FEDERAL BUDGET 2005-2006

The Federal Government will provide $7.8 billion to the higher education sector in the 2005-06 budget period. This is predominantly funding committed through the Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future package but also contains $31.9 million in new initiatives. New funding includes:

- ANU will get $16.5 million to increase funding to existing student places at its Institute of Advanced Studies;
- The University of Western Sydney will receive $25 million over three years for the development of a medical training facility at its Campbelltown campus, a new building for teaching at the Parramatta campus, a new library at the Penrith campus and upgraded facilities at the Hawkesbury campus.
- $26 million has been allocated to James Cook University to fund a modest increase in medical school numbers and the establishment of a new veterinary science school, with 50 places per course in 2006 for veterinary science and tropical agriculture.

In line with announcements made in last year’s Backing Australia’s Ability statement, funding for the Australian Research Council will increase from $481 million last year to $556.5 million in 2005-06.

The Department of Education, Science and Training will receive $9.2 million over four years to offset the high costs associated with implementing the Government’s complex higher education reform package. This is in contrast to the $250,000 each institution has been allocated specifically to offset the costs of implementing the HEIMS framework. Universities have not been fully compensated for compliance costs and have had to absorb the increased administrative expenses into their existing budgets.

DEST DISCUSSION PAPERS AND REVIEWS

Indexation
The Department of Education, Science and Training, in cooperation with the Department of Finance and Administration, and in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Treasury completed a review of indexation arrangements in the higher education sector. The Government was required to undertake such a review by the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Following consideration of the findings of the report, the Government concluded that there is not a strong case for a change to the current indexation arrangements at this time.

The view was put that the sector will receive about $8 billion in funding in 2005 and $36 billion over the next four years. Additional funding totalling more than $11 billion will also be provided through a range of reforms underpinning the Government’s Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future package.

Vice Chancellor’s Report to Senate
The report states that:

“Given the generally strong financial health of the sector, its enhanced scope to generate and retain revenues, and recent Budget supplementation which will provide additional funding of $2.6 billion over the five years to 2008, the review considers that immediate consideration of further resourcing to the sector would be premature.”

Further information and the full report of the review of higher education indexation arrangements are available at:

This underlines the University’s need to build revenue from a broad range of sources. Over time it is likely that fewer undergraduate courses will be viable on income from HECS-based places alone. It will be critical that Schools focus on their ability to grow income above the DEST base, leveraging the funding they receive for teaching to build their international student profile, other fee paying income and research income.

Research Quality Framework (RQF)

Submissions in response to the RQF Issues Paper closed on 2 May 2005. Murdoch participated strongly in the development of the IRUA’s comprehensive submission, available at:

In addition, Murdoch made its own submission on the design and implementation of a RQF. This emphasised that funding for research training is the major part of research block grants that come into consideration for allocation through an RQF. It is therefore essential that the performance of research training by universities is well understood and accommodated in any new framework. It is not sufficient to assume that allocating research training funds to the best research groups through a single block allocation will serve the needs of research training adequately. Mechanisms must be included in the process to reward excellence in research training.

Our submission also highlighted the need for funding from a new framework to be phased in over three to five years. This facilitated the move to a new funding framework without compromising current long-term projects, including postgraduate research training and research centres (CRCs and Centres of Excellence).

Building University Diversity

The Government’s discussion paper on the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval and Accreditation titled “Building University Diversity” canvassed mechanisms to ensure Australian universities reflect international best practice in underpinning a high quality, diverse and competitive higher education sector. At the heart of the discussion was the characteristics of universities and what criteria should be set in terms of institutions’ breadth and depth of teaching, scholarship and research to attain the University title.

The IRUA submission, which was again prepared with significant input from Murdoch, is available at: http://www.irua.edu.au/submissions/submission-20050422.pdf

In developing the AVCC response to the Building University Diversity paper, an analysis of non self-accrediting providers and their courses as listed in the AQF registers was conducted. Highlights of the analysis (full detail of which are available from John Pike) include:

- Australia has 184 AQF recognized non self-accrediting HE providers offering approximately 1,088 AQF recognized awards.
- Approximately 29% of awards are Bachelor awards, 17% of awards are diplomas, advanced diplomas and associate degrees and 58% of awards are higher degree awards (including
Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates, Masters and Doctorates). 95% of these are Graduate Diplomas, Graduate certificates and Masters awards.

- Approximately 28% of providers offer graduate certificate and graduate diploma awards only, 14% offer Bachelor awards only, 13% offer ‘Other’ (e.g. diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree) awards only, and 12% offer a broad range of awards (from Diploma to Masters/Doctorate).
- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (largely religious/theological studies) represent 51% of awards offered (546) by these providers.
- Approximately 44% of all Bachelor awards and 65% of all Masters and Doctorate awards offered are in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- There are 33 doctorate awards offered (3%) by a total of 18 providers. 82% (27) of these are specifically in religious/theological studies, and 82% (27) of all doctorates are offered by religious/theological providers.
- These providers offer no doctorate awards in the Science/Health, Engineering/Information Technology, Education or Law/Legal Studies disciplines.

**HEWRR**

The Government has announced the implementation of the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements (HEWRRs). Higher education providers will need to comply with these requirements and the National Governance Protocols in order to be eligible to receive increased levels of Commonwealth Grant Scheme funds.

To qualify for increases in CGS funding available in later years - 5% in 2006 and 7.5% from 2007, universities must by 31 August of the year prior have in place certified agreement(s) and workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs. The HEWRRs include:

1. Choice in Agreement Making
   - AWAs must be offered to all new employees employed after 29 April 2005 and to all other employees by 31 August 2006.
2. Direct relationships with employees
   - Workplace agreements, policies and practices must provide for direct consultation between employees and the institution on workplace relations and human resources matters.
3. Workplace Flexibility
   - Workplace agreements, policies and practices must facilitate and promote fair and flexible arrangements, with working arrangements and conditions of employment tailored to the individual institutions circumstances.
4. Productivity and Performance
   - Workplace agreements, policies and practices must support organisational productivity and performance. This includes a fair and transparent performance management scheme which rewards high performing individual staff and efficient processes for managing poor performing staff.
5. Freedom of Association
   - Consistent with freedom of association principles contained in the Workplace Relations Act 1996, institutions must neither encourage nor discourage union membership. CGS funds must not be used to pay union staff salaries, or fund union facilities and activities.

Human Resources will work with University staff, the AVCC and the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA) to ensure that Murdoch is compliant with the HEWRRs.
GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT FAIR

Murdoch University’s Alumni, Careers and Employment Centre played host to many of Perth’s top Government and Private Sector Employers and Service organisations at the 2005 Graduate Recruitment and Employment Fair held on 27th April 2005.

Over 75 employees representing over 45 different organisations participated in the Fair, including representatives from public and private sectors of business, mining, education, tourism, environment, together with those from social justice, engineering, sciences, training and professional development organisations.

Employers were on hand to offer students and graduates specialist advice on areas such as:
- Industry employment trends;
- Graduate employment options;
- Future career opportunities;
- Tips on gaining meaningful employment; and
- Where to get volunteer experience.

The Alumni Careers and Employment Centre received considerable, positive feedback from employers and students. Recruiters commented on the high level of interest displayed by our students, their informed questioning as well as their professional and personal presentation. One employer commented that the Murdoch University Fair had been the best of many she had attended in the professional way in which the employers were treated and the standard of presentation of the students.

Students were pleased with the mix of employers represented, as well as for the opportunity to network and to gain information on what employers are looking for in graduates. Resumes were dispensed, follow-up meetings arranged between students and employers, and new opportunities were created for employers to come to campus to deliver key presentations.

The local community was engaged by providing a press release to the Melville Times, the Western Beacon and the Fremantle Gazette.

The Careers Fair was highly successful, with excellent contributions from Murdoch students. Feedback from faculty and staff is welcome to Mr. John Hyde, Manager of Alumni, Careers and Employment Centre (Tel: 9360 2596 or Email: j.hyde@murdoch.edu.au).

RESEARCH AWARDS

The Commonwealth Government has announced details of the $92 million Endeavour Programme under which a total of 109 high achieving students and scholars are to receive a scholarship to undertake study or research in their field of expertise.

Eighty-nine of these awards will bring to Australia outstanding people from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North and Latin America. Meanwhile twenty of Australia’s top researchers will travel to Asia to enhance their skills and knowledge in their area of specialisation.

Murdoch received six Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarships in 2005. Awards went to postgraduate students in the Institute of Sustainability and Technology Policy, Environmental Science, Psychology, Information Technology and Veterinary Studies (2).
In 2005, 110 projects from 29 Australian higher education institutions were funded through the Australian University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) Programme. The funded projects include 30 staff visits to counterpart institutions and participation of 340 Australian students from a wide range of disciplines. Murdoch will participate in the following way:

**Canada**
Two students, Michael Murphy and Alison Prior, will undertake one semester of study at one of the counterpart institutions: Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria and University of Waterloo, Canada.

**Hong Kong**
David Muller will undertake one semester of study at University of Hong Kong or City University of Hong Kong.

**United States**
Karrie Allan will undertake one semester of study at one of the counterpart institutions: St Norbert College, San Diego State University and University of Colorado, United States.

Naoko Sumiyoshi who is studying for a Master of Science in Renewable Energy has received an Australia-Asia Postgraduate Student Award.

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**STRATEGIC PLAN**

A University Strategic Planning meeting was held on 6th May 2005 at which the Pro Vice Chancellors responsible for implementation of the University’s four operational plans gave feedback to Schools/Offices in relation to the extent to which University Key Strategies (& Desired Outcomes) contained within Operational Plans are being addressed by School and Office Plans. In addition, the Director of Policy and Planning, provided information on the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

Following the meeting School Heads were encouraged to begin the process of reviewing their 2003-2007 School Plans and Office/Administrative Unit Directors were encouraged to commence the process of preparing 2006 Office Plans. These groups will be asked to present their plans towards the end of this year. To facilitate this new initiative, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Strategy) has been working with the Office of Human Resources to develop a “Strategic Planning Process” workshop for all School Heads and Office Directors to support the development of the required plans.

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**AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Professor Steve Halls, Director Murdoch Environment, has been appointed to the Environmental Protection Authority by the Minister for the Environment, Dr Judy Edwards MLA. This is one of the most prestigious Government appointments that an environmental professional can attain in this State.
- Professor John Webb has been appointed by the Department of Education, Science and Training as Counsellor (Education, Science and Training) based in the High Commission in New Delhi, India. With the expanding educational and research links between Australia and India, his appointment offers significant opportunities for Murdoch.
- Professor Goen Ho has been elected to serve on the International Water Association (IWA) Strategic Council. He was elected as a representative of the Specialist Groups/Member Segments/Developing Countries within the IWA. The IWA aims to help water professionals create innovative, pragmatic and sustainable solutions to challenging global water needs across national boundaries and across the drinking water, wastewater and stormwater disciplines.
The City of Mandurah celebrated its 15th Anniversary as a City on 14th April 2005. Murdoch congratulated the City through an advertisement included as part of a lift out feature on the history of Mandurah in the Mandurah Mail. This provided an opportunity to focus on the University as Mandurah’s ‘newest resident’ and to explaining our current course offerings and entry opportunities.

The School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences has received advice from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) confirming its continuing accreditation. This confirms the high standard of veterinary education and confirms anecdotal evidence from a range of sources that Murdoch’s Veterinary graduates are performing very well in many parts of the world and in many sectors of the profession. The School remains focussed on maintain its benchmark position within the Australian sector with several new initiatives in the School Plan to strengthen standards.

Professor Yianni Attikouzel was elected an Executive Member of the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) for a period of 2 years.

First year law, politics and international studies student Alexandra Shaw has been named Western Australia’s Young Person of the Year 2005 for her work as a leader in the deaf community. Her achievements in the field of advocacy for the deaf community include changes to the interpreter system in classrooms and in Centrelink, and captioning on all trains and PA systems in Transperth facilities. Alexandra has also been extremely active in raising awareness about Deaf education, Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and deaf culture.

The WA Youth Awards recognise and reward outstanding young Western Australians aged 13 to 25 years in the categories of active achievement, leadership, citizenship (individual), citizenship (group), inspiration and environment. As overall winner, Alexandra won a European holiday for two.

Murdoch University provides significant support for Alexandra to assist her with her studies, including Auslan interpreters working with her at her lectures and tutorials and for additional academic support time, the provision of lecture notes, and the captioning of audiovisual materials. Alexandra said that she was settling in well to studies at Murdoch University, but that many of staff and students on campus still need to learn a lot about working with deaf people, including adjusting to having interpreters in classrooms and providing transcripts.

Staff and student filmmakers and Murdoch alumni received 24 nominations for the 18th Western Australian Screen Awards. Winners were announced at a ceremony held on 12th March 2005 and include the following Murdoch-linked awardees:

- Best Experimental Production
  **Something Bush**
  Director/Writer: Diana Ford (recent Media Honours graduate)

- Best Animation Production
  **Medusa - First Date**
  Director/Writer: Pierce Davison (Media alumni)

- Best Music Video
  **Bridal Train by the Waifs**
  Producer: Rob Bygott (Media Honours and ex-staff)

- Best Directing (Drama)
  **Broken Bonds**
  Producer: Jessica Woodland (Media alumni)
  Writer/Director: Ashley Sillifant (Media alumni)

- Best Cinematography
  **Broken Bonds**
  Producer: Jessica Woodland (Media alumni)
  Cinematographer: Rob Bygott (Media Honours and ex-staff)

- Best Sound Design
  **Synaesthesia**
Sound Design: Wendi Graham & Emma Mitchell (Emma is a current Media student and also TSU Loans Officer)

- Best Production Design
  **I Chapman**  
  Producer: Poppy Dowle (Media alumni)  
  Production Design: Erika Jellis (Media alumni)

- Best Visual Effects
  **I Chapman**  
  Producer: Poppy Dowle (Media Alumni)  
  Visual Effects: Matt Hermans, David McDonnell, and Phil Barrenger (Multimedia students & alumni)

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**NOTABLE EVENTS**

- Professor Dr Kemala Motik, Rector, and delegates for Universitas Indonusa Esa Unggul in Indonesia visited Murdoch University on 1st March 2005 to discuss the development of a Memorandum of Understanding and possible offshore collaboration.

- An MOU was signed on 15th March 2005 between Swan TAFE and Murdoch University setting a foundation for negotiations relating to the development of franchising and articulation arrangements with respect to certain Swan TAFE Associate Degrees and Murdoch's Bachelor of Commerce (Hospitality and Tourism Management) and Bachelor of Commerce (Management).

- A new offshore agreement was signed on 30th March 2005 with the Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMa) for the delivery of the Bachelor of Commerce majors Management, Marketing Management, Human Resource Management and Entrepreneurship & Business Innovation and the Master of Human Resource Management. Founded in 1932, SMa is a national body representing Singaporean manufacturing companies, with a clientele base of 2,500 corporations.

- On 6th April 2005 a morning tea was held to celebrate the first Japanese Chiropractic students' graduation. The students also made a gift presentation to the Murdoch University Foundation.

- A delegation from Beijing Union University in China visited Professor Gary Martin and Professor Arnold Depickere on 9th April 2005 to discuss the offering of the final year of Murdoch's Bachelor of Science with majors in Computer Science, Internet Computing and Business Information Systems in Beijing.

- An MOU was signed on 14th April 2005 between Challenger TAFE and Murdoch setting a foundation for negotiations relating to the development of franchising and articulation arrangements with respect to certain Challenger TAFE Associate Degrees and Murdoch's Bachelor of Technology and Bachelor of Engineering degrees.

- Ms Anna George, Australian Ambassador to Croatia, visited Murdoch University on 27th April 2005 to meet with representatives from the Division of Arts (including Politics and International Studies staff), Division of Science and Engineering, and Murdoch International. This followed from a visit in June 2004 of the Croatian Deputy President, Dr Vesna Pusic, who met with a group of Academic Staff and had a short meeting with the Vice Chancellor.

- On 30th April 2005 the WA Branch of the National Liaison Committee for International Students (NLC) held their Branch Education Conference in the Brian Hill Lecture Theatre. The theme of the conference was "Striving for International Education excellence in the next 20 years". The NLC is recognised as the peak representative body for international students currently studying in Australia. It works closely with the key stakeholders in the Australian international education industry toward continuously improving the provision of education...
and support services for international students.
The NLC National Education Conference is the main forum for the valuable exchange of information, research and future outlook for international education in Australia among international student representatives throughout Australia. In addition to international students from all WA institutions, representatives from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Council for International Students Western Australia and ISANA: International Education Association were in attendance.

- Following a visit to Murdoch University in October 2004, Thaksin University in Thailand signed, in April 2005, an MOU with Murdoch University to foster collaboration in the areas of teaching and research training. Thaksin University is seeking to develop collaborative projects with the School of Education so that Thai Teacher Education postgraduates can come to Murdoch to take undertake professional development programs.

- The Environment Minister, Judy Edwards, released “Scumbook!” a guide to common local algae and aquatic plants. The book is designed to instruct field workers in various environmental arenas to correctly identify useful and harmful algal blooms, but also aimed to appeal to the average person.

FOR NOTING

**Professorial Selection Committee – Chair in Sustainable Agriculture**
The Selection Committee for the Chair in Sustainable Agriculture will comprise:

- Professor Andris Stelbovics, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
- Professor Yianni Attikouzel, Executive Dean, Division of Science and Engineering
- Mr Malcolm MacPherson, Chair of the Board, Research Institute for Sustainable Energy (RISE), representing Senate
- Professor Richard Hobbs, Chair in Environmental Science
- Professor Goen Ho, Professor in Environmental Engineering, Chair of Environmental Technology Centre Board
- Professor Mike Jones, Director, WA State Agricultural Biotechnology Centre
- Mrs Carolyn Jones, School of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology (Peel)
- Ms Barbara Whelan, Guild President