IN BRIEF

UWA moves to increase its intake

THE University of Western Australia could increase its student intake by almost 50 per cent as it seeks to get the scale needed to bolster its aim of becoming one of the world’s top 50 research universities.

UWA vice chancellor Professor Alan Robson has already moved to increase the university intake from its current level of about 17,000 students to grow to 20,000.

But, in discussing the university’s new initiative to coordinate its minerals and energy focus to raise its profile here and internationally, Professor Robson said the current plan to grow by around 17 per cent may not be enough.

He said he anticipated 25,000 students were what was required as UWA sought to position itself better globally.

“I will take that to the senate later this year, [a proposal] to grow to 25,000,” Professor Robson said.

That would still leave it behind WA’s biggest education provider, Curtin University, whose more than 32,000 students is almost double UWA’s current intake.

Professor Robson said the ranking related to research was the best way to evaluate the university’s position against international competition.

It is currently ranked well outside the top 100, behind several other Australian universities and facing an influx of Chinese institutions, which are being heavily funded by their government.

In addition, many leading institutions from the US and Europe were establishing campuses in regional centres, like Singapore.

“A lot of places are stretching themselves out, so this is not easy,” Professor Robson said.

He said apart from scale, universities also needed depth in their academic staff, good systems to support them, and a reputation for top graduates if they wanted to achieve international recognition.

“It’s not just a few stars,” he said.

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