the Academic Ranking of the World Universities which is primarily based on research performance (ARWU 2012).

A strategic research focus or research strength is clearly articulated in all the university mission-related documents. This is illustrated by the following examples:

JCU has internationally-recognised research in marine sciences, biodiversity, tropical ecology and environments.

QUT is a selective intensive research university with applied focus in the STEM area.

Research engagement featured prominently in the mission-related documents as illustrated by a large number of university-industry research partnerships such as Macquarie’s Cochlear and GE Healthcare partnerships. Other examples include Melbourne’s IBM Research and Development Centre and its collaboration with the Bionic Vision Australia consortium; Monash’s partnership with CSIRO, the Australian Synchrotron and the Melbourne Centre for Nanofabrication; and UNSW’s National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Research.

5.4.3 Summary of Institutional Mission Diversity

Generally the university missions were similar, covering traditional university missions with acknowledgement of the new functions. The
differences that did exist were often related to the history and location of the universities. The areas of differentiation in the mission-related documents were notable in institutional philosophy and self-concept; geographical distinctiveness (campus locations); program model and diversity; sector coverage (whether higher education only or multi-sector); and research strengths.

5.5 Summary of Findings

In relation to Research Question One, relating to the formal use of the words *Mission Statement* and the applicability of nine components used in business setting, suggested by David (2007), it is evident that while almost half of Australian universities are not wedded to the words *Mission Statement*, they generally exhibit the components recommended for a Mission Statement in the corporate sector.

In relation to Research Question Two, the degree to which universities follow the Government policy directive, there is strong evidence of compliance except in terms of Academic Freedom. This is demonstrated by the almost unanimous inclusions of: intending to improve access and equity; delivering excellent teaching and research; maintaining a sustainable institution; advancing Australia’ international standing; contributing to the economy; and being responsive to the communities. It is to be expected, in line with the traditional functions of a university that teaching and research would receive full inclusions, but most other commitments are beyond the traditional purpose of a university. The changes in the mission-related documents up until the final Mission-based compacts were minor, apart from Academic Freedom, and are not suggestive of any particular significance. Despite the absence of a clear Technology emphasis from the Government directive, most universities included it in their mission-related documents, although not necessarily in their mission-related statements.
In relation to Research Question Three, the diversity of institutional missions, there were discernible differences in the stated missions. Some areas of differentiation were notable in institutional philosophy and self-concept; geographical distinctiveness (campus locations); program model and diversity; sector coverage (whether higher education only or multi-sector); and research strengths.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation addresses a deficit in research on Australian University missions by presenting the first systematic research on university missions. In this final Chapter, each of the research questions is discussed on the basis of the findings and in terms of the literature and facts about the Australian higher education sector. Once each of the research questions is examined, a response is provided to the overall research question, To what extent do the mission-related documents of Australian universities reflect the Government policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System? The final sections of the Chapter develop implications for policy and practice and suggest directions for future research on university missions. The Chapter concludes with the contribution of the research.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS BY RESEARCH QUESTION

This section reviews each of the three research questions and their respective sub-questions in the light of the research findings and the relevant literature. The section concludes with a response to the overall research question.

6.2.1 Question One. The extent to which Australian Universities Specify a Formal Mission Statement

The first research question is answered based on relevant findings and literature in respect to its two sub-questions: one, the extent of
adoption of the formal label, Mission Statement; and two, the extent to
which the content of the mission-related statements contain David’s

**RQ 1.1 Adoption of the label, Mission Statement**

Despite Government pressure on universities to adopt a formal
‘mission statement’, the finding that only half of the universities had a
formally labeled ‘mission statement’ would indicate a reluctance to
employ the words. While a majority of 20 universities used the
formal label, ‘mission statement’, 15 universities preferred the labels,
‘vision’, ‘purpose’ or ‘intent’ with another four employing other
words. This is in spite of the Government requirement for mission
statements being introduced in 1988 and reinforced most recently and
more explicitly in the Government’s Mission-based Compact
(DEEWR 2009). A similar reluctance was found by Smith et al.
(1993) in the United Kingdom where not all universities used the
words ‘mission statement’ but preferred to use terms such as purpose,
intent, aims, and objectives, despite government directives and
funding requirements.

Why universities are reluctant to use the label ‘mission statement’ is
not entirely clear, but there are some possible explanations. It might
simply be that it was difficult to articulate fully the strategic
imperatives of such complex organisations in a short statement. It
might also be that some universities wish to avoid the use of overtly
corporate language and the symbolism it might entail (Keller 1983).
Related to this latter explanation is a possible cynicism about the use
of ‘mission statement’ as expressed by the Vice-Chancellor of
Macquarie University in that University’s 2011-2013 Mission-based
Compact.
While Westerhuis’ (2006) found that the use of the words ‘mission statement’ in university documents were largely driven by government requirements, the evidence in this study would suggest this compliance was not universal. Between November 2008 and November 2011, 11 universities changed their terminology relating to the use of ‘mission statements’. For example, Swinburne had a Mission Statement in November 2008 that disappeared and was replaced by a Statement of Direction in 2009 and then by a Vision in 2010. UTS had two slightly different versions of Mission in November 2008, which were then replaced by a Vision & Purpose in 2009. Flinders had Missions & Aims in 2008 but changed to Visions & Values in 2009. Murdoch had a Mission Statement in 2008 and 2009 but changed to Our Purpose and Intent in 2010. These examples would indicate a trend away from using the ‘mission statement’ label, despite government perseverance.

**RQ 1.2 Mission Components**

While some universities may have been unwilling to adopt the label ‘mission statement’, the universities generally were found to have incorporated David’s (2007) nine essential components within their mission-related statements. The mission statements, including vision, purpose and intent, largely confirm the universities’ conformity with the components of corporate mission statements. Six of the nine components were included in the statements by 85 percent or more of the universities. In particular, customers (students), community contribution (social good), products and services (teaching and research), and self-concept were mentioned by over 95 percent of the universities. This is not surprising as Richter and Buttery’s (2005) analysis of university mission statements, found that the basic functions of a university, teaching, research and contribution to society, remained as they had for centuries.
What was perhaps surprising was the limited inclusion of technology, sustainability and concern for employees. It could be that universities take their staff and technology for granted, regarding them as part of the structural fabric to deliver teaching to students. This is in spite of the major impacts that technology has had on all aspects of the university and will have into the future. Although technology is one of the key global challenges, it was not identified as a key policy imperative in the Australian Government’s policy directive. The omission of technology and sustainability may also reflect Newsom and Hayes’ (1990) recommendation that ‘core technologies, commitment to survival, growth, and profitability’ be combined into a single component of ‘commitment’ for university mission statements. The non-inclusion of ‘concern for employees’ by almost half of the universities is not easily explained, especially for knowledge-based institutions like universities whose products and services are essentially its employees.

Both the use of the label, ‘mission statement’ and the general conformity with the structure of a corporate mission statement would suggest that university mission statements are more strategic than philosophical (Campbell & Yeung 1991). Yet, they do not come across as particularly inspirational (Cochrane & David 1986; David & David 2003) nor encouraging of employee identity (Swales & Rogers 1995), possibly because they are essentially designed for an external stakeholder in the form of government (Leuthesser & Kohli 1997). It is also doubtful that the university mission statements are a foundation for priorities, plans and managerial structures (David & David 2003; Drucker 1973). Their functions appear essentially political and utilitarian (Morphew & Hartley 2006). The following section examines the extent to which universities have responded to the government policy directive in their mission-related documents.
6.2.2 Question Two. The extent to which the Content of University Mission-Related Documents reflect Government Policy Directive

In response to the second research question, two sub-questions were posed: one, the extent of inclusion of commitments to government inspired policy themes; and two, the extent of change in the two mission-related documents over time. This section discusses both sub-questions based on the content analysis of the Interim Agreements and the Mission-Based Compacts.

RQ 2.1 References to commitments promoted by the Government Policy Directive

The research findings from mission-related documents confirm that Australian universities have developed their strategic positions in the new higher education environment in response to the Government policy directive, and so addressed the key global challenges for higher education. The universities have been cognisant of their roles in knowledge creation, dissemination, transfer and exploitation in the knowledge economy. They have addressed the challenges of increasing globalisation and competition, and responded to the impact of the information and communication revolution on their operations. They have unanimously responded to the Government’s policy directive to improve access and equity; enhance Australia’s international standing; contribute to community and sustainability of the sector. While their claims might be more aspirational than achievable and/or reflect conflicts and contradictions such that each university appears ‘partially at war with itself’ (Kerr 1963, p 8), it is clear that each was trying to maximise its scope and capabilities and play down institutional limitations (Connell & Galasiski 1998).
The remainder of this subsection comments on how the universities dealt with the Government policy themes for commitments to: improving access and equity; excellence in teaching and learning; commitment to excellence in research; commitment to maintaining a sustainable higher education sector; contribution to Australia’s international standing; contribution to the economy; responsiveness to the social needs of the community; and commitment to upholding academic freedom and values.

The three traditional missions of a university, teaching, research, and contribution to the good of society were clearly dealt with by every university as they included each of these policy themes. General references to teaching and research were inevitably clothed in words such as excellence, quality, innovation and world-class, while outcomes and graduate attributes were specifically attached to teaching references along with life-long learning and student engagement. Teaching references were further amplified with words and statements about being student-centred, flexible and connected with technology. These specific descriptions for teaching method go beyond the traditional transmission of knowledge mission to reflect various national and international edicts about new forms of teaching (DEEWR 2009; OECD 2005; UNESCO 1998) and the global challenge represented by advances in technology (Kinser & Hill 2011; OECD 2005; Oliver 2002).

All 39 universities were committed to conducting excellent research in their areas of strength, enhancing Australia’s research and innovation capabilities, and contributing to the country’s international standing through research. A focus on international competition in research was demonstrated by ANU’s aspiration ‘to have no area where national and international distinction was not achieved or where there were few prospects of achieving that distinction’. While few other universities
were so specific in their research excellence, the impact of Government policy, Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), is clear. Further, and in line with Boyer’s (1990) call for ‘scholarships of integration and application’, most universities emphasised inter- and trans-disciplinary research and partnerships with industry and government, similar to the third mission (Laredo 2007). The majority of universities professed to be active in knowledge transfer and industry engagement, working closely with networks and industry partners in innovation and development, indicating their adoption of the ‘Triple Helix’ model (Etzkowitz et al. 2000).

The third traditional mission of a university, to contribute to the good of society (UNESCO 1998), was more often encapsulated through reference to responding and contributing to a specific community need. For example, UTas ‘will provide leadership within its community, thereby contributing to the cultural, economic and social development of Tasmania.’ JCU aimed ‘to create lasting intellectual, cultural, social, health, environmental and economic benefits for our region and beyond.’ Melbourne contributes to ‘Australia’s cultural dynamism through programs such as the Melbourne Theatre Company, Melbourne University Publishing, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, and Asialink.’

The following four policy themes could be considered outside the traditional missions of a university and more reflective of the new political environments and global challenges: access and equity; international standing; economic contribution; and sustainability.

Access and equity were central platforms of the Government’s policy directive, *Transforming Australian Higher Education System*. The Government’s goal was for 40 percent of all 25 to 34 year old Australians to hold a qualification at bachelor level or above by 2025. Students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds were to
increase to 20 percent in the same period. Despite previous failure in attracting and retaining low-SES students (Clancy & Goastellec 2007), all universities embraced both improving access and equity. Strategies to improve access and equity include partnerships with other institutions and provision of special targeted programs. Some universities have formed networks in order to achieve the Government’s attainment and equity targets. This is exemplified by the National Alliances formed by ANU, UniSA, CDU, USQ, UC and Newcastle to offer joint and dual degrees, articulated pathways and enhanced research training.

While the Government’s *Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System* agenda has laudable aims, the Government has yet to develop a clear strategy on how to achieve the aspirational target of having 40 percent of 25 to 34 year olds with a bachelor level or above qualification by 2025. Critics questioned the Government’s plan to meet the increasing demand with the existing capacity (Gallagher 2010b). Most strategies, such as outreach programs and special admission schemes, augmented with academic support and enrichment programs, are resource-intensive requiring universities to allocate funds away from other areas. Access has been a long held goal of universities as it is so closely linked to government funding (Smith et al. 1993), yet the equity goal is not only elusive but presents a form of mission tension (Douglass 2007). World-class universities rely on attracting world class talent, both faculty and students, hence unlimited access and a focus on equity can undermine other aspirations to be world-class. Therefore, there is a challenge for universities to reconcile the tension between access and quality in a financially constrained environment.

The second policy theme outside the traditional missions is that of enhancing international standing. References to international and
internationalisation were included in all mission-related documents, albeit with different emphases. This finding corresponds with and exceeds the finding of Egron-Polak and Hudson (2010), whereby 87 percent of universities in an international survey had included some form of internationalisation in their strategic plans. International standing may incorporate an international teaching presence beyond Australia, international cooperation and international competition. Most universities referred to some form of global distribution of teaching and learning through transnational education, branch campuses, or distance learning; interactions with global businesses and agencies; and involvements in projects impacting national and global issues.

Australian universities were actively engaged in international activities in cross-border co-operation and knowledge exchange, contributing to Australia’s international standing (Marginson and van der Wende 2009). In response to intensified global competition and the change to the Government’s demand-driven funding model, the universities were committed to delivering world-class programs in an increasingly competitive market. An explicit consciousness of global competition could be seen in references to global rankings. Despite an OECD (2008) warning that such rankings were a fashionable device and to be treated with caution, almost 40 percent (15) of universities referred to these rankings, either to their position or their desire to achieve a high global ranking. These references would confirm Hazelkorn’s (2007, 2008 & 2009) arguments that rankings impact on university mission statements and strategic direction.

The third policy theme outside the traditional missions of a university is economic contribution. Again all universities referred to their contribution to the economy and/or labour market. Since the 1970s, the increasing global emphasis on universities as engines of economic
growth and knowledge capital (Martin & Etzkowitz 2000; Sabour 2005) has led to a stage where the service of university as a commodity of direct benefit to economic prosperity is now explicit both in government policy (Boulton & Lucas 2008; Roberts & Peters 2008) and in university missions.

The final policy theme not found in the traditional missions of a university is sustainability, which was included in one or other of its various forms by 95 percent (37) of universities. General references to a ‘sustainable future’, sustainability in teaching and research, including the ‘wicked’ problems of the world (UNESCO 1998 & 2011) and broad environmental challenges were common. The universities engaged in public advocacy with local and national communities, collaborated with international networks, and participated in research and education in the global questions critical to the future of mankind (UNESCO 1998 & 2011). They formed multi-disciplinary and multicultural teams, engaged in transformative education and prepared students to deal with complex sustainability challenges (Neef 2005; Van Dam 2006). As precise endeavours rather than rhetoric, these statements were exemplified in UTS’s Institute of Sustainable Futures.

In addition to delivering programs in and conducting research on sustainability, more specific forms of sustainability related to workforce, finance and campus facility and property management. Workforce sustainability has been identified as a major challenge for all universities (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley 2009) and Australian universities in particular (Coates et al. 2009). The topic was further given substantial discussion in the Bradley Review, the precursor to the Government policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System. Possibly in line with the policy directive, 92 percent or 36 universities included references to workforce
sustainability in their mission-related documents. However, most references were in an international context of attracting and retaining quality employees. The discussions of workforce failed to address directly the challenges of: an aging academic workforce (Hugo & Morris 2010); the high rates of casualisation among academics (May 2011); or the inability of doctoral graduates to gain ongoing employment in Australian universities (Bexley et al. 2011; Edwards, Bexley & Richardson 2011). Likewise there were no mention of morale problems among existing academics (Fredman & Doughney 2011; Meek 2002), nor of increasingly high student-staff ratios (Larkins 2011).

Strong financial resourcing is a hallmark of a world-class university (Salmi 2009). In the Australian higher education sector, the under-resourcing of universities has been a constant theme since the early 1990s (Hill & Kumar 2008; Ryan et al. 2008). So it is surprising that 20.5 percent or 8 universities omitted the mention of financial sustainability in their mission-related documents. The references made to university finances and financing were generally made in positive and aspirational terms and would not support Parker’s (2012) proposition that financial concerns have overtaken all others among the managers of Australian universities. A final form of sustainability referred to in the mission-related documents was associated with campus management, including grounds and facilities. These efforts were exemplified in Melbourne’s connection with the International Sustainable Campus Network.

Upholding academic freedom was the concluding policy theme in Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System. Despite being the ‘key legitimating concept for the entire enterprise’ of a university (Menand 1996, p 3) and existing at the core of teaching and research missions (Albach 2001), less than half of the universities expressed a
commitment to upholding academic freedom. It received the lowest percentage of inclusions in mission-related documents of any of the specific policy themes, at 43 percent or 17 universities. In fact, an analysis of the final Mission-based Compacts reveals that only 10 percent or 4 universities referred to academic freedom. On one hand, the low inclusion rate might be because academic freedom is taken for granted; on the other hand it might reflect the threats to academic freedom posed by new public management and changes in institutional governance (Coates et al. 2009; Gilbert 2000; Nelson 2010). The corporatisation of governance combined with quality and accreditation requirements impose greater control and surveillance on academics and their work (Marginson & Considine 2000; Marginson 2006; Nelson 2010). As outlined by Nelson (2010), other threats to academic freedom include: the decreasing presence of tenured academics; increased cost cutting; increased legal restrictions; and increased use of intellectual property rights. Ironically, although academic freedom is embedded in the Government’s Principles of Commonwealth Funding Support, the Government itself helps to undermine academic freedom and institutional autonomy through its use of performance funding, research priorities and audits (Marginson 2006b).

RQ2.2 Changes to Mission-based documents between 2009 Interim Agreements and the 2011 Mission-based Compact

It could have been expected that any content changes from the 2009 Interim Agreements which were transitional arrangements, to the final 2011-2013 Mission-based Compacts would have indicated a shift toward greater compliance with the Government directive. However, with the exception of academic freedom, the changes were few and in no particular direction towards or away from the Government policy directive. A practical explanation would be that the Government
directive was already known and incorporated in the Interim Agreements and so required little change.

Among the changes that did occur, the three key themes, access and equity, international standing and economic contribution were added to the final compacts by one, two and five universities respectively, so that 100 percent of universities addressed these imperatives in the final compacts. On the other hand, references to sustainability were excluded from the final documents by two universities. Most surprisingly, the number of universities that had included academic freedom in earlier documents had gone down, so that only 10 percent or four universities expressed commitment to academic freedom in their Mission-based Compacts for 2011-2013. The reasons for the reduction are not clear. They might relate to the explanations already given in the above discussion or to the Government’s 2011 legislative amendment to enshrine academic freedom in law. This requires universities to have policies to protect academic freedom in order to receive government funding. Perhaps the reluctance of universities to commit to upholding academic freedom is evidence that academic freedom lies at the ‘heart of political battles over the future of the public university’ (Menand 1996, p 3), a battle in this case that the universities appear to be conceding.

In summary, with the exception of ‘upholding academic freedom’, the universities appear well disposed to incorporating the demands of Government into their mission-related documents, over and above the traditional missions of teaching, research and contribution to society. Evidence of enhancement to government policy may be gleaned from the relatively high inclusion of issues associated with technology in the Mission-based Compacts. Despite technology being identified as a global challenge for universities, it was not specified among the Government policy directive themes. The majority of universities,
however, were able to understand the importance of technology in their operations and incorporate it in their mission-related documents. In this regard, the universities have demonstrated that they are not fully reliant on Government directive to shape their missions.

Whether through Government fiat or their own understanding and initiatives, the mission statements and related documents suggest Australian universities go beyond Richter and Buttery’s (2005) findings that university mission statements are restricted to the traditional purposes of a university in knowledge accumulation and diffusion. Most if not all of the university missions examined in this research covered both the traditional missions in a global environment as well as addressed key global challenges of competition, technology and the rise of the knowledge economy. However, the results also support Westerhuis’ (2006) conclusion that the mission-related documents of Australian universities are strongly influenced by government funding agreements and requirements.

6.2.3 Question Three: Diversity of Institutional Missions

While institutional diversity has been highlighted as a global challenge for universities in the 21st Century (Marginson 2009; Ross 2012; Van Damme 2001), the study has found a limited degree of diversity based on the universities’ stated missions. As social institutions, universities could be expected to have common elements in their missions (Meyer & Rowan 1977). However, each university is a product of its own social circumstances and past history (Burgess 2007), so some differences should be apparent. Differentiating traces of the previous binary system found by Smith et al. (1993) among universities in the United States were not apparent in this research. Perhaps as a unitary system, the sector itself does not have sufficient diversity. In fairness, and similar to the findings of Morphew and
Hartely (2006), the missions of the two universities with religious affiliations and the one private university did distinguish themselves on these grounds. There were other differences among the missions, but not to the degree that Australian higher education could be described as a diverse system. This finding is in line with Huisman et al.’s (2007) conclusion that the Australian higher education system contains much less institutional diversity compared to other OECD countries.

The areas of differentiation within missions were found in institutional philosophical approach; geographical distinctiveness; structural factors (whether higher education only or multi-sector); and research strengths. Not all of these areas of differentiation were expressed explicitly, as universities may regard the demonstration of their competitive position and distinctive competence as incompatible with their academic culture (Davies & Glaister 1996). Further, these differences that were found in institutional and philosophical approaches tended to reflect rather than drive the realities as suggested by Morphew & Hartley (2006).

The homogenisation of mission-related statements and documents with their emphasis on government priorities, fails to capture many of the real differences. Actual differences such as size of student enrolments and program and disciplinary diversity and the consequences of these differences were not clearly enunciated in the mission-related documents. However, a closer reading would demonstrate a form of stratification in the system based on institutions’ resource positions and capacities, especially seen in the breadth of research among the older and wealthier universities (Marginson 2007a & b).
Faced with what Marginson (2007a & 2007b) describes as universities being caught in a dilemma of choosing between the homogenising forces of global competition and national diversity, it appears Australian universities have chosen the former. As predicted by Codling and Meek (2006), when faced with a homogenous environment, intensified competition, funding incentives based on generic performance indicators, and emphasis on ranking, the result will be a convergence within the system whereby universities become more similar. Ironically, while intense global competition drives convergence, Marginson advocates greater divergence among Australian universities as a key solution to addressing the rising prominence of Asian universities in the global marketplace (Ross 2012).

The convergence of mission is no doubt the result of multiple forces. A unitary system with emphases on compliance, standardisation and quality assurance, leaves little room for diversity (Gallagher 2010a; Meek & Davies 2009). Related to this, similarity in governance structures produces similarities in missions (Trakman 2008), as does the obvious compliance with government objectives for funding (Musselin 2005). Unlike the findings of James and Huisman (2009) related to Welsh universities’ mission statements, the differing frequencies and configuration of mission elements found in Australian university mission statements, point to a sector with generally similar missions. It would seem that universities, in an attempt to maximise their scope and capability, have ignored their institutional limitations and thus their differences (Davies & Glaister 1996).

While the current study has identified a limited degree of diversity in Australian universities, it is uncertain if this diversity is by design or due to historical market position. Marginson defines mission diversity as when universities deliberately follow a particular mission and
design a vision along that mission path (Ross 2012). While the Australian Government desires that its higher education be differentiated and diverse, with institutions having distinctive missions (DEEWR 2009), it has not provided specific policy initiatives to support diversity (Ross 2012). Instead it has encouraged conformity through a ‘one size fits all’ approach to allocating government funds based on achieving compliance with specific themes.

6.2.4 Overall Research Question: extent to which the missions of Australian universities reflect the Australian Government policy directive

Based on an analysis of the mission statements and mission-related documents, it appears that Australian universities have responded to the Australian Government’s policy directive, Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System. Whilst the theme of upholding academic freedom is a curious omission from their Mission-based Compacts by 90 percent of universities, all other themes from the Government directive and global challenges have been included in the mission statements and mission-related documents. Therefore, on the face of the manifest text, Australian universities have complied with the Australian Government policy directive to address the challenges of the 21st century.

However, the extent to which the words in the mission statements and mission-related documents reflect the reality rather than the desire to appease the government is not as obvious. Unitary systems of higher education are not conducive to diversity (Codling & Meek 2006), especially when the funding system discourages diversity. Universities comply with government directives and fashion their formal documentation in order to receive government funds (James & Huismans 2009; Westerhuis 2006). The convergence in mission can be attributed to both a unitary system with ‘one size fits all’ rules.
(Codling & Meek 2006) and possibly to universities becoming more like corporations, such that they have difficulty in clearly defining their real missions (Barnet 2000; Jarvis 2001).

The achievement of missions is also complicated by the conflicting themes in the Mission-based Compact template that reflect the contradictory government policies identified by Marginson and van der Wende (2009) and Witte, Huisman and Purser (2009). For example the commitment to ‘world-class’ teaching and research is in competition with the commitment to access and equity. The excellence versus access and equity paradox has been identified by Douglass (2007) as a global phenomenon affecting universities. World-class universities have abundant resources to attract and retain the best faculty and the best students to engage in cutting edge research. They are supported by flexible governance structures and guided by bold missions (Altbach 2004; Salmi 2009b; Salmi & Saroyan 2007). However, few of these criteria would be available to most universities that struggle with limited funding, unlimited and diverse student growth, and strong government steering. Few if any Australian universities are endowed with such abundant resources and institutional autonomy.

The increase in student numbers, diversity and ability, without the concomitant growth in faculty severely restricts the capacity of universities to achieve anything like world-class standards (Brown et al. 2010). Further, the pressure to contribute to the economy through research and attainment of specified graduate attributes while maintaining a comprehensive scholarly profile (Kinser & Hill 2011) is neither sustainable nor probably possible. These contradictions in policy settings and mission documents pass unacknowledged by government and universities. Australian universities have addressed the global challenges of the 21st century in the mission documents,
but whether they are able or enabled to meet the challenges is another question.

This research has addressed the paucity of mission research in Australia in presenting the first systematic research on university missions. The research is made more pertinent in this new wave of transformation, as the Australian Government embarks on wide-ranging reforms as part of the Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System agenda.

6.3 Implications for policy and practice

Current contradictions in the Government’s higher education policy and funding arrangements, based on a unitary system with ‘one size fits all’ rules, are not conducive to a diverse and world-class system (Gallagher 2011). In complying with the Government directive, universities have failed to reflect their obvious differences and limitation in their formal mission documents. The current Government incentives are a barrier to a vibrant, diverse and secure higher education system. The inability of institutions to articulate their differences and limitations may ultimately disadvantage the weaker universities in serving their communities and prevent other universities from being able to meet global challenges.

Given the Government’s desire for a diverse higher education system but a limited degree of diversity found in the missions of Australian universities, the Government might consider developing policy settings to encourage divergence rather than convergence. Universities must also have the courage to build on their strengths in teaching, research and community engagement without trying to be everything to every stakeholder. Additionally, collaborations and partnerships between complementary institutions could be fostered to create the
synergies necessary to contribute to the excellence of Australian higher education system.

6.4 Directions for further research

Arising from this research, there are at least four directions for further investigation. First, it would be helpful to know the intent behind the manifest text of the mission documents: the universities’ motivation and their targeted audience. A second direction is to evaluate the utility of the mission documents as strategic tools in the universities’ aspiration to achieve the stated mission. Third, this research sets a foundation for longitudinal research on Australian universities’ missions and their changes in response to ongoing global challenges, markets and government directives. Finally, the question of what is happening to academic freedom within Australian universities deserves attention, including why universities are reluctant to include academic freedom in their public mission documents.

6.5 Contributions of the Research

This research contributes to both scholarly literature and higher education policy. It represents the first complete analysis of university mission statements and mission-related documents in Australia and does so within the latest wave of reform to higher education in the context of Mission-based Compacts, in which missions have considerable significance beyond the normative statements of purpose. From a policy perspective, the research suggests that strong centralised government steering through controlled funding mechanisms is creating, on the surface at least, a homogeneous sector lacking the necessary autonomy and diversity. A further contribution has been to extend the available research on university missions, generally and in Australia specifically, and suggest important
questions for further exploration in the field of university mission research and academic freedom.
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APPENDIX A

Australian universities (by state and groupings)
(Source: Universities Australia, Go8, ATN, and IRU websites 2012)

State of New South Wales (NSW)
Charles Sturt University (CSU)
Macquarie University (Macquarie)
Southern Cross University (SthCross)
The University of Newcastle (Newcastle)
The University of New England (UNE)
The University of New South Wales (UNSW)
The University of Sydney (Sydney)
University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
University of Western Sydney (UWS)
University of Wollongong (UOW)

State of Victoria (Vic)
Deakin University (Deakin)
La Trobe University (La Trobe)
Monash University (Monash)
RMIT University (RMIT)
Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburn)
The University of Melbourne (Melbourne)
University of Ballarat (Ballarat)
Victoria University (VU)

State of South Australia (SA)
Flinders University (Flinders)
The University of Adelaide (Adelaide)
University of South Australia (UniSA)

National
Australian Catholic University (ACU)

State of Queensland (Qld)
Bond University (Bond)
Central Queensland University
Griffith University (Griffith)
James Cook University (JCU)
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
The University of Queensland (UQ)
University of Southern Queensland (SthQld)
University of the Sunshine Coast (SunCoast)

State of Western Australia (WA)
Curtin University of Technology (Curtin)
Edith Cowan University (ECU)
Murdoch University (Murdoch)
The University of Notre Dame Australia (NotreDame)
The University of Western Australia (UWA)

State of Tasmania (Tas)
University of Tasmania (UTas)

Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
The Australian National University (ANU)
University of Canberra (Canberra)
Northern Territory (NT)

Charles Darwin University (CDU)

In 2011, there are three main groupings of Australian Universities with one (New Generation Universities) recently disbanded. These groups have been formed to strategically promote the mutual objectives of member universities. These objectives include including marketing advantages, collaboration, and lobbying power as a group. The three main groupings currently active are:

1. Group of Eight (go8)
2. Australian Technology Network (ATN)
3. Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia)

The groupings represent member universities that have a similar approach and aspirations and the aim of formation of these groups is to accentuate these similarities.

Group of Eight (go8)

The Group of Eight (go8) markets itself as the group of 'Australia's Leading Universities' in relation to their research outputs, industry links, graduate outcomes, and the competency of academic staff. The member universities are:
The University of Adelaide
The Australian National University
The University of Melbourne
Monash University
The University of New South Wales
The University of Queensland
The University of Sydney
The University of Western Australia

Each of these member universities is well-regarded in a number of different areas and together they form a powerful bloc in lobbying government for increased government support and developing its own standards framework.

The Group of Eight (Go8) universities are research-intensive and offer comprehensive general and professional education. The Group’s missions are to enhance members’ contribution to the nation’s social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing and prosperity; generation and preservation of knowledge; global engagement; and improve access for Australian students.

**Australian Technology Network (ATN)**

The Australian Technology Network (ATN) is a coalition of five Australian universities which share a common focus on the practical application of tertiary studies and research. Their graduates and research are closely aligned to the needs of industry and the wider society. The member universities of this network are:

- Curtin University of Technology
- University of South Australia
- RMIT University
- University of Technology Sydney
- Queensland University of Technology

These universities share a common background of being technical colleges before becoming accredited universities. The Group aims
to use its solution-based research and strategic partnership with industries and communities to contribute to Australia’s social and economic wealth.

The ATN’s aim is to help secure Australia’s reputation as the clever country, contributing to its social and economic wealth by building strategic partnerships and undertaking solution based research which is relevant to the expectations of industry and the community. At the same time the Group will continue to champion the principles of access and equity that have ensured its members are the universities of first choice for more students.

**Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU)**

Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia) is a group of seven universities which share a common mode of operation and who believe that by coming together they will be better able to deliver value to their stakeholders. Most importantly, the group believes that they will be able to establish research concentrations and investment across universities. There will also be opportunities to benchmark against each other along with collaborating in professional development initiatives, e-learning and new information and communications technology, income generation, and industrial issues. The member universities of IRU Australia are:

- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- La Trobe University
- Murdoch University
- University of Newcastle
James Cook University
Charles Darwin University (recently joined)

These seven universities share a common background of being established in the 1960s and 1970s as research universities. Together, they have about 15 per cent of total university enrolments in Australia. Each of the universities has developed highly regarded areas of specialisation. The Group aims to create opportunities for students and stakeholders through collaboration and partnership. The Group also focuses on social inclusion, collaborative course delivery, work-integrated learning and research.

IRU aims to deliver value to its member universities, students and stakeholders through the pursuit of three key objectives:

1. To build profile and a strong voice with government and other influential bodies
2. To enhance quality through the sharing of policy and practice
3. To create opportunities for students and stakeholders through collaboration and partnership
## APPENDIX B

### ANALYSIS OF MISSION-RELATED STATEMENT

*Frequency tables of specific mission components in university mission-related statements*

#### Customer

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#### Quality & Excellence in Teaching & Research

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#### Geographic markets

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APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF MISSION-RELATED DOCUMENTS

*Frequency tables of the specific policy themes in university strategic plans, interim and final Mission-based Compacts*

### Students

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## APPENDIX D

Distinctive features found in the mission-related documents of Australian universities

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<th>Adelaide</th>
<th>ACU</th>
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| • Member of Go8  
  • Key research strengths in agricultural sciences; health sciences; molecular biosciences and biotechnology; physical sciences; engineering, information technology and telecommunications; environmental sciences and management; and social sciences  
  • Research institutes - Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resource Management, Health and Ageing, Photonics and Advanced Sensing, Agriculture, Minerals and Energy Resources, and Neuroscience.  
  • Waite campus is home to the most powerful agricultural research and teaching cluster in the southern hemisphere. Campus partners include the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA), Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI), divisions of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, the Wine Innovation Cluster, the Plant Accelerator and the new ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Cell Wall Biology.  
  • Roseworthy campus is the home of teaching and research into animal and veterinary science. Campus partners include PIRSA, SARDI, and the Pig and Poultry Production Institute. It is home to the Pork Cooperative Research Centre and to South Australia’s first Vet School. | • Catholic intellectual tradition  
• Distinctive spiritual perspective  
• Quality programs in education, liberal arts, business, nursing and allied health, social sciences, theology and philosophy, visual and performing arts  
• Explicitly engages the social, ethical and religious dimensions of the questions it faces in teaching and research, and service  
• In its endeavours, it is guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and the dignity of all human beings  
• Ideal graduates are ethical in their behaviour, with a developed critical habit of mind, an appreciation of the sacred in life, and a commitment to serving the common good.  
• University Priority Research Centres: Centre for Early Christian Studies; National Centre for Clinical Outcomes Research; Centre for Creative and Authentic Leadership; Mathematics Teaching and Learning Research Centre; Institute of Child Protection Studies; and Quality of Life and Social Justice Research Centre |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **ANU** | • National university - research-intensive and research-led  
• Member of Go8  
• Research is central to everything ANU does. Research is the core. Research is central to everything ANU does.  
• The distinctive nature and purpose of ANU – it is an education-intensive research institute of international distinction  
• Educational values lie in providing a broad based research and discovery-led education. (At the time of its establishment in 1946, it was a full-time research university, the only one in Australia)  
• Partnership with national executive government and parliament  
• Leading contributor to public policy formulation and debate  
• ANU advances knowledge through community engagement by enhancing understanding of Australia – its economy, society, culture and environment – and its position in the region and the world  
• Emphasis on postgraduate research and graduate coursework |
| **Ballarat** | • Regional Victorian university  
• Dual sector – HE & TAFE, a pioneer of multi-sector integration  
• Australia’s only regional, multi-sector university and a pivotal provider of post-secondary education for Central and Western Victoria.  
• Four priority research themes being: Informatics and Applied Optimization, Regional Futures, Addressing Disadvantage and Inequality in Education and Health, Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion |
| **Bond** | • Private, independent, not-for-profit university  
• Distinctive learning experience  
  • Personalised, innovative teaching in small classes  
  • Flexible, workplace relevant, outcome focussed programs  
  • Fast track degrees  
  • visiting professors from all over the world who bring an international perspective to our teaching  
  • uncompromising focus on industry relevance  
• Offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Law, Business, Sustainable Development and Architecture, Humanities & Social Sciences, Health Sciences & Medicine, Hotel, Resort & Tourism Management and Information Technology. |
<p>| <strong>Canberra</strong> | • Geographical distinctiveness - role is to serve Canberra, the |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Missions and Specializations</th>
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| CQU        | Focused on making higher education more relevant and accessible to all people, especially Central Queenslanders.  
Multi-city university (Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane & Gold Coast) with its base in regional Queensland - Central Queensland, the key energy-resource and industrial powerhouse of Australia  
Most-engaged university, regional mission  
services the largest proportion of underrepresented students among all Australian universities  
Institutes of Resources & Sustainability - partnerships with resources companies – provide research services to the resource sector  
Community Health research, intercultural and international education research |
| CDU        | Regional multi-sector institution in Northern Territory  
Committed to the advancement and prosperity of our region and the nation,  
Leader in the teaching and understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems & education  
Research strengths in tropical, desert and Indigenous knowledge |
| CSU        | To serve inland communities across New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and northern Victoria  
Provide distinctive educational programs for the professions  
Research relevant to sustainable inland, rural and regional communities (food security, water security, biosecurity, climate change, inland health); and, in areas where it has  
Three Cross-Faculty institutes:  
The National Institute for Sports Studies (NISS)  
The Donald Horne Institute for cultural heritage  
the ANZSOG Institute for Governance and  
Three University Research Centres:  
The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling  
the Institute for Applied Ecology  
The National Centre for Integrative Science  
Our research will be encompassed by three cross-cutting themes:  
Sustainable Environments;  
Effective Governance;  
Resilient Communities |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Key Facts and Research Strengths</th>
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| Curtin     | Western Australia's largest university  
• Largest enroller of Indigenous Australian students  
• Areas of Research Strength  
• Minerals and energy; Curtin Institute of Minerals and Energy  
• Information and communications technology, and emerging technologies;  
• Health; and  
• Sustainable development |
| Deakin     | Rural and regional engagement - enhancing the economic, social, cultural and intellectual capital of Geelong, south central and south western Victoria  
• Research strengths: carbon fibre innovation; creative technologies; education futures; public health; biomedical science and comparative social research  
• Research institutes: The Alfred Deakin Research Institute promoting debate and public policy impact and Institute for Technology Research and Innovation  
• Strategic Research Centres in: Applied ecology; creative technologies; education futures; sustainable business; public and population health; biomedical science and biotechnology; and citizenship and globalisation.  
• Known for its distance education - background as a distance education provider and its leadership in the use of technology  
• Establishment of Australia’s first regional Medical School |
| ECU        | Largest provider of regional Higher Education in Western Australia  
• University-Community engagement as a key priority  
• Areas of research activity: Business and Society; Communications and Creative Arts; Education; Engineering and Information and Communications Technology; Environment and Sustainability; Health and Wellness; Security, Law and Justice; and Society and Community |
| Flinders   | Based in Adelaide, Flinders University has a physical presence in various regions of South Australia, Western Victoria and the Northern Territory.  
• The University’s activities in these regional areas support educational programs and students, particularly in medicine, nursing and other health professions, tourism, environmental management, archaeology, teacher education, marine |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Griffith  | • For the enrichment of Queensland  
• Offered Australia’s first degrees in Asian and environmental studies,  
• World leader in the fields of Asian politics, trade and development; climate change adaptation; criminology; drug discovery and infectious disease; health; sustainable tourism; water science; music and the arts.  
• Specialisations in issues that are critical to the world this century: Asian politics, security and development; water; climate change adaptation; health and chronic disease; and drug discovery and infectious diseases.  
• Griffith’s research contributes to the national research priority of an *environmentally sustainable Australia* through National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility and the Australian Rivers Institute |
| JCU       | • Advancing northern Queensland and northern Australia  
• Internationally-recognised research in areas such as marine sciences, biodiversity, tropical ecology and environments, global warming, tourism and in tropical medicine and public health care in underserved populations  
• Four major themes:  
  · Tropical Ecosystems, Conservation and Climate Change  
  · Industries and Economies in the Tropics  
  · Peoples and Societies in the Tropics  
  · Tropical Health, Medicine and Biosecurity |
| La Trobe  | • Serving northern Melbourne metropolitan region and northern Victoria  
• Research Strengths  
  · Human Behaviour and Thought  
  · Agribiosciences and the Environment  
  · Health and Society  
  · Human Society and Organisation  
  · Studies of the Past  
  · Human Communication |
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<th>Melbourne</th>
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| - Molecular Science  
- La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science and AgriBio  
- Nine concentrations of research excellence in animal behaviour; cognitive science; earth and planetary evolution; social inclusion; ancient cultures; quantum information; science and security; lasers and photonics; climate risk / ecology and evolution; and biomolecular frontiers  
- Eight new research areas in astronomy and astrophysics; emotional health; wireless telecommunications; financial risk; legal governance; neuroscience, vascular sciences and surgery; social, cultural and political change; and language sciences  
- Australia’s first post-fellowship, sub-specialty medical school and the Macquarie University Hospital  
- Macquarie has secured several industry partnerships –  
  - Macquarie and Cochlear  
  - Macquarie and GE Healthcare  
  - Macquarie and EMC Corporation  | - Australia’s top ranked university, member of Go8, member of the global Universitas 21 alliance  
- Melbourne Model- combining broad and deep undergraduate study with specialised and professional graduate programs at Masters and PhD level  
- Triple helix - Research, Learning and Teaching & Engagement - three core strategic objectives—  
  - production of globally competitive research,  
  - provision of internationally recognised degree programs  
  - external engagement activities - encompasses many dimensions of interaction between academia and wide society—including knowledge partnerships, advancement and international activities  
- Home to the world’s first IBM Research and Development Centre.  
- Ground-breaking research projects:  
  - the development of the Bionic Eye, in collaboration with the Bionic Vision Australia consortium  
  - the construction of a Hydrogen Car, including a highly efficient hydrogen fuelled internal combustion engine  
  - research into the development of the Victorian Wildfire Management Overlay  
- The University also contributes to Australia’s cultural dynamism through programs such as the Melbourne Theatre Company, Melbourne University Publishing, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, and Asialink. |
<table>
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| Monash      | - Australia’s largest university, member of Go8  
- Outer suburban and regional campuses in Berwick, Caulfield, Clayton, Gippsland Peninsula - serving the needs of local communities and industries  
- Multi-international campuses - Malaysia and South Africa, and centre in Italy, a joint research academy in India  
- Curriculum has a strong international content  
- On the board of Open Universities Australia, the only Go8 university to do so;  
- Over a quarter of Monash domestic undergraduate students are enrolled in double degrees, and a third undertake professional degrees.  
- Co-located with CSIRO and other major research facilities such as the Australian Synchrotron and the Melbourne Centre for Nanofabrication  
- Significant research strengths in areas such as regenerative medicine, stem cell science, structural chemistry, green chemistry, materials engineering and economic modelling  
- Substantial capacity, in various platform technologies including proteomics and genomics, electron and medical microscopy, nanofabrication and e-Research |
| Murdoch     | - Student-centred teaching - Ensuring that its students can study flexibly and in a supportive and engaging learning environment  
- Multidisciplinary/multi competency approach to course offerings  
- Areas of focus:  
  - resources technology  
  - animal and plant studies, environment and bioinformatics  
  - health, biomedicine and psychology  
  - film, television and digital media  
  - history, literature and religion  
  - Asian studies, political science and social sciences |
| UNE         | - Australia’s first regional university  
- Serving regional communities in New England region - School of Rural Medicine  
- Flexible education, Learning online, (75% of student study by distance mode)  
- Research excellence – support economic and social development of regional communities |
| UNSW        | - Member of Go8, one of the three Australian members of the global Universitas 21 alliance  
- B2B is a strategy to enhance effectiveness and interdisciplinarity. We seek to minimise the barriers between faculties and disciplines, and between blue sky research and |
research of more immediate impact. The name B2B captures the idea of the practical application of research, as in “Bench to Bedside” in medicine, or “Bench to Building” in architecture.

- UNSW is distinctive in that it is the only Australian research intensive university established with this unique focus, modeled on universities such as MIT in the USA and European technical universities.
- Its research centres foster multidisciplinary research and include national centres such as the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Research; ARC Centres of Excellence such as the Centre for Advanced Silicon Photovoltaics and Photonics; and university centres such as Brain Sciences UNSW and Lowy Centre for Cancer Research, the largest integrated cancer research institute in the Southern Hemisphere.

**Newcastle**

- High quality education of professionals a defining feature of the University
- Problem-based learning, first pioneered by the university some 25 years ago, forms the basis of degree programs in medicine, engineering, architecture, nursing, social work and law
- Our research strengths are in health, energy and environment, and science and engineering,
- Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources
- Hunter Medical Research Institute - the only medical research institute in regional Australia
- A national and international leader in Indigenous collaboration.
- 32% of our students are from low SES backgrounds, more than double the national average participation rate.

**Notre Dame**

- Not for profit private university
- Dual sector – HE and TAFE
- Embraced both the modern Australian university tradition and the ancient and esteemed traditions of Catholic universities both in Europe and North America.
- Leader in the great traditional professional disciplines of Health and Education, so long associated with the mission of the Church in Australia.
- A special role in the education of, and service to, the indigenous people of northern Australia.
- 3 campuses - Fremantle, Broome and Sydney – has a Sydney medical school which also operates in Melbourne

**UQ**

- Member of Go8 in Queensland
- One of the three Australian members of the global Universitas 21 alliance
- Research across a broad spectrum, ranging from bioscience
and nanotechnology to mining, engineering, social science and humanities

- Eight significant research institutes - Institute for Molecular Bioscience; the Queensland Brain Institute; the Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology; the Sustainable Minerals Institute; the Diamantina Institute for Cancer, Immunology and Metabolic Medicine; the Institute for Social Science Research; the Global Change Institute; and the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation.

| QUT | A selectively intensive research university, applied focus  
|     | Focus in the STEM area - strengthen offerings in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and in postgraduate coursework and customised education  
|     | Queensland’s first Confucius Institute  
|     | Hosts the Australian-Canadian Prostate Cancer Research Alliance, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, the Syngenta Centre for Sugarcane Biofuel Development, the Microsoft eResearch Centre, AusSun Research Lab and the Australian Research Centre for Aerospace Automation |

| RMIT | Global in outlook and action  
|      | Urban in orientation and creativity, reflecting and shaping the city of the 21st Century  
|      | The first choice provider of work relevant learning in Australia, preparing students for professions and vocations of the future  
|      | Applied focus and for excellence in research and research education in our chosen fields.  
|      | Four Research Institutes, Design, Global Cities, Health Innovations and Platform Technologies that represent cross-disciplinary research  
|      | 'high impact' programs/fields are: Technology, Design, Global communities, Health solutions, Global business, Communication, and Urban sustainable futures  
|      | Five priority industry sectors are the focus for advancing strategic partnerships in education and research across RMIT: aerospace and aviation; automotive; built environment, construction and infrastructure; health and community services; media and communications. These industry priorities have strong alignment with RMIT's high impact programs and research institutes.  
|      | In the 2015 Strategic Plan, the research areas: The future of cities, Improving health and lifestyle, Smart devices and technology solutions, Designing the future, and Sustainability and climate change. |

| UniSA | Largest university in South Australia; significant contributor to South Australia's prosperity  
<p>|       | Defined by its experiential learning with applied focus |</p>
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<th>Southern Cross</th>
<th>Southern Queensland</th>
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| • Grapple with the ‘big’ issues of a changing world, including:  
  • improving health and health care for all  
  • protecting the planet’s natural resources  
  • generating clever solutions to global energy needs  
  • creating new designs and technologies for a changing world  
  • enhancing the quality and productivity of working life  
  • building just, resilient and inclusive democratic societies.  
| • One of Australia's newest universities.  
• Based in regional Australia, with campuses in Lismore and Coffs Harbour and an expanding presence in the southern Gold Coast and Tweed Heads.  
• SCU is the only university that provides a campus presence across its entire regional footprint.  
• SCU expansion at the Gold Coast and Tweed Heads directly impacts on the Australian Government's ambitions for higher education by providing a physical campus in one of Australia's fastest growing population areas traditionally under-served by higher education providers. The campus will enable SCU to deliver courses for professions in demand including Health, Education, Law, Business and Tourism.  
• The University's student cohort is distinctive. Around 60% are from a regional background and 22.36% are from a low SES background.  
• SCU has particular strengths in agricultural and environmental research (plant genetics, geosciences, phytochemistry, coastal biogeochemistry and marine sciences). Other strengths include tourism, sport and leisure, and aged services. Emerging areas include children and young people, health and well-being (including psychology) and Indigenous well-being (healing and trauma).  
| • Multi-campus, regional and outer metropolitan university … recognised as a leader in open and flexible education  
• From its foundations as a distance education provider, the University has diversified its operations to include a far greater mix of open and flexible programs that meet the education needs of its students. More than 75 per cent of students studying via distance or online. USQ is at the cutting edge of flexible delivery of resources and technology  
• Three campuses play an important role in their respective communities - Toowoomba, Springfield and Fraser Coast  
• Strategically focussed research and engagement program based on a select number of multidisciplinary research centres in areas of institutional strength.  
• The USQ Research Framework includes the following four core themes:
- the Sustainable Systems Initiative which focuses on the four programs of sustainable agriculture, sustainable energy resources, water resources, and world food security
- Sustainable Communities, including major contributions to healthy communities, sustainable business and organisations, and education; and
- Regional Advancement and Future Technologies, and in particular the links to a Sustainability Industry Precinct under development, innovation in regional manufacturing industries and the emergent gas industry in Western Queensland.
- The Next Generation Learning Initiative to maintain USQ's leadership in this area by delivering research in online pedagogy and technology-enhanced learning and to further develop the digital capacity at USQ through the Australian Digital Futures Institute (ADFJ).

| Sunshine Coast | Founded to service the needs of the wider Sunshine Coast community, one of Australia’s fastest growing regions
- To be the major catalyst for the innovative and sustainable economic, cultural and education advancement of the region
- High proportions of low SES (>40% Centrelink beneficiaries), first in family (50%), Indigenous and other equity groups
- Sustainability Research Centre (climate change adaptation, sustainable coastal communities)
- Genecology Research Group (aquaculture and fisheries science, tropical and sub-tropical forestry science)
- Centre for Healthy Activities, Sport and Exercise (exercise physiology and rehabilitation) |

| Swinburne | Dual Sector - Swinburne is the first university in Australia to offer a guaranteed institution-wide articulation program. The Guaranteed Entry Scheme gives students guaranteed entry into an undergraduate program when they enrol in a Swinburne TAFE diploma or advanced diploma
- Swinburne's program profile is concentrated in Engineering and IT Approximately 36% of undergraduate student load lies within these two broad fields of education, and Management/Commerce accounts for a further 32% of load
- Has eight research concentrations in: astrophysics and supercomputing; atom optics and ultrafast spectroscopy; brain sciences; complex software systems and services; manufacturing; micro-photonics; social research; and sustainable infrastructure |

| Sydney | To serve NSW, Australia and the world
- Member of Go8
- Oldest university in Australia and Oceania
- International standing in arts and humanities, health and
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<th>Institution</th>
<th>Features and Research Areas</th>
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| UTas        | Tasmania’s only public university  
|             | Contributing to the cultural, economic and social development of Tasmania.  
|             | While its teaching, learning and research are global in scope, it also takes direction from Tasmania’s distinctiveness.  
|             | Its location ensures a close affiliation with Antarctic and Southern Ocean science, including a strong focus on climate change - The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies  
|             | UTAS also has excellence in population and health research, through the Menzies Research Institute  
|             | Key provider of maritime research and teaching through the Australian Maritime College.  
|             | Centre of Excellence in Ore Deposits, a collaboration between the Australian Government, the minerals industry and university partners  
|             | Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science  
|             | The Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre  
|             | CRC for Forestry  
| UTS         | Sydney based - university of technology - embedding and showcasing leading edge IT and other technologies in all disciplines;  
|             | Performing strongly in the disciplines of science, engineering and technology;  
|             | The UTS Model of Learning - practice-oriented education  
|             | Transdisciplinary nature of our teaching and research, and it is this which holds the key to our approach to university-wide sustainability.  
|             | Research into sustainability has been strong at UTS for more than ten years, with specific expertise in economic, environmental and social sustainability - the Climate Change Research Cluster Institute for Sustainable Futures  
| UWA         | For the benefit of the Western Australian, Australian and international communities.  
|             | Member of the Group of Eight (Go8) universities  
|             | The strategic research areas are: plants, animals, agriculture and environment (including management of natural and agricultural systems) exploration, production and utilisation of minerals, oil and gas, fundamental bio-medical and translational approaches to health, indigenous knowledge, bio-engineering and bio-
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<th>University</th>
<th>Mission and Accomplishments</th>
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| **VU**     | • Seeks to positively transform lives through the power of further education, vocational and higher education, and research.  
• We work collaboratively to develop the capabilities of individuals, enterprises and communities within the western Melbourne region and beyond to build sustainable futures for ourselves and our stakeholders.  
• We operate primarily at campuses in the western suburbs of Melbourne, the Melbourne CBD and at facilities provided by our partners in Asia and Europe.  
• Our multi-sector nature will facilitate students both moving across our further, vocational and higher education sectors to customise their formal learning, to differentiate the University as Australia's best-integrated tertiary provider  
• Social inclusion has long been a characteristic feature of VU |
| **UWS**    | • Bringing knowledge to life in Greater Western Sydney through community and business engagement with our learning and research  
• Service to its regional, national and international communities, beginning with the people of Greater Western Sydney, campus – Bankstown, Campbelltown, Hawkesbury, Nirimba (Blacktown) – UWS College, Parramatta and Penrith  
• Implement a comprehensive Indigenous education strategy  
• The University’s new School of Medicine is also helping solve medical workforce shortages by training extra doctors to work across Greater Western Sydney’s hospitals, health services and general practices |
| **UOW**    | • An integrated, multi-site university (Wollongong, Shoalhaven and the Innovation Campus (iC)), four Education Centres and a Sydney Business School at sites on the Innovation Campus and in the Sydney CBD.  
• A Graduate School of Medicine - with a special curriculum and purpose for training medical practitioners for remote, rural and regional areas.  
• Its research strengths include nanotechnology, intelligent materials, medical radiation physics, internet security, superconductivity, renewable energy, transnational crime prevention and functional foods.  
• The University’s Innovation Campus, a research and development precinct on a 22-hectare beachside site in Wollongong designed to give innovative companies and organisations the opportunity to locate alongside and collaborate with its leading research institutes,  
• targeted social inclusion strategy - strategies for improving Indigenous access, participation, retention and success |

Source: Universities’ mission-related documents