

# Appendix I

## The Nature of Notre Dame

### Objects

In August 2005, the Parliament of Western Australia amended the University of Notre Dame Australia Act 1989 to insert (Section 5) a new Objects statement for the University:

- a) *The provision of university education within a context of Catholic faith and values and*
- b) *The provision of an excellent standard of –*
  - i) *Teaching, scholarship and research*
  - ii) *Training for the professions and*
  - iii) *Pastoral care for its students*

This statement underpins the policy and development framework for the University and is reflected in its Strategic Plan.

The University has set five principal goals to achieve by 2018:

1. To position itself as a distinctive private Catholic university within Australia, noted for the excellence of its undergraduate education, its scholarship, its training for the major professions, and the pastoral care of its students.
2. To fulfil its compact with the Australian Government to specialise in and achieve a leading position as a university in the fields of Health and Education.
3. To be regarded as one of the best Catholic universities in the world.
4. To grow to a total enrolment of about 10,000 equivalent full-time students.
5. To achieve a strong overall budgetary and financial position.

### Size

Although Notre Dame is growing rapidly, it remains a relatively small university by Australian standards. It aims to reach a final enrolment position of about 10,000 equivalent full-time students by 2018, with 5000 at each of its campuses in Fremantle and Sydney. The University believes that by remaining relatively small it will be better able to achieve its goals, particularly as they relate to the pastoral care and holistic development of its students.

The University tries to complement its ‘institutional smallness’ policy by committing itself to relatively small class sizes. Tutorials are normally limited to a maximum of 20 students and lectures are generally restricted to medium sized groups.

Institutional smallness has other advantages. It produces a close-knit, informal community. Decision-making can be simpler and more direct. It also encourages

considerable policy flexibility and nimbleness. It necessitates a smaller bureaucracy and a less cumbersome policy development and implementation process than in large institutions. It also encourages direct accountability and efficiency of resource use.

Perhaps the single greatest advantage of relative smallness in what is essentially a human service institution is the individual and personal stamp which characterises most people's experiences within it.

## **Location**

The University's locations in the West End of Fremantle, Broome on the North West coast, and in Broadway and Darlinghurst Sydney have given it a special character, and have helped to shape the nature of its curriculum and its teaching program and the facilities and services it provides to students. The West End of Fremantle is one of the finest examples of preserved 19th Century port architecture in the world. The University has acquired a substantial number of buildings in this area, and over time has been developing and restoring them. This has been a difficult and expensive challenge but one which has produced benefits, not only for the University, but also for the wider community. The historic nature of the buildings, their authentic appearance, and the way they mesh together have created a very special University environment.

The University has been supported in these goals by the City of Fremantle, which has a formal agreement with the University to ensure a harmonious 'town and gown' relationship for the long term. The University has the space to accommodate its planned enrolment of 5000 students in Fremantle. It intends to develop its Fremantle campus as one of the most unique and beautiful in Australia.

The Broome campus is self-contained, and occupies four hectares of land leased for the long term from the Diocese of Broome. The Broome campus was the site of a former Catholic girls' boarding school. The facilities have been adapted and others, including a beautiful new library facility opened in 2005, have been added to make this a very special learning environment in the middle of the township. The Broome campus has residential accommodation for both tertiary students and for Aboriginal students who come from the Kimberley and elsewhere in Western Australia to undertake short-term, intensive Vocational Education and Training programs. These students find the physical environment of the Broome campus particularly supportive.

The Sydney Campus has been developed in the 'Notre Dame tradition' – using old buildings and bringing them to new life through careful adaptation and restoration, which preserves the original integrity of the buildings while making them suitable for university purposes. The interior design reflects the style used in WA. The campus at Darlinghurst is a combination of restored church buildings and a new seven story facility to house the Nursing and Medical schools.

The choice of locations, and the style of development that the University has undertaken on its Fremantle, Broome and Sydney campuses, have done much to enhance position of the University and to add value to the education of its students.

## **Emphasis on Teaching, Scholarship and Professional Training**

From the beginning, Notre Dame has chosen to focus on being primarily a teaching and professional training university, concentrating largely on undergraduate students. Whilst supporting staff with particular research interests or motivations, the University has made it clear that, for the present at least, priority is to be given to high quality teaching, scholarship and professional training. Senior staff are strongly encouraged to teach first year classes.

Staff policies, contracts and specified employment conditions make it very clear that this is the priority. Academic staff know, when they seek and gain employment at the University, what their teaching and related professional training obligations will be. In general, this has been well accepted by staff and is highly valued by students. The University expects all full time and fractional staff, including Deans, to teach a required number of units per year.

Notre Dame has tried to make a specialty of training for key professions. These include teaching, nursing, accounting, law, the priesthood, counselling, physiotherapy and medicine. The University's professional training programs reflect both the objects of the institution and areas of need and demand in the community. The emphasis on the professions has been of critical importance to the enrolment viability of the University.

In developing its professional training programs the University has had to meet the accreditation requirements of relevant professional bodies. In many cases the University has gone well beyond these requirements in its focus on the practicum as an integral part of professional training.

The University has been able to develop special relationships with a wide range of professional providers in the community. These partnerships have been crucial to the quality and the relevance of its training programs and also to the high level of success enjoyed by its graduates in professional employment when they have left Notre Dame. The success of its graduates has, in turn, been important in building up the reputation of the University in the community and stimulating subsequent demand for admission.

The emphasis on professional training has also strongly influenced Notre Dame's staffing policies. The University has consistently sought to ensure that highly successful and well qualified professionals who remain current in their fields and who are recognised for their quality and expertise are employed as full time, fractional or sessional academic staff. The quality and the availability of these people have been critical to the University's achievement of recognition for its professional courses.

## **The Kimberley Mission**

Of great significance to the early development of Notre Dame, and the shaping of its character and place in Australian higher education, was the decision taken in 1993 to establish a branch campus in Broome which opened in 1994. The prime aim of this initiative was to meet the needs of the people of the Kimberley region for tertiary education services, and to be an instrument for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia. The Church had long laboured in the Kimberley region in

meeting the primary and secondary schooling needs of its people. It was felt that Notre Dame had the potential to build on that Catholic tradition, by offering a unique educational opportunity and incentive for advancement, especially to the Aboriginal people. It was a bold venture, led by the then Bishop of Broome, John Jobst, and the foundation Dean of the Broome campus, Sister Pat Rhatigan, SJG, given the newness of the University as a whole, its fragile resource base, and the extreme challenges associated with establishing Australia's most remote university campus.

The Kimberley initiative has been a very successful one for the University. It has already achieved much and holds the promise, notwithstanding the ongoing endemic challenges, of being a major force for the educational advancement of the region, and especially its Aboriginal people. The Broome campus has helped to define the uniqueness of Notre Dame and to give it a particular place in Australian higher education.

### **Special Relationship with the University of Notre Dame in the United States**

The University of Notre Dame Australia was fortunate to have, as its founding partner and mentor, the University of Notre Dame in the United States. (The latter is ranked in the top twenty national universities in the United States. It has almost 11,000 mainly undergraduate students and an endowment of more than \$US6 billion).

The UNDA Canonical Statute requires the Trustees to take all possible steps to enhance its relationship with NDUS. The relationship has manifested itself in a number of ways:

- From the beginning, senior members of the leadership group of NDUS have formed a significant body (up to five members) within the Trustees and Governors of Notre Dame Australia, with the President of NDUS, Father Malloy CSC, a foundation member and active participant. Board membership by NDUS officials has enabled UNDA to gain consistent in-depth advice about its development, its curriculum, its philosophy, its management operations, its position in international Catholic higher education, and its long-term plans and aspirations.
- NDUS has sent hundreds of its students to study at UNDA for a semester at a time. These students have enrolled in a wide range of units in such areas as Business, Arts and Letters, Communications, Environmental Studies, Philosophy and Theology. They have also been a major presence on the Broome campus as part of their program.
- The enrolment of NDUS students in UNDA units has necessitated the gaining of accreditation for them from NDUS. This accreditation has involved ongoing review of course content, staff qualifications, assessment and reporting, and advice to UNDA on necessary improvements.
- In addition to sending its students to UNDA, NDUS has also sent staff members each year, in many cases senior faculty, who have taught in UNDA courses and have been a major influence on campus life. NDUS has also received UNDA staff on its Indiana campus and given them systematic professional development opportunities on such visits.

NDUS has also been a very significant influence in shaping the Catholic character of UNDA. Especially important in this regard has been its promotion of the value of a core curriculum (the compulsory study of Theology, Philosophy and Ethics), and of Campus Ministry and Service Learning Programs.

Finally, the existence of such a powerful and prestigious founding partner as NDUS gave the infant UNDA credibility and status at a time when it was most needed. This has been of great value in creating recognition of UNDA within the general and academic communities in Australia and overseas.

Overall, NDUS has been a major formative influence on UNDA. Although UNDA is an independent Australian Catholic university, it has maintained close practical links to NDUS and has deliberately set out to develop itself in the NDUS tradition.