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# **Engaging Community— Service or Learning?**

## **Benchmarking Community Service in Teacher Education**

Jude Butcher, Peter Howard,  
Marilyn McMeniman and Graham Thom

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## Executive Summary

The focus in this project has been on the extent of explicit commitment of teacher educators in universities to community service and community partnerships that find expression in the content and processes of programs. Such program expression reflects the reciprocity and mutual benefit of engagement with community in teacher education, albeit at a range of levels from superficial and isolated to complex and integrated. In teacher education, the focus is on community as a context for learning and in that sense the community provides significant benefit to the university and its students.

**The project consisted of five iterative and recursive phases.** The first phase was a literature review that provided the conceptual and methodological frameworks for the second phase of the project, a mapping of current community service components of teacher education courses. The mapping was conducted through a survey of all Australian universities offering teacher education programs. The third phase of the project was conducted through case study work in three sites chosen on the basis of survey data analysis. Each site provided a snapshot of practice in the area of community service learning in teacher education. The fourth phase of the project involved a participatory forum of teacher educators and community sector representatives at which the literature review, analysis of survey data, and case study findings were presented and critiqued. The final phase of the project integrated the findings of the previous phases and synthesised themes and issues. Throughout, the project team maintained discussions with external guides and critical friends such as staff from Loyola University, Chicago, and the University of Pennsylvania, and received useful materials from Pennsylvania State University.

The **literature review** highlighted that what is needed in characterising community service learning is a recognition that foregrounds mutual benefit and reciprocity between equal partners in learning.

The **survey** indicated there were distinct differences between institutions in levels of awareness and extent of community service activity. Regardless, there was an extensive range of community agencies engaged with teacher educators in the delivery of their programs.

The **case studies** emphasised that the implementation of a community service learning agenda occurred along a continuum of practice from pragmatic practice through to an articulated vision.

The **participatory forum** articulated the need to raise awareness of community service learning at both a national and institutional level and to develop (i) integrated programs that engage community, and (ii) appropriate benchmarks both to drive and evaluate change.

The outcomes of the literature review, survey, case studies and participatory forum all pointed to the way in which mutual benefit and reciprocity characterised strong community and university partnerships in learning. Each phase of the project has

highlighted the importance of an authentic process of engagement with community and shared reflection on action in delivering productive program outcomes. Accordingly, there are policy implications for the further development of benchmarks in community service.

At a national level, there needs to be recognition within the benchmarking structure that as a third key policy area, community service should feature more prominently than it does at present. As with the other two key areas of policy and practice in universities (teaching and research), community service should be a separate recognised area for benchmarking. This should be built into a framework for benchmarking community service.

At the institutional level, explicit recognition of the importance of community service within the benchmarking structure will lead to the development of specific and appropriate policy and strategies, including the allocation of adequate resources to support community service initiatives.

This influence on policy, strategies and resources holds also at the level of teacher education faculties and/or discipline groups. At this level, however, the focus of academic staff will necessarily be on the expression of policy in practice and on negotiation with members of community service agencies around the community involvement of students in specific kinds of programs.

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## Recommendations

The following recommendations build on the current structure and content of the benchmarking process as developed and presented in the *Benchmarking in Universities Manual: Version 2* (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, November, 1999). The recommendations are stated as follows to facilitate the further development of benchmarking community service within teacher education.

### Recommendation one

That the existing community service benchmarks be removed from the section 'External Impacts' and that a separate 'Area' for benchmarking in community service be created (as is the case with learning and teaching, and research) that gives prominence to community service as the third major role that universities play along with teaching and research.

### Recommendation two

That the following suggested structure of a benchmarking 'Area' titled, 'Community Service' be considered. The elements of the suggested area are:

- Community Context
- Community Service Plan

- Community Engagement Processes (including Strategic Community Service now benchmark 4.4)
- Community Service Learning
- Community Service Outcomes (including Exemplary Community Practices, now benchmark 4.5)

### **Recommendation three**

That a Community Service Learning benchmark with appropriate indicators be developed as an additional ‘element’ of the benchmarking document (a model benchmark with suggested indicators is included as appendix H to this report).

### **Recommendation four**

That benchmark 4.4, Strategic Community Service, be amended in light of recommendation two.

### **Recommendation five**

That benchmark 4.5, Exemplary Community Practices, be amended in light of recommendation two.

### **Recommendation six**

That the government consider funding similar benchmarking projects in other discipline areas to further inform and validate the structure and process findings as presented in this project report.

The implementation of these recommendations will necessarily impact on the development of institutional policy in relation to community service in both teacher education and across disciplines more broadly. As with other aspects of the benchmarking process, implementation of such an approach to benchmarking community service would influence the way institutions plan, resource, document and evaluate their engagement with the communities they serve.

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

This project is of national importance in higher education policy making and practice. It focuses upon community service as a core activity of universities and addresses practice and benchmarking issues with particular reference to teacher education programs. The focus is upon involvement of both university staff and students in community service and how their involvement is related to the research and learning activities of universities.

Community service is increasingly becoming a key element of students' teacher education courses. This element of their course provides students with opportunities to examine diverse social influences and their impacts upon Australian school children and youth. A critical awareness and responsiveness to these social influences is crucial for teachers in their roles not only as facilitators of learning but in providing links between schools and their communities.

Through mapping current community service programs in teacher education courses a national database showing the current state of involvement of teacher education staff and students in community service initiatives can be developed. The analysis of the strategies and outcomes of these community service components of courses is designed to provide the necessary information to inform appropriate and adequate benchmarks for community service in higher education in general and teacher education in particular.

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## 1.2 Purpose and scope

This project provides baseline data on the nature, status and efficacy of current community service components in teacher education courses across Australia. The intentions of the project were to:

- Define the nature and role of community service in teacher education;
- Map the nature and extent of current practice across Australia;
- Document models of practice;
- Propose benchmarks for community service in teacher education; and
- Identify appropriate indicators for the proposed benchmarks.

The findings from this study will assist in shaping policy and planning for improved university-community partnerships in teacher education courses across Australia. The findings also have implications for courses in other disciplines that seek to produce graduates who will work in community settings.



### 1.3 Benchmarking community service in teacher education

Benchmark 4.4 for Australian tertiary institutions (McKinnon, Walker & Davis 1999) highlights that universities need to have:

- a proactive approach to community service;
- community service as an integral component of its strategic planning;
- developed quantitative targets and processes for monitoring this area; and
- community service as an integral aspect of their learning and research functions.

The proposed benchmarks provide a conceptual framework for enunciating areas of the institutional practice related to community service. The conceptual framework needs to include subsets of indicators to address each of the above requirements. These indicators need to be defined so that they are valid for all stakeholders including universities, communities, community organisations and their clients. The indicators also need to encompass the learning and research functions thus highlighting community service as a substantive and core activity for universities.

The argument in this project report is that community service as part of field based learning, that takes place with an explicit awareness of social and cultural difference, enables participants to become aware of individual and community needs and develop a better understanding of how people can contribute to community wellbeing (Waddell & Davidson, 2000).

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### 1.4 Citizenship and community service

Citizenship is an integral part of community service as it relates to the learning and research functions of universities. In this project, citizenship refers to ‘living together in the Australian community and actively participating in our society’ (Australian Citizenship Council, 1999, p. 9). Included within this meaning of citizenship are the related ideas of democracy, national identity, shared civic values, fulfilling civic duties and civic pride.

Responsible or active citizenship focuses on one’s role in strengthening the community’s wellbeing and the ability to participate and engage in social problem solving. Community service engages university staff and students in expressing and fostering citizenship through their active involvement within the community. Such community engagement of staff and students is also an expression of the corporate citizenship of the university as a key social institution.

An active citizenship focus, at both individual and corporate levels, on community service ensures that attention is given to enhancing the social and human capital within our communities and nation as a whole. Additionally, it recognises the interrelationship between social and human capital in the development of a civil society. Increasing university staff and students’ commitment to community

wellbeing will contribute at least indirectly to the success of many educational, social and economic enterprises.

Community service indicators include how institutions serve the needs of their communities. This requires the formation of effective, responsive and authentic partnerships between the university and community agencies and organisations.

Teachers and schools address their learning and other educational goals within particular, yet diverse, community contexts. The need for teachers to have the skills to work effectively with their communities and different organisations with differing values has been emphasised by national and state reports (Adey, 1998; Ramsey, 2000). The effectiveness of community service components of teacher education courses needs to include student teacher learning outcomes in this area.

## 2. Literature Review

*Service, service-learning, community, and democracy are inevitably linked. They find their link through the ethical question of how one is to live.*

(Howard & Fortune, 2000, p. 26)

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### 2.1 Introduction

The project of which this review is a part is primarily concerned with examining the processes by which teacher education students engage with programs of community service within their curriculum structures to develop a greater awareness of both community and cultural diversity. The project is also concerned with the links between teacher education, cultural diversity and the development of active and informed citizens who, it is hoped, will become culturally sensitive and empathetic educators in their professional futures. In addition, it is focused on benchmarking programs that seek to incorporate community service in such a way that ‘citizenship’ and ‘service’ will impact positively and in socially just ways on pedagogical practice and educational outcomes. Finally, it is concerned with the implementation, evaluation and impact of programs of social action.

That this project has attracted significant funding reflects the federal government’s commitment to ‘citizenship’ and the development of ‘engaged citizens’. Often such interests tend to notions of ‘the good citizen’ and respective ‘civic duty’. The citizenship focus of this project is on the role of community service in the development of ‘engaged citizens’ involved in social action. In this project community service is characterised as a mutually beneficial partnership involving university staff, their students, and members of the community. The review of the literature will make clear that another significant focus in work on citizenship is in the area of civics.

An examination of the relevant literature has been conducted in the following four thematic areas:

- Community Service;
- Service Learning in Teacher Education;
- Engaged Citizenship; and
- Benchmarking.

In describing the way in which community service operates within teacher education programs we must first understand the pedagogical basis on which such learning contexts are included in the curriculum of teacher education. In the literature, many programs are explicit about their connection to a pedagogy of

‘liberation’, that is, a style of teaching and learning that encourages student control and input, highlights social justice, and recognises cultural difference. The bases of such a pedagogy are explored in the following section of the review. This is not to suggest that all programs of community service are influenced by what has come to be known as ‘liberatory’ pedagogy. Rather, the exploration sets up a theoretical and conceptual frame of reference for reflecting on and critiquing the purposes and outcomes of community service learning.

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## 2.2 Community service: towards a liberatory approach

Theories of social and cultural reproduction have focused on the unequal and hierarchical power relationships between teachers and students to help explain why education tends to reinforce rather than challenge structures of disadvantage. More recently, researchers have focused on the way that education can help change people’s lives for the better.

There are various explanations for the way in which systems of education seemingly reproduce the class, race and gender differences of society. For instance, many students seem trapped in economically disadvantaged positions in society. For them, education appears to maintain rather than change broad social and economic structures. Theorists and researchers in education have long been interested in whether education actually mirrors the society of which it is a part or if there is some challenge and critique in educational sites to the dominant ideas of society (McFadden, 1995).

Reproduction theory suggested that education contributed quite straightforwardly to the maintenance of the social status quo. Broadly speaking, education served to produce educational outcomes in which the children of say working class parents remained in the working class, and those of the middle class stayed in the same class as their parents; that is, education reproduced the existing relationships between social groups and between their cultures.

Connell (1994), for example, states that evidence of ‘socially unequal outcomes’ is ‘one of the most firmly established facts about Western-style educational systems in all parts of the world’ (p. 129):

*Children from working class, poor, and minority ethnic families continue to do worse than children from rich and middle-class families on tests and examinations, [are] more likely to be held back in grade, to drop out of school earlier, and [are] much less likely to enter college or university*

The dilemma is that systems of education have ‘become the main bearer of working-class hopes for a better future’ (Connell, 1994, p. 134). Connell (1994) concludes that education is a universal benefit containing powerful mechanisms of exclusion and privilege.

In broad terms, the operation of these mechanisms of exclusion and privilege in education are thought to reproduce the cultural relations of society. For example, educators use certain kinds of language and legitimate the use of certain kinds of texts reflecting the interests, values and tastes of the dominant social class (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

However illuminating such sociological analyses may be, they are quite deterministic in their orientation. An alternative approach is to see education operating as a dynamic part of society, making a difference to the way people, including teachers and student teachers, see themselves, their likely social positioning and their ability to influence others and bring about social change (Connell *et al.*, 1982). In this way, education can be seen as a ‘space’ where contested forces are mediated and dominant ideas resisted or rejected. Freire refers to such a space as ‘a space for change’ (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 126).

Educational sites, including teacher education programs, can therefore be seen as sites for the promulgation of liberal democratic ideals where education is constructed in terms of a political struggle for social justice and democratic citizenship (Giroux, 1983). They can also be seen as possible sites of intercultural understanding or articulation (McFadden & Walker, 1997).

Community service can thus be conceptualised as providing a context for such intercultural understanding to take place. As a pedagogical strategy, particularly in situations where issues of social justice and notions of citizenship and community are central, learning in a community setting provides content. Community service learning also challenges students to see different experiences as educationally valid and enables them to experience different cultures and situations. As Daigre (2000, p. 8) says, ‘service-learning offers a means for creating ... spaces and for challenging young people to participate in ... democratic efforts.’

In support, Giroux (1994) argues that education can propagate liberal democratic ideals where educational practice is constructed in terms of a political struggle for social justice and democratic citizenship and where oppressions like sexism and racism can be overcome.

Drawing on Freire's (1972) notion of a ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’, Giroux (1994) argues that the conditions must be right to enable progressive social change. Whereas Freire refers to the process of raising students’ awareness as conscientisation, Giroux (1994) refers to critical moments of critique. Both are referring to the way in which education can enable people to change their consciousness; to make social change possible both for themselves and others. In fact, Freire’s philosophy has been referred to as, the ‘pedagogy of possibility’ (Glass, 2001, p. 15). Through conscientisation (or critique), the individual and/or the group understands the construction of their own social positioning and recognises their ability to change the situation through both critical reflection on lived experience and related social action (Glass, 2001).

This liberatory framework of analysis has been applied to the development of political and technological literacy in developing countries and to the emergence of critical literacies for active and informed citizenship (Lankshear, 1997; McLaren & Lankshear, 1994; Muspratt, Luke & Freebody, 1997). Applied to community service in teacher education, the framework enables the conceptualisation of community service placements as ‘moments’ leading to or encouraging social critique and analysis of social action, where the notion of ‘the moment’ is more process oriented than time specific.

Accordingly, for Lankshear (1994), ‘liberatory’ education has to do with the struggle for symbolic power where the question for educators becomes:

*... how best to construct critical pedagogies that respect the integrity of learners, yet enable them to resist and transcend the fragmenting and depoliticising tendencies of contemporary forms of meaning making and the meanings that are made and lived thereby.*

(McLaren & Lankshear, 1994, p. 187)

In other words, a ‘liberatory’ approach is the kind of pedagogic practice which enables rather than constrains students by encouraging them to question ‘taken for granted’ social stances and stereotypical portrayals of certain cultural groups. It encourages students to take into account cultural difference and community experience as they reflect on their own experiences as teacher education students.

Society and culture become, therefore, important considerations in any analysis of teacher education, particularly in forms of teacher education that utilise community service as a key context for teaching and learning.

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## 2.3 Community service as context for teaching and learning

Miller and Sellar (1985) characterise approaches to teaching as a choice between three broad positions. The first is transmission, where the function is to transmit facts, skills and values to students. The second, transaction, where students are seen as rational and capable of applying themselves to the solving of complex problems. Finally, transformation, which emphasises the interrelatedness of knowledge and phenomena, and focuses on social and personal change.

Neville (1992) uses mythology to characterise orientations to education and teaching. First, the myth of Apollo, of ‘logic, rationality, detached observation, scientific enquiry, spiritual enlightenment, obviousness, understanding exactly what is what’ (p. 4). It is closest to a transmission position and ‘celebrates the clear light of the sun’ (p. 4). Second, the myth of Prometheus, rooted in the technocratic and the instrumental, the inspiration of the industrial age, ignoring ‘both the gods from whom technology comes and the hell to which such dangerous gifts might consign us’ (p. 14). It is closest to the transaction orientation. Finally, there is the myth of Psyche, ‘the story of how the soul is drawn by love through a slow, painful, shadowy initiation into a new way of being ... a story of blunders and ambivalence, of self-abasement, of stumbling over shadows towards a reunion with the divine’ and therefore with the light and knowledge (p. 3). The myth of Psyche is of course transformational.

These broad positions can also be referred to as traditions. Traditions of teaching are based on how we perceive knowledge and how we understand knowledge is constructed and learned. Pedagogical choices have therefore clear philosophical bases and are aimed at either assisting learners to exercise some control over (to determine and negotiate) the direction of their learning thereby enabling them to be more in control or restricting their opportunity to connect previous experience with new knowledge.

An enduring and durable characterisation of teaching and pedagogy comes from the work of Basil Bernstein (see Bernstein, 1996 for an overview). Bernstein’s thesis

is that three main subsystems of education (curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation) have evolved specifically so that students will acquire, and later apply, the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to reproduce the society and maintain the status quo.

Bernstein's analysis of the three educational 'message systems', curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, and the interdependency between them, provides a framework for understanding how education operates both to reproduce and structure the thinking of those within it. Bernstein argued what teachers teach, how they teach it, and the way that student learning is evaluated conveys powerful messages to students about what the teacher, and ultimately the society, considers both important and valid knowledge.

In this way, the selection of community service by institutions as a valid context for learning conveys 'powerful' messages to teacher education students about what their particular institution considers important and worthwhile knowledge. Not only does it suggest an importance of community as context but also implies a more 'open', rather than narrow, content focused approach to teaching.

For Bernstein, the traditional curriculum is a 'collection' type curriculum where high status contents (attitudes, knowledge and skills) are presented as subjects that stand in closed relation to each other, separated by clear boundaries. A different form of curriculum organisation is the 'integrated' type, where the various contents stand in open, rather than closed, relation to each other. Previously insulated subjects, or courses, are subordinated to some relational idea which blurs the boundaries between subjects. For the purposes of illustration, this project focuses on community service as a learning context. As such, community service may be the kind of relational idea that is used to blur the boundaries between subjects in the teacher education curriculum.

Under a 'collection' type curriculum, the underlying theory of pedagogy tends to be didactic. Students are perceived as empty vessels and the teacher, the source of relevant knowledge, with the task of passing on knowledge. Under 'integration', Bernstein argued, the pedagogic theory is more likely to be self-regulatory. He held that the change in emphasis from didactic to self-regulatory approaches tended to alter traditional teacher-pupil relationships and, in particular, increased the status and rights of students, where students came to accept greater responsibility for and exercised greater control over their own learning.

Importantly, for this project, in this kind of open and integrated curriculum frame, issues of cultural concern, for example, racism, land rights, and the gendered division of labour in specific sites, can become valid curriculum content enabling access to academic skills and knowledge (Education for Social Justice Research Group, 1994).

In this liberatory and open frame, curriculum and pedagogy are used explicitly to challenge ways of thinking, stereotypes and institutionalised assumptions about society and culture (McFadden, 1996). As a strategy, it is contingent upon cultural convergence rather than cultural divergence (Walker, 1995). It forces students to look for solutions to the educational problems they perceive from outside the resources of their own cultural experience and group.

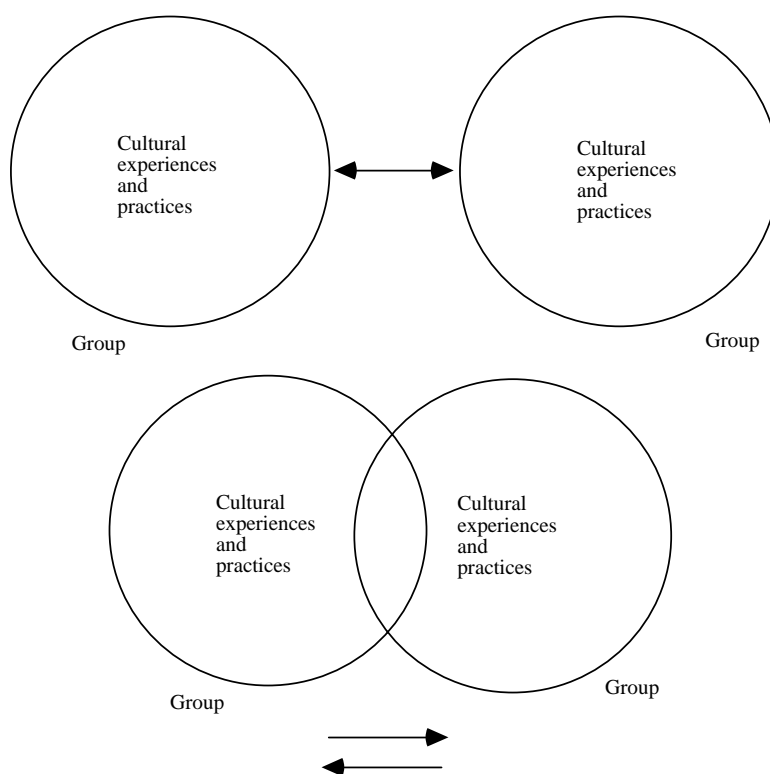
Figure 1 illustrates the way in which differing cultural experience can be brought together through intercultural articulation by focusing on culturally convergent

experience. The first two circles indicate how groups (and individuals) are constrained by their own cultural resources and experience. The circles that intersect and overlap on common ground indicate how the cultural resources of different groups (or individuals) can become available to other groups and can become shared. The crucial element, however, is the search for the common ground, or experience (see the intersecting area of figure 1), which allows the sharing of cultural resources and/or experience to take place.

The provision to students of community service placements can be read in these broad terms, that is, as opportunities for students to experience other cultures and situations in such a way that these other cultures add to and supplement their own experience.

A liberatory pedagogical framework can, in this way, be said to be explicitly sensitive to cultural issues and difference, and to recognise the capacity of students to engage in decisions about their own learning. Implied here is a sense of control over the process of education so that it might offer the potential for groups to work together for their mutual benefit.

**Figure 1** The operation of intercultural articulation



In a liberatory frame then, the context of education is used to question and challenge commonly held assumptions such that individuals can begin to change their own consciousness (Freire, 1972). Bernstein (1996) believed that if such change occurred in a group setting where the group had some control over the pedagogical context this could lead to positive social change with the group as its



essential unit. In this setting, individuals within the group were able to break free of the boundaries and limits that previous pedagogical formations put on what they were able to express validly as worthwhile knowledge (Bernstein, 1996). In addition, within a liberatory frame, students are positioned as producers rather than merely passive receptors of knowledge.

How education plays its part in developing citizens who are conscious of their role as ‘engaged’ citizens and socially active in their community is the subject of the following section of the review. As this section has illustrated, it is the context and approach taken to learning about citizenship which will either help or hinder the development of ‘engaged citizens’ who are socially active and aware of their role in the broader community of which they are a part.

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## 2.4 Engaging citizens: the role of education

Before examining the role of education in engaging citizens it is important to understand how ‘citizenship’ is defined, especially with regard to education. This is somewhat difficult as it is generally acknowledged that the basic terms used to explain the concept of citizenship are often murky and politically contested (Klusmeyer, 1996). As a starting point, it is generally accepted that citizenship involves membership of, or belonging to, a civic association. Underlying this starting point however are basic questions about how the criteria for membership in a polity should be determined, how the civic identity of a polity should be defined, and how participation in civic life should be understood (Klusmeyer, 1996).

Differing theoretical conceptions of citizenship have emphasised differing aspects of citizenship, for instance civic-republicans, going back to ancient Greece, prioritised the need for political participation. Liberal-individualism on the other hand promotes legal status involving sets of rights and duties, while the Communitarian school of thought prioritises the sharing of cultural attributes. It is widely accepted though, in each of these theories, that an important component is that of ‘active citizenship’ as well as ‘civic virtue’, whereby citizens act to benefit their community - in short, to be good citizens (Oliver & Heater, 1994, p. 6).

The importance of education in preparing the younger generation to be truly active and good citizens is also widely acknowledged by the differing conceptions of citizenship. Oliver and Heater (1994) claim that no one can be a citizen in the proper and full meaning of the term without being educated for the role. Throughout the twentieth century, citizenship education, however, has tended to focus on democracy and/or nationality, whereby democracy involved teaching the participation of ordinary citizens in choosing their government, while nationality education saw schools used to consolidate a sense of national identity and loyalty. Critics of citizenship education subsequently have accused those of promoting it (sometimes correctly, for example, in Nazi Germany) of ideological indoctrination (Macintyre, 1996; Oliver & Heater, 1994).

Recent studies by governments to promote citizenship education in schools (for instance in 1990 in the UK with the appointment of a Commission on Citizenship and in Australia, in 1994, with the formation of a Civics Expert Group) went to

great lengths to address concerns of bias and balance. It is also increasingly being accepted that citizenship education needs to promote the idea that every citizen should participate in community and civic life, with participation in voluntary associations, for example, seen as much as an aspect of citizenship as voting or jury duty (Macintyre, 1996; Oliver & Heater, 1994).

‘Citizenship Education’ is a term that is widely used across education sectors to describe programs that aim to develop ‘capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life.’ (Teaching and Learning, Scotland, 2001, p. 1) and to develop ‘informed, reflective and active citizens in their civic community.’ (DETYA, 2001, p. 2)

Definitions of ‘citizenship’ in Australia (DETYA, 2001, p. 2) refer to a person ‘making a responsible contribution to civic life.’ The idea of ‘responsible contributions’ needs to be considered, however, in terms of power relations within society and begs the question, who decides what contributions are ‘responsible’ or not? Inversely, which groups have their ‘contributions’ valued and who makes this assessment?

Those who make decisions about who is considered ‘responsible’ enough to be called a citizen may well be making value judgments determined by their own cultural and social history. The development of Australia’s history since European colonisation has, for example, reflected dominant British cultural and political ideologies. Those for whom these systems were foreign were forced to adapt their behaviour and assimilate into the dominant system. Those who resisted were viewed as deviants and considered to be second-class citizens in that their contributions were not considered responsible. This is particularly true for Indigenous Australians.

At the core of community service programs are concepts of social and structural justice, diversity, human rights, and social inclusion. For example, the Community Outreach/Social Analysis & Action Program (ACU) promotes the role of educators in the development of a just and diverse Australian society in which the cultural, economic and political rights of all are recognised. Where inclusion is a declared goal, the concept of ‘citizen’ needs explanation to avoid its interpretation as a political category that is by its nature exclusionary.

The majority of people living in Australia are citizens, however this category does not apply to all. Groups within Australian society who are not considered citizens include amongst others, permanent residents and international students. In terms of social justice and social inclusion, the concept of ‘citizen’ as a political category can be problematic in that it immediately establishes a dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion.

Historically, in Australia, ethnicity, cultural and lingual background, and socio-economic status have also been factors used to determine the suitability of a candidate for citizenship. Decisions about ‘desirability’ have been informed, both consciously and subconsciously, by a sense of national identity – of what it means to be ‘Australian’. Dominant notions of Australian national identity have been formed within a climate of historical ethnocentrism and cultural superiority that has led to exclusion and marginalisation of Indigenous peoples and non-Anglo immigrants.

Those with citizenship rights in Australia are more likely to be economically and politically powerful when compared with those who are denied the rights of citizenship. Their sense of personal security and belonging to the community will outweigh that of non-citizens who struggle for the recognition of their basic human rights.

Accordingly, when we apply a rights based definition to the concept of citizenship, our programs of education may exclude those whose rights are currently denied. By educating for citizenship, inadvertently, the powerful may be automatically included within the scope of our programs while the powerless may be further marginalised.

If the goal of education for citizenship is to enable participation in Australian society then there needs to be greater understanding of how this society in the 21st century better understands the full participation of all members of society and of how Australia is located within the global context.

Participation in society must be critical participation. Encouraging non-critical ‘participation’ will perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation. The goal of education should be the transformation of unjust systems and the building of a better world and more just society, through critical analysis and action.

The challenge is to develop new models of inclusiveness and diversity and to develop the language we use to reflect these. This is also one of the explicit goals of this project.

In summary, we can identify six components crucial to any understanding of the term, ‘citizenship’:

1. Citizenship provides formal **membership** of a state.
2. Membership provides **equality** both in terms of rights and status.
3. There is an important **inclusionary** and **exclusionary** element.
4. There is an interaction of **rights** and **duties** (including civil, political and social rights and both private and public duties).
5. Beyond duties there is a notion of **‘civic virtue’**.
6. Citizenship can be both synonymous with, as well as helping to provide, national **identity** through a feeling of belonging to a territory and a commitment to ‘fellow strangers’ (Turner & Hamilton, 1994).

Developing individuals who are tolerant, compassionate, socially trusting and responsible accords with the ‘multi-dimensional’ notion that the attributes of ‘engaged citizenship’ are: a sense of identity, the enjoyment of certain rights, the fulfilment of corresponding obligations, a degree of interest and involvement in public affairs, and an acceptance of basic social values (Cogan, 1998).

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## 2.5 Community service, engaged citizens and higher education: facilitating good practice

Boyer’s (1990) ideal of an engaged campus was one that addressed social, civic, economic and moral issues in the community that it served, be it local, national or indeed global. Zlotkowski (1998) argues that service learning is rapidly having an

impact on the culture of higher education for faculty, students, administrative staff and community partnerships. Battistini (1996) states that service learning in higher education can be a powerful tool for educating ‘citizens’ by building students’ concrete civic skills in the area of intellectual understanding, communication and problem solving, and civic attitudes of judgement and imagination. It is integral, however, that broad definitions of service and citizenship be assumed and used to develop measures of the impact on service learners (Battistini, 1996).

Astin (1999) suggests that universities and colleges should maximize their opportunities to assist students in understanding the functions and value of citizenship and democracy, while being critically aware of how democracy and society operates.

Astin (1999) also discusses the role of service learning, institutionalising citizenship, and empowering students to believe that they can make a difference and become active and engaged citizens and leaders in revitalising democracy and citizenship within the higher education institution and beyond.

Accordingly, Prentice and Garcia (2000) see service learning and its role in experiential education as a marriage between occupational and/or academic learning and service to the community. Service learning is based on a reciprocal relationship in which service reinforces and strengthens the learning, and the learning reinforces and strengthens the service.

Prentice and Garcia (2000) believe a critical aspect of any service-learning activity is how closely it is related to the academic content of the course the student is studying. In addition, following completion of the service learning activity, they believe it crucial the student engage in critical reflection about what they have learned. By combining service with a reflective framework, the benefits to students, faculty and community agencies, they believe, far exceed those of service or learning offered separately.

According to Prentice and Garcia (2000) service learning offers other beneficial aspects such as flexibility and creativity, as they can fit into any academic area within a higher education institution. It can also be an enriching and enlivening teaching tool in that it enables both students and faculty members to recognise the interrelated aspects of all learning and life experiences, while encouraging faculty members to objectively assess their course objectives and methods of assessment to better cater to the learning needs of the students.

Some important benefits for the students include:

- An enhancement in their self-concept, in their knowledge about issues in their community and in their willingness to become lifelong volunteers within the community;
- An opportunity to engage in career exploration;
- Improved interpersonal and human relations skills which are viewed by employers as being increasingly important in the professional and personal spheres;
- The opportunity to make a real contribution to the community and see social participation and action making a difference to people’s lives.

There are many examples in the literature from both overseas and within Australia of the interplay between communities and universities in the development and implementation of higher education programs that have as a central element the development of active and engaged citizens. The following two examples are drawn from disciplines other than education.

### **2.5.1 Community consultation in architecture**

Crowe (2000) describes the way students in the Bachelor of Architecture course at the University of Sydney, engaged in community consultation with Balmain community members, in order to develop a suitable model for a new civic space in Balmain. The project involved the implementation of a small-scale survey relating to the community's opinion of the site and what they would like to see developed. Small groups of students developed fifteen different design models that were presented for community appraisal. The Project Co-ordinator and Head of the Department of Architecture, Planning and Allied Arts believed the project offered students the opportunity to engage with the local community over a current design issue as well as providing them with the opportunity to make a valuable and real community contribution. Clearly, the work linked the academic content of the curriculum with community action.

### **2.5.2 Keeping families healthy**

Waddell and Davidson (2000) describe the Keeping Families Healthy (KFH) program at the University of Florida, College of Medicine, a new community-based course designed to improve physician-patient relationships and focussing on first-year medical students' experiences with home visits. The program allows first year students the opportunity to integrate prevention, service and humanism into the established academic curriculum. Volunteering community members are benefited by the students helping them to identify useful community resources and the students are engaged in formulating health care plans for the prevention of illness and the stabilisation of chronic illness.

By engaging in community-based learning, the students are exposed to issues, such as low socio-economic status and its impact on personal health in a way that cannot be as effectively addressed in the traditional education setting (Waddell & Davidson, 2000). Students are also involved in community-building strategies that assist individual patients and communities as a whole. Such learning opportunities allow students to be active rather than passive role players in their learning, while hopefully encouraging them to be more sensitive and attentive physicians.

The integration of service-learning into health professions education assists students to focus on their reasons for choosing medicine as a vocation, while contributing to the vast community needs for community-based health care. It also assists teaching staff to provide a more relevant and appropriate learning experience. What is missing from both these brief case studies, however, is some element of explicit social analysis linked to the community learning context. One would expect this not to be the case with community service learning (CSL) in teacher education where social analysis and critique are foundational ideas.

The following section of this review explores the way in which learning in community settings has been defined and implemented in teacher education.

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## 2.6 Community service learning (CSL) in teacher education

Anderson (1998) defines service learning as both a philosophy of education and an instructional method. In the United States, in particular, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of service learning in both K-12 and teacher education (Glenn, 2002). This increase can be attributed to the recognition that well designed and implemented service learning activities can help address unmet community needs while also providing students with the opportunity to gain academic knowledge and skills (Anderson, 1998).

Researchers and teachers have noted that CSL often increases student self-esteem, promotes personal development and enhances a sense of social responsibility and personal competence. In relation to CSL specifically related to teacher education, the literature also provides rich examples of the implementation of programs and analysis of the benefits for students and community.

First, however, it is important to differentiate between community service, service-learning and other forms of experiential learning. Carpini and Keeter (2000, p. 635) maintain that:

*Service learning is typically distinguished from both community service and traditional civics education by the integration of study with hands-on activity outside the classroom, typically through a collaborative effort to address a community problem.*

Anderson (1998, p.1) states community service, service-learning, internships and other types of field education are all forms of ‘experiential education’ but can be differentiated according to ‘their primary focus and beneficiaries’. Community service has as its main focus the provision of assistance or a service, either direct or indirect, where the beneficiary is the recipient. Internships focus primarily on student learning and the beneficiary is the service provider. Service learning ‘blends’ key elements such that the service provider and recipient are both beneficiaries. There is a dual focus on the service being provided and the learning that occurs. Howard and Fortune (2000, p. 25) concur and reflect the sentiment that service learning is both instructional method and philosophy:

*Service-learning contextualises service within an educational environment, meaning all participants are learners and teachers ... the terms ‘server’ and ‘served’ become obsolete in service-learning since the relationship is more one of reciprocity than receiving. When the relationship among participants involved in a service project is defined by equality, all persons develop, rather than are given, the voice necessary for stating their needs, goals and responsibilities. The conversation or relationship between participants, rather than one person or group, directs service-learning.*

Zlotkowski (1999, p100) suggests that ‘one useful way to capture the complexity and richness of service learning is to conceive of it as a matrix’ where two complementary axes intersect: ‘a horizontal axis ranging from academic expertise to a concern for the common good, and a vertical axis that links the traditional domain of the student (i.e., classroom activities) with that of those who teach and mentor the student in the world beyond the classroom.’ The matrix necessarily demands the development of pedagogical strategies, reflection strategies, supportive academic culture, and community partnerships.

Such a conceptualisation of CSL highlights both the critical role of the teacher in developing just citizens and also the integral perspective of community setting as learning context. The interrelationship between teacher and mentor in the community implies a sharing of control of different learning contexts and suggests the mutual benefit of CSL. As Zlotkowski (1999, p100) argues:

*Through such a utilisation of multiple learning sites, service learning also links situations in which student needs dominate (i.e., the academic course) with situations where student needs are subordinate to other concerns (i.e., the delivery of social services and other kinds of practical assistance). In this way, service learning bridges the kind of work characteristic of the classroom – hypothetical, deductive, reflective – with the kind of work most typical outside it – concrete, inductive, results-driven.*

The following examples illustrate the philosophy of reciprocity evident in the above distinctions and demonstrate the way in which service, learning and community are all-important and need to be recognised explicitly in CSL activities. What is not immediately apparent, however, is what actually influences the learner engaged in CSL activities.

### **2.6.1 Community outreach program: ACU**

At the Australian Catholic University, the Community Outreach/Social Analysis & Action Program of the Faculty of Education requires education students to spend 80 hours working in a community service organisation of their choice. Possible organisations include Centacare, Amnesty International, The Starlight Foundation and the Edmund Rice Centre (Baker, 1999; Oxley, Howard & Johnston, 1999). The students set individual learning goals and complete the placements in addition to their academic load.

### **2.6.2 Campus community centre: UQ**

Mayer (1999) discusses the Bachelor of Education (Graduate Entry) course offered by the University of Queensland, Ipswich campus. The B. Ed is offered over four semesters, with 21 weeks practicum experience and two semesters service learning at the campus community centre which is integrated into the academic curriculum.

The B. Ed aims to be community focussed and contextually valid within the Ipswich community. Mayer (1999) describes Ipswich as a community in transition, with a very diverse population culturally, socioeconomically, and ethnically. The course seeks to meet the challenges raised by such a community and expose

students to worlds vastly different to their own. The community, which has never had a university located there before, appears eager to support the university's development and play an active role within the community centre, thereby providing fertile ground for education students.

The B. Ed students are required to negotiate projects as part of their third and fourth semesters and conduct these through the community centre. Such activities include: homework support programs; tutoring in ESL, literacy, numeracy and other curriculum areas; discussion groups; enrichment programs for gifted and talented students; and working with community organisations to offer short educational programs, such as tertiary preparation programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Preservice teachers are thereby provided with opportunities to experience and work with the diverse local community and be exposed to people living in situations socially diverse to their own. This takes place within an integrated curriculum, and thereby enhances the learning of the students in a practical manner, while contributing to the needs of the local community.

### **2.6.3 Fostering a caring community: Penn. State**

Pennsylvania State University (see internet sites in references) expresses a belief that outreach both extends the forum for teaching and creates opportunities for scholarship and research. These interrelationships are promoted to enhance Penn State's impact on the quality of the lives of the people the university serves. The University is explicit about its mission to foster a caring community that provides leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world.

The Penn State College of Education seeks to integrate teaching, the advancement of knowledge through research and scholarship, engagement in outreach programs and activities and the preparation of professionals who will provide exemplary educational and related services to improve the lives of individuals in a changing and complex global society.

Penn State requires that its future teachers must be familiar with the characteristics of learners from various cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. Students are required to complete 80 hours of volunteer or paid education work experience with learners of the age group they plan to teach, and whose cultural, social or ethnic backgrounds differ from their own.

Such experiences are intended to promote an understanding of teaching-learning processes and contribute to sound decision-making about academic and career goals as well as prepare educators for their work with diverse learners.

Reflecting their institutional mission, nearly every Penn State college and campus incorporates service learning in their credit courses, offer service internships or encourage students to collaborate in projects that benefit local communities. The AT&T Centre for Service Leadership at Penn State matches students' interests and time with needs in local communities and provides transportation for weekend projects. The Centre is also part of the Community Leadership Alliance for Service and Scholarship and integrates its service activities with those sponsored by individual colleges and Centre county agencies.



### **2.6.4 At-risk youth: University of Durban, South Africa**

Smith (2000) describes an outreach program that forms part of a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention by a volunteer group of third and fourth year trainee teachers in the lives of 35 boys living in a street shelter in Durban, South Africa. The project contributes to the community in a meaningful way, exposing students to ‘hands on’ experience working with children and at-risk youth. It provides the opportunity to mentor the boys in the shelter in relation to their schoolwork. For one hour a week, over the course of two terms the trainee teachers worked with the boys individually. Students were required to keep reflective diaries of their weekly interventions as well as make regular contact with their particular child’s teacher. The boys’ academic progress was measured using their term reports and unstructured interviews with their teachers. Unstructured interviews with social workers and childcare workers were used to gauge the boys’ emotional and social adjustment.

In general, it was found that there had been a noticeable improvement in the boys’ emotional, social and educational growth. The trainee teachers also benefited. Their confidence in their teaching abilities increased. They felt more empowered. Their curriculum modification and lesson development skills were enhanced. Their communication and collaboration skills were improved. They became more sensitive to the needs and lived realities of others and confronted with their own fears and prejudices, untapped hidden talents emerged to share with others. Their professional and personal development was enhanced as they understood that they were actively contributing to something larger than themselves.

### **2.6.5 Service-learning in schools and teacher education: South Carolina**

Tenebaum (2000) assesses South Carolina’s extensive commitment to service-learning in schools and teacher education institutions throughout the 1990s which saw the implementation of several pieces of legislation emphasising the importance of service-learning for schools, higher education institutions and the community. The finding was that service-learning assists students to develop the knowledge and skills to become effective, productive, caring young adults who are involved in their community and their nation. Also, the students’ guided involvement in real-life situations reinforced their motivation to learn.

### **2.6.6 Encouraging active citizenship: University of Iowa**

Wade (1995) researched the University of Iowa’s elementary preservice teacher education (social studies) course. The research examined the community service learning element of the course during the 1993 Spring semester, involving forty-one students.

Wade (1995) discusses the relevance of preservice teachers engaging in community service learning activities and the necessity for the integration of CSL into the academic curriculum. The justification of this inclusion was based upon the notion that the mission of teaching is to encourage active citizenship and to assist students to learn the value of engaging in long term efforts to revitalise our democratic

society. In addition students would be developing the skills necessary to instigate change and act compassionately to those whose immediate needs cannot wait for societal transformation.

The following section focuses on the increasingly important area of benchmarking in universities with a particular emphasis on benchmarking community service.

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## 2.7 Benchmarking community service for engaged citizenship

At the outset, this review argued, however, that society is indeed in a state of social transformation. The institution of higher education is itself experiencing significant change and reform. One of these reforms is the benchmarking of performance and the comparative analysis of that performance at both a systems and institutional level. Benchmarking has become an important issue. Crucially, particularly for this project, community service is an element of the comparative efforts to judge the way that institutions are performing.

Universities are encouraged to benchmark their performance and practices in relation to criteria established by the federal government. Performance on established indicators will provide information to the government, through an independent quality assurance agency, about the achievements and profile of each Australian university.

Weeks (2000, p. 61) cites Terrell's definition of benchmarking as:

*... a systematic approach for sharing information between two or more organizations in order to improve the quality and performance of a selected process.*

Critical to the success then of any benchmarking process is how 'practice' and performance might be judged and against what 'best practice' or 'good practice' standard judging will be made. Weeks (2000, p. 60) argues there are significant difficulties associated with measuring what is 'best' or 'good' in education.

To cope with such difficulties, measurement tools have been borrowed from industry and business, and developed and improved, to measure or benchmark the progress and success of higher education institutions' processes. This has been particularly so in an environment of increased competition and demands for accountability of higher education institutions' operations (Weeks, 2000).

Regardless of the difficulties involved in benchmarking alluded to above it is thought that the process provides useful and easily understood processes for learning how to improve in a higher education system that is characterised by change (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999). As already stated, the federal government is committed to benchmarking as a way to improve the accountability and performance of higher education institutions in Australia. Universities are seen to need 'reference points for good practice and for ways of improving their functioning' (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 3). To this end the government has involved universities in a process of consultation aimed at developing appropriate and relevant benchmarks against which performance can be judged.

Consultants have been employed to facilitate this process. They have developed and published benchmark guidelines and, under the guidance of a steering committee and various working parties, have developed and trialled 67 draft benchmarks across nine key performance areas. The stated purposes of the benchmarks are to:

- ascertain performance trends and initiate continuous self-improvement activities;
- allow universities to compare performance on all or some of the areas covered; and
- allow universities to ascertain their competitive position relative to others in the system (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999).

The benchmarks are categorised as either, lagging indicators – measuring outcomes; leading indicators – measuring the drivers of future performance; or learning indicators – measuring the rate of change of performance.

Many institutions already engage in forms of benchmarking, through the sharing of information with units similar to their own through study tours, professional meetings, conferences, in the course of daily work, academic study visits and informal networking (Weeks, 2000). Benchmarking is said to build on these more informal processes by adding process structure, quantitative muscle, research rigor and implementation focus (Jackson, 1998)

Weeks (2000) describes the benchmarking process as stimulating and invigorating, time consuming and labour intensive, and argues that it is a continuous process that can stimulate change, help an organisation to learn, grow, develop and mature, and offers substantial results in the end.

Alstete (1995) also argues that benchmarking, as derived from the business world, is necessary for an expanded and diversified higher education system, particularly as the sector experiences greater demands from a market economy and changing societal needs.

Alstete (1995) states effective benchmarking needs to involve the analysis of performance, practices and processes within and between organisations, to obtain information for self-improvement and self-evaluation. By thinking outside ‘one’s own box’, organisations may compare and question in a structured and analytical manner, their own activities with those of both similar and dissimilar organisations. In Alstete’s (1995) formulation, benchmarking involves five steps:

1. Forming a benchmarking group
2. Planning the exercise
3. Conducting the research
4. Analysing the data
5. Implementing the findings.

Four kinds of benchmarking are identified that may be applied at either operational or strategic levels:

1. Internal (within an institution)
2. Competitive (between external competitors)

3. Functional (with respect to industry functional leaders)
4. Generic (generic processes in dissimilar organisations).

In relation to such a formulation, the current Australian federal government's interest in benchmarking is clearly targeting both internal and competitive kinds of benchmarking.

Importantly, Alstete (1995) argues that evaluation is the most important element of benchmarking and involves the search for 'best practice' and the reasons why practice may be considered best, that is, identifying gaps or differences in the practices and performances of different participants.

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## 2.8 Addressing the challenge of benchmarking CSL in Australia

McKinnon, Walker and Davis (1999) describe two kinds of benchmark: criterion referenced, 'defining the attributes of good practice in a functional area' and quantitative, 'distinguishing between normative and competitive levels of achievement' (p. 6). Both kinds of approaches are thought to be useful and important in formulating benchmarks. There are some issues, however, that need to be addressed in formulating adequate and comprehensive benchmarks. These include:

- the balance between assessing process and outcomes;
- defining and describing 'good' or 'best' practice;
- the testing of commitment to continuous improvement;
- measuring functional effectiveness rather than mere 'countables';
- adjusting for system inequalities;
- taking account of the difficulties of multi-campus institutions;
- finding the appropriate organisational level for benchmarks;
- calibrating and recalibrating;
- face validity; and
- developing a manageable system (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, pp. 6-8).

Interestingly, higher education institutions are thought to be well placed to implement their own benchmarking practices in an effective manner, because the skills needed are those skills academics routinely practice, that is, research, academic inquiry, and critical analysis (Alstete, 1995).

In that sense, the challenge in broad terms posed by benchmarking in higher education is thought to be not as great as is the challenge to provide adequate benchmarks in key performance areas.

Even a cursory analysis of the 67 current draft benchmarks point to their inadequacy in the area of community service and their absolute silence about CSL.

Such perceived inadequacy impacts on the policy importance that universities give to community service activities and also to their importance in relation to resource allocation.

At present there are two benchmarks relating to community service. They are positioned in the key performance area of 'External Impact'. Namely, they are:

- Benchmark 4.4: Strategic Community Service; and
- Benchmark 4.5: Exemplary Community Practices.

Neither of the draft community service benchmarks qualify as one of the 25 possible core benchmarks as listed (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 131). This is both unusual and inconsistent as the benchmarking document makes clear that, '...public universities almost always have community service as a third major role (along with teaching and research)' (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 30).

The first benchmark is said to monitor the extent to which the university takes its stated obligation to community service seriously through its strategic planning and implementation of plans. And both are said to judge the impact of the university's contribution to its community. Both are categorised as 'leading indicators' in that they relate to 'future drivers' of change rather than to present practices.

There is, however, in the description of 'good practice' that accompanies the benchmark, a pointer to the way in which CSL could be considered a relevant and measurable activity. One of the indicators of 'good practice' describing benchmark 4.4 is: 'Clear evidence in organisational plans that community service is an important aspect of the learning and research functions'. In addition there is a requirement that, 'The university has well developed mechanisms to monitor performance in the communities in which its services are directed' (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 35). While this description is quite one way in its orientation, there is clearly an opportunity to develop appropriate indicators of CSL performance.

It is clear that in relation to a CSL benchmarking strategy there is a need to identify and document best practice to inform both institutional and government policy. In that sense the strategy would have a research purpose in addition to the monitoring and evaluative purpose inherent in benchmarking. Benchmarking is seen in the literature as a collaborative process and one on which and through which partnerships can be built. A CSL benchmarking process, of itself, represents an opportunity to build links between members of the academic and general community. It can be framed as both a collaborative and developmental exercise and one focused on reciprocity of relationship.

## 3. Methodology

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### 3.1 Introduction

The central aim of the Benchmarking Community Service in Australian Teacher Education Project was to inform the government's policy on benchmarking outcomes in the higher education sector, specifically in the area of community service, and more particularly, in teacher education. To this end, the project was focused on developing a national database indicating the level of awareness and the extent of community service learning activity in Australian teacher education, and providing examples of practice on which to base key community service benchmarks.

Accordingly, the project consisted of five iterative and recursive phases. The first phase was a literature review that provided the conceptual and methodological frameworks for the second phase of the project, a mapping of current community service components of teacher education courses. The mapping was conducted through a survey of all Australian universities offering teacher education programs. The third phase of the project was conducted through case study work in three sites chosen on the basis of survey data analysis. Each site was chosen to provide a snapshot of practice in the area of community service learning in teacher education. The fourth phase of the project was the convening of a participatory forum of teacher educators and community sector representatives at which the literature review, analysis of survey data, and case study findings were presented and critiqued. The final phase of the project involved an integration of the findings of the previous phases and a synthesis of themes and issues in the form of the final report.

Throughout, the project team maintained discussions with external guides and critical friends such as staff from Loyola University, Chicago, and the University of Pennsylvania, and received useful materials from Pennsylvania State University.

The following sections of this chapter explain how each of the phases of the project was conducted.

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### 3.2 Phase one: literature review

A small project team consisting of academic staff of the Australian Catholic University, two community sector members and an external consultant was established. This project team reported through the Head, School of Education, NSW, ACU, to the project steering committee.

The project team first met to discuss the literature review in early February 2001 where a number of thematic areas were discussed. Broadly, these areas were:

community service; benchmarking as process; service learning in teacher education (and higher education); and engaged and/or active citizenship. In each of these broad areas central conceptual themes were identified.

A first draft of the literature review was presented to the project team in early March 2001 and again in mid April 2001. On both occasions, the framework of the draft review was amended. A subsequent draft was developed and presented to the project steering committee in late April 2001. The steering committee provided further feedback on the content and structure of the review which was further refined for presentation at the participatory forum held in November 2001.

The literature review that appears in this report takes into account the responses of community sector representatives and teacher educators who attended the participatory forum.

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### 3.3 Phase two: survey

A survey of all Australian universities conducting teacher education programs was conducted in mid 2001. The survey was drafted and trialled in April and May 2001 and distributed to all universities in June 2001. Its structure and content was informed by the conceptual and theoretical insights developed through the construction of the literature review.

Each survey was accompanied by a letter that stated the survey was aimed at gathering data on the views of teacher educators on community service and community service learning. The letter also signalled that each institution would be invited to send appropriate teacher educators to the November participatory forum.

Broadly, the survey was open-ended and sought to elicit from teacher educators across Australia their understandings of the term community service and the way in which this understanding was reflected in programs and links with the community.

Further, the survey sought information about how students were involved in the community and how the community was involved in teacher education programs. The survey asked specifically about the nature and kind of partnership arrangements universities had entered into in teacher education.

Finally, the survey became a mechanism to identify an institutional contact person who had either a particular interest in community service learning or responsibility within the discipline for programs with a community service orientation or focus.

Thirty seven survey instruments were distributed and twenty four returned over a two month period, a response rate of 65%. Analysis of the data was undertaken by ACU staff throughout August and September 2001. An initial analysis, including proposed empirical categories, was presented to the project team in early August 2001 and a more comprehensive analysis, on the basis of feedback about the proposed categories, was presented in mid October 2001. The outcomes of phase two of the study were presented at the participatory forum in November 2001.

### **3.4 Phase three: case studies**

The purpose of the project was to determine the extent of explicit commitment of teacher educators in Australian universities to community service and community partnerships as expressed in the content and processes of programs. Case studies were conducted in three sites to provide rich and differing sources of data to inform the project team's analysis of this issue.

The project team chose three case study sites after reflection on the analysis of survey data. At each of the sites it was clear that community service was an important part of programs. The team believed, however, that the sites chosen provided particular perspectives on the way in which community service was enacted within teacher education programs in specific institutional settings and in different geographical locations. Each university, in their unique way, was seeking the involvement of the community for the benefit of their students and hoped that student involvement would benefit the community. It should be noted that each of the sites agreed to be named in the report.

The teacher education sites chosen were Monash University in Victoria (Peninsular Campus), Australian Catholic University (Mount Saint Mary Campus) in Sydney, and James Cook University (Townsville Campus), in Queensland. A portraiture approach was taken to the construction and presentation of the case studies where impression is valued but also where the impression needs to be supported with evidence (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

In each of the chosen sites, site visits were undertaken in October and November 2001 by an external consultant engaged specifically for the case study phase. Each site visit was conducted over two days and consisted of interviews with key academic staff, and community members, and, where appropriate, students, and the collection of documentary evidence about the community service programs underway within each institution.

The external consultant presented the preliminary issues arising from the case study work at the Working Conference in November 2001. The issues raised by the case studies fell broadly into those at the level of the profession, the university level, for academics and students, and finally for the community service agencies involved in the programs under discussion.

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### **3.5 Phase four: participatory forum**

In October 2001 an invitation to attend a working forum to critique the project's research findings was sent to each institution offering teacher education. As was explained in the survey section above, this forum was signalled in phase two of the project. Most importantly, the participatory forum was a mechanism by which the project team could gain external feedback on its research direction and valuable input on the available research data and outcomes.

Two thirds of the thirty participants were drawn from the surveyed universities and one third from the community sector. The conference was held in Sydney on 19 November 2001.



The conference gave participants the opportunity to gain an understanding of the project and its aims. It also involved Dr Marcus Einfeld providing a context for discussion and reflection on engaged citizenship, teacher education and community. Participants worked with members of the project team to critique the outcomes of each of the previous phases of the project: the literature review; the survey; and the case studies. In addition, participants were requested to work in groups to advance the community service agenda through responding to focus questions about what was possible in the area, and the challenges to be addressed in facilitating the possibilities and benchmarking community service activities appropriately and adequately.

The participatory forum was concluded by two discussants external to the research team but knowledgeable about community service issues who each reflected back to the participants their perspective on the day's deliberations. A summary of these reflections can be found in Appendix G.

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### 3.6 Phase five: integrated report

The final phase of the project was a process of synthesis and integration. Each of the project phases had been structured to build reflectively and reflexively on the findings and outcomes of previous phases. The report was the culmination of this recursive process of reflection, building and further reflection.

The report was constructed following the phased nature of the project. The recommendations and conclusion, however, seek to integrate the findings into a coherent framework that will inform national and institutional policy and discipline based programs and practices.

The report makes a small number of key recommendations that target, at the outset, policy at the national level. Next, the report is concerned with policy and practice at the institutional level. Finally, the report makes recommendations regarding programs and practices as they are implemented by organisational units within institutions.

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### 3.7 Conclusion

The research team constructed the project methodology to foreground the process of partnership with and for the community. Consequently, the methodology had both engagement of the teacher education community and the wider community as key elements. The project team were strongly committed to the belief that modelling a process of community engagement in research would produce the most authentic and useful research outcomes. As an illustration, definitional debates about community, service, citizenship and participatory citizenship, civil society, civics education, and engagement were problematic and often uncomfortable as the team struggled to reach agreement on meaning. No attempt, however, to bring early closure to issues of definition or problematic language was entertained. On the contrary, debate was opened and encouraged through the reflective and reflexive mechanisms detailed in this chapter.

## 4. Findings

Four sources of evidence have been used to inform this study: a literature review; a national survey; a series of case studies; and, a working conference conducted as a participatory forum. The first of these has been discussed elsewhere in this report. The remainder, in their detail, are included as a series of attachments (survey: appendices A and B; case studies: appendices C, D, and E; forum agenda: appendix F; and forum summary: appendix G). The purpose of this section is to provide a synthesis of the evidence prior to a discussion in the next chapter of underlying principles.

### 4.1 The national survey

The national survey was sent to Deans of Education (or their equivalent) located in 37 sites. 24 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 65%.

The data have been organised into five areas of inquiry that were present in the survey (reprinted in the appendices). These are:

Concepts of Community Service	(Question 1)
Student Involvement	(Questions 2 and 3)
Staff Involvement	(Questions 4 and 5)
Community Involvement	(Questions 6, 7, 10 and 11)
Partnerships	(Questions 8 and 9)

What follows is a summary of the main findings of the survey. The summary statement relating to each of the five areas mentioned above indicates the number of universities that responded in particular ways to each of the questions. Only comments where four or more universities made a similar response are mentioned. Responses by one university may be included more than once in each of the aggregated sections below as they may relate to more than one key theme or issue.

#### 4.1.1 Concepts of community service

The most common type of community service, mentioned by ten universities, was the involvement of student teachers in professional experience. No community service beyond this professional experience was mentioned, although some universities referred to their links with professional associations and the community via professional experience.

Five universities mentioned involvement with educational agencies as a form of community service, including children's centers, experience in school classrooms encouraged in elective courses, and involvement in hospital play programs.

Another five universities mentioned particular types of involvement with community groups, like Landcare and Centacare, where community members

advised on course design and where mandatory school/community visits were structured in to programs.

#### **4.1.2 Involvement of students in the community**

The practicum (professional experience) was referred to by eighteen of the 24 universities surveyed as being the form of community service in which students were most likely to be engaged. Eight universities referred to particular community and service organisations with which their students had been involved in education related community service and/or identified community educational programs (eg, vacation programs, sports coaching, or literacy programs).

Eight universities referred to excursions or visits that were organised in subjects/units within their teacher education programs as involvement in community. It was often unclear from responses whether the students were visiting schools, external educational agencies or other community organisations.

Seven universities referred to voluntary arrangements like mentor and volunteer programs as being part of the community service involvement of student teachers.

In five responses, research of different kinds (oral history, action research) was referred to as a form of student teacher involvement in the community.

#### **4.1.3 Purposes of student community involvement**

The most common purposes for involving students in community service, regardless of definition, were associated with achieving professional purposes such as providing students with: an understanding and awareness of the community (15 responses); a broader educational experience (14 responses); a context to develop professional skills (13 responses), and authentic learning (7 responses).

A concern for social justice and citizenship within community service involvement was mentioned by seven universities.

There were seven universities that saw the students' involvement as contributing to the community groups with whom they were working.

Four responses reported student involvement in community service as having a benefit for the university itself through promoting the university as a caring institution, strengthening partnerships with schools and/or showcasing students to the community.

#### **4.1.4 Involvement of staff in community service**

Teacher educators at 22 universities referred to their own involvement in community services as utilising their professional skills through membership of associations, consultancies, forum participation, hosting community activities and speaking at community events, researching and professional development with the educational community.

The coordination of student activities and the supervision of professional experience was mentioned by teacher educators in 15 universities as part of their involvement in community service.

When addressing the purpose of staff involvement in community service, teacher educators from 11 universities referred to their role in the promotion of the university through promoting their university's interests by securing grants or developing closer community relationships.

Teacher educators in four universities indicated that one of the purposes of community service for them was keeping in touch with the community.

#### **4.1.5 Community involvement in teacher education**

The twenty four universities who responded to the survey mentioned an impressive range of community agencies that were involved in their programs (see appendix B). They can be classified into two groups: schools and school systems (like the Catholic Education Office or Departments of Education), and educational and community agencies, like the Department of Community Services or the Brotherhood of St Laurence. A full list of agencies appears in appendix B of this report.

#### **4.1.6 Agency roles in teacher education programs**

Community service agencies were seen most commonly by universities as a source of information and as a resource for students through the experiences they provided or through speakers. Nineteen universities referred to agencies in this manner.

Given that the most common form of community service perceived by teacher educators was professional experience, community agencies, were seen by eight universities as a source of student placements and practical experience.

#### **4.1.7 Intended outcomes of community service in teacher education programs**

The most commonly expressed intended outcomes from involvement in community service were related to the nature of the partnership between the university and the community from which mutual benefit could be derived. Sixteen universities made comments of this type.

The idea that community service was intended to develop a sense of citizenship among students was mentioned by twelve universities.

A focus on the importance of a broad based professional education through developing an awareness of the community was evident in the comments from twelve of the universities surveyed.

Eleven teacher educators referred to the purpose of community service as providing students with necessary professional skills.

Teacher educators from five universities referred to particular community benefits as being outcomes of the community service elements of their teacher education programs.

#### **4.1.8 Supporting community service elements of teacher education programs**

The two clear ways that have been used to support community service elements in teacher education programs are the allocation of staff (13 universities) and the allocation of funds to activities like professional experience or specific projects (7 institutions).

#### **4.1.9 University - community partnerships**

Partnerships were established with a wide range of agencies (see section 4.1.5 above). In eight responses the comments on these partnerships were prefaced with the term ‘formal’ while in seven cases the preface was ‘informal’. Formal partnerships included memoranda of understanding with schools regarding professional activities while informal partnerships included looser networking arrangements.

#### **4.1.10 Purpose of partnerships**

The purpose of establishing partnerships between universities and the community was seen as providing benefits for all partners, providing, for example, mutual benefits in learning, teaching and research, and supporting community agencies.

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## **4.2 The case studies**

The three sites selected for the case studies were quite distinctive. The sites chosen provided particular perspectives on the way in which community service was enacted within teacher education programs in specific institutional settings and in different geographical locations. From their responses to the national survey it was clear that each case study site had developed an understanding of community service and community service learning which went beyond satisfying the requirements of the practicum in the teacher education program. Such an understanding of community service and the associated learning, held by the majority of the respondents, does little more than suggest that it can be fulfilled by placing teacher education students in the community’s schools.

Nonetheless, following visits to the three sites, in Victoria, North Queensland and metropolitan Sydney it was also clear that each had developed its own understanding of these terms and the ways in which they play out in practice. Hence, they will be portrayed separately below, with an understanding that to appreciate their distinctiveness, their history and development it is important to read the full portrayals (see appendices C, D and E).

If we are to understand the emergence of community service and community service learning as desirable components of teacher education programs we need to see that their adoption will follow a developmental trajectory. The three case studies can be said to be at varying points along a continuum of practice.

#### **4.2.1 Monash University – Peninsular campus**

While this site did not embed community service into its teacher education programs as a core component, nor did it have a policy of community service learning, nonetheless it displayed two manifestations, which were enacted through the work of individual academics.

One such position was demonstrated through the environmental education program, which was conducted by a social researcher who had a well articulated view of social enquiry as activism. Her activist identity was based on democratic principles, embodying negotiated, collaborative, socially critical, future oriented, strategic, and tactical enquiry. In her various projects she sought to connect her teacher education students to the community in ways, which were not possible in school settings. While she did not explicitly identify her position as one associated with community service or community service learning it was evident that both of these outcomes were being achieved.

The second manifestation was based upon a number of academics, themselves offering community service by providing a series of benefits to the local community in the form of engagement in various enterprises in the area of the expressive and performing arts. Again, there was no explicit identification of these activities as ‘community service’ and there was no systematic attempt to derive professional learning from them.

A major concern for this site was the perceived lack of professional autonomy to develop innovative teacher education programs in the face of the trend to standardise practice both within the university’s programs and through employer expectations and government regulatory policies. As well, there was a concern that individual enterprises were insufficiently recognised and rewarded through the university’s structures where the emphasis was primarily upon research and secondly on teaching and learning. Community service was seen to come a poor third.

Finally the academic staff believed that any innovation in the direction of a more sustained and planned program of community service would need to acknowledge the need for most students to be engaged in the paid workforce with all of the concomitant demands associated with employment.

#### **4.2.2 James Cook University - Townsville campus**

The second case study was of a site which was enacting a Community Education Service (CES) program in its teacher education courses for the first time. While it required of its students that they complete 50 hours of attendance in a community setting and produce a log as a record of that attendance there was no associated set of campus based studies to support the program. Focus groups with students who

had completed the requirement demonstrated that there were specific skills which had been enhanced by their engagement in CES. Briefly these were that students:

- learned to **negotiate** appropriate behaviours and tasks;
- learned to **plan and organise** themselves in environments which were often less stable than those found in the classroom;
- developed their **communication capabilities**;
- had enhanced **self-esteem**;
- found qualities in themselves of **patience and empathy**; and,
- overall, **gained in confidence** (even those who were fairly shy and diffident at the outset).

Clearly, these skills are important, and there is a need to further develop them in students, who, together with their mentors, could be involved in a consistent program focussed on engaging them in the kind of transformational learning about social justice issues and active citizenship as discussed in chapter two.

As a program in its infancy CES at James Cook University has, as yet, had little time to more fully expand the notions of service learning or to commit the necessary resources to ensure that it might occur. It saw its involvement in this study as an opportunity to identify ways in which the program could be improved and developed.

Emerging concerns related to both structural issues and those associated with student wellbeing. As a new program there has been relatively little integration of its substance with campus based studies. Negotiations with the field have tended to the pragmatic; that is to say finding the requisite places for students. There has been less engagement with those providing the services in terms of them having an input into the design and management of the program. Several providers noted that other professional faculties also have community service components and that developing interdisciplinary networks might be of some assistance.

Students tend to see the requirement as standing alone, and in some cases another hoop through which they have to jump with little guidance and support. There is also a real cost to students in terms of the time which is required of them to complete the requirements of CES. For those who are juggling paid employment and parenting it is a serious demand.

### 4.2.3 Australian Catholic University – Mount Saint Mary campus

As is noted in the full portrayal (appendix E), this third in the series of case studies, has a number of distinctive features. Firstly, community service is well embedded in the teacher education curriculum and has gone through a series of iterations following ongoing and systematic evaluation over the five years of its existence. Secondly, it is particularly well documented, in that those responsible for the program, both from the university and from the community service perspective, have written about its work and presented their findings in a range of public forums

and conferences. Thirdly, the program is built upon partnership arrangements, which ensure that the broader community has an active voice in its design and enactment. And, finally, it is explicit in its consonance with the mission statement of the University and is recognised as such.

The Community Outreach Social Analysis and Action Program (COP) involves students in an 80 hour placement in an approved community agency, supported by a course of lectures and a substantial handbook of reading materials. Students maintain a learning journal in which they note not only their experiences but the relevance of these experiences to them as intending teachers and informed citizens. As a requirement of the subject students must attend the placement to the satisfaction of the agency and the university's liaison officer, and complete a learning portfolio, which has the following components:

- reflection upon the lectures and their connection to the selected placement;
- maintenance of a learning journal; and
- analysis of community service learning at the completion of the placement.

Thus it is clear that the program is an acknowledged course of study. It is supported by an Advisory Committee, comprising key community agencies as well as Diocesan and University representatives and those from the Sydney Catholic Education Office and the NSW Department of Education and Training. While not involving themselves in operational decisions, members of the committee are active in offering policy advice and recommending strategic directions.

The Mount Saint Mary Campus of the Australian Catholic University has progressed the concept of community service learning further down the continuum than is the case in most teacher education programs in Australia. Even so it continues to face challenges and concerns. It is currently grappling with the consequences of providing further resources in the form of supportive tutorials for the program and the effects of grading student learning. In the past the subject was assessed on a pass/fail basis. University policy now dictates that the substance and magnitude of the program is such that student results should directly reflect their effort and commitment in the form of a grade. Some academic and community agency staff see that grading, may in the end, compromise the very nature of community service learning.

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### 4.3 The participatory forum

In order to familiarise a variety of key stakeholders in teacher education with the early findings of the study and to gain from them further insights and understandings of community service and community service learning in teacher education a one day working conference was conducted. Participants included: representatives from a range of higher education institutions; personnel from the then Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA); representatives of national and state community organisations including immigration personnel.



The introduction and welcome to the Forum was undertaken by Professor Marilyn McMenemy, Griffith University, who is a member of the research team, and is familiar with community service learning both in Australia and abroad. Drawing upon United States experience she emphasised that community service learning and engaged citizenship goes “beyond good works”. Her argument proposed that service should not be separated from scholarship and that the goal was “academically based service learning” which is intellectually, socially and morally engaging.

In his keynote address, which followed, Dr Marcus Einfeld, drew particular attention to the timeliness of the task of conceptualising coherent programs in community service learning. He believed that Australia had strayed into “dangerous times” in relation to the international refugee crisis, responses to terrorism, and the growing gap between the world’s richest and poorest citizens. He argued that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be more than mere rhetoric and that it would take an engaged citizenry to ensure that it guided Australian policies and actions.

The Forum was then presented with the research outcomes to date these being:

- Literature Review
- Survey Analysis
- Case Studies.

Each was spoken to briefly, allowing time for some broadly based discussion.

The major part of the remainder of the Forum was taken with workshop discussions. The following major issues in relation to operational definitions were identified:

- The term community itself needs to be redefined.
- The changing nature of the university student in a comprehensive higher education sector needs to be better understood.
- Universities need to better define, understand and recognise the role of community service and community service learning.

With respect to advancing the community service agenda it was believed that:

- Account needs to be taken of regional differences (e.g. rural vs urban environments) as well as program and institutional histories.
- Varying models of practice need to be further evaluated (e.g. integrated vs stand-alone models).
- Processes for consultation with the wider community need to be put into place.

Finally, in taking account of the national agenda, it was thought that:

- The framework for benchmarking needs to acknowledge the complexities of both the process itself and the respective domain, for example, community service, that is being benchmarked.

- Notions of both social capital and human capital development need to be explicit within these benchmarks.
- The focus, in relation to community, should shift from metaphors associated with maintenance and repair to those related to building and reconstruction.

In summing up the workshop it was observed by two rapporteurs that:

- The discourse has shifted from economic rationalism to engaged citizenry; that is, notions of the public good, rather than economic good. This appears to be somewhat at odds with concepts surrounding the practices of benchmarking.
- There is a tendency to rush to reductionism, narrowing down and measurement; where, in fact, the concepts are complex and interrelated. Research, teaching and community service all relate one to the other and will be better understood when they are seen as organic and interactive components.

See Appendix G for a summary of the rapporteurs' concluding comments.

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## 4.4 Conclusion

The findings of this project raise issues and relate to themes that have implications for national higher education policy. In addition, the findings suggest the necessity to reconsider the way in which universities construct community partnerships and the purposes behind these partnerships. Specifically in relation to teacher education programs there are policy implications for the profession and practical implications for the way in which resources are deployed at an institutional level to support community service partnerships. Institutions have different conceptions of what constitutes community service and the way in which community service is structured into programs. These conceptions range from those that focus exclusively on community service in a professional sense to those that see community as a partner in constructing learning programs and contexts for students. The following chapter explores these underlying principles in more detail.

## 5. Underlying principles

Before turning to a more general discussion of the implications of the findings it is important to note that they have differential impacts upon the various stakeholders involved in the enterprise of teacher education, particularly initial teacher education. Consequently, underlying principles for each stakeholder group will initially be discussed separately.

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### 5.1 National government policy

While the provision of school and technical education is principally a matter for the States and Territories it is the case that university education falls within the purview of the Federal Government. Initial teacher education, then, is clearly one governed by national policy. The Benchmarking Manual for Australian Universities (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999) currently discusses community service as a means of universities “enhancing their external impact” (p. 35). We would argue that further consideration should be given to expanding this benchmark to incorporate a wider understanding of community service learning, over and above the provision of services.

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### 5.2 Universities

Universities are now recognised as corporate entities with well defined goals and foci in the areas of teaching, research and community service. Yet it is clear that the levels of recognition regarding the place and value of community service, and the subsequent community service learning, within teacher education programs varies greatly from one site to another. When time and individual resources are committed to community service they deserve affirmation and reward. As well they require investment. Community service and the associated professional learning cannot and will not just happen. It requires infrastructure and moral support.

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### 5.3 Community service agencies

Community service agencies provide the sites where community service learning occurs. It is therefore important that the various agencies are fully engaged in the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs. It is not sufficient that agencies be seen as opportunities for university students to become active citizens, rather, they, too, should be participants in the learning process in mutually beneficial ways.

## 5.4 The education profession

If community service, of the 'liberatory' kind, is to be well developed in teacher education it requires the endorsement and support of the education profession itself. Employing authorities, regulatory bodies and the like have to reconceptualise what counts as legitimate professional experience and the kind of professional knowledge which can arise from broader participation in social programs. While there can be little argument that such bodies have a proper role in standards setting, this should not then transmute into standardisation.

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## 5.5 Teacher education programs

As an essential component of teacher education, community service and community service learning must be deeply embedded in the course design, such that it is apprehended by all who are involved as an appropriate and enriching experience which will enhance teaching as a socially committed profession.

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## 5.6 Academics

With the encouragement of the universities academics should be enabled to construct community service as an important opportunity for teaching, learning and research. Academic work has greatly intensified in recent years. If community service and community service learning is seen to be merely an additional requirement it will not be appropriately honoured and rewarded. In spite of individual motivation to engage with it, it will continue to be an adjunct to programs rather than a central and embedded component.

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## 5.7 Students

Where community service is to be introduced into the teacher education program it must be understood by the students as a critical part of their professional learning. Student time is not elastic. Many, if not most students, have to participate in the paid workforce in order to survive. They need to be persuaded that the cost of investing their time in community service programs is commensurable with the benefits that they and their chosen profession will derive. They need to understand what it is to be an engaged citizen in a society more and more given to a decrease in trust.

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## 5.8 Further discussion

It has been proposed by Sachs (2000, 2001) that a revised professional identity requires a new form of professionalism and engagement. It is possible that a well

articulated program of community service learning, within teacher education, could make a significant contribution to such an enhanced professional identity.

Community service learning has as one of its goals the development of those entering the teaching profession in order to support their becoming engaged citizens; what Sachs (2000) has identified as activist professionals (and we shall call the ‘socially committed professional’).

Such a practitioner draws for inspiration and momentum from the work of people in the broad democratically based enterprises which hold the best interests of the community at heart in recognition that needs vary, are contextualised, and require careful and thoughtful decision making. It is worth noting Dewey’s position:

*In order to have large numbers of values in common, all the members of the group must have an equitable opportunity to receive and take from others. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise, the influences which educate some into masters educate others into slaves. And the experiences of each party loses in meaning when the free interchange of varying modes of life experiences is arrested*

(Dewey, 1916 p. 84)

First and foremost, as an engaged citizen, a socially committed professional is concerned to reduce or eliminate exploitation, inequality and oppression. Accordingly the development of this professional identity is deeply rooted in principles of equity and social justice. It is upon the foundation of deliberative democracy that such professionalism is built. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) suggest that deliberation should extend throughout the political process. It embraces virtually any setting in which citizens come together on a regular basis to reach collective decisions about public issues. Deliberative democracy is built upon citizens and officials debating policy, its formation and implications.

It is clear that socially committed professional identities are rich and complex because they are produced in a rich and complex set of relations of practice (Wenger, 1998, p.162). There are three points to be stressed. First and foremost, is that this richness and complexity needs to be nurtured and developed in conditions where there is respect, mutuality and communication; all elements which are desirable in a well structured university course. Secondly, such professionalism is not something that will come naturally. It has to be deeply reflected upon, negotiated, lived and practiced. Finally, the community consciousness of the socially committed professional will find expression in action that has equity and social justice as key objectives.

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## 6. Framework for benchmarking

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### 6.1 The current situation

Before considering benchmarking of community service in teacher education, the broad policy framework relating to benchmarking community service needs to be revisited. Chapter two of the report presented an overview of this framework.

At present, two benchmarks (4.4 and 4.5) of the government's 67 published benchmarks relate to community service. The first, benchmark 4.4, relates to strategic community service and reflects the community rating of the importance of a university's contribution to the community. The second benchmark, 4.5, relates to exemplary community practices, and measures the extent to which a university is an exemplary corporate organisation in meeting community standards, for example in employment, health, environment and arts policy.

In operational terms, it is benchmark 4.4 that focuses on the relationship between the community and the university through its policies, programs, and staff and student practices.

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### 6.2 Focusing on improvement

As was noted in chapter two, the stated purposes of benchmarks are to:

- ascertain performance trends and initiate continuous self-improvement activities; and/or
- allow universities to compare performance on all or some of the areas covered; and/or
- allow universities to ascertain their competitive position relative to others in the system (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999).

While ascertaining their competitive position is becoming increasingly important to universities, the benchmark purposes that have most utility for this project are the comparative performance and continuous self-improvement benchmarks. Giving priority to the competitive position is antithetical to the notion of community service where networks, interdependence and mutual support are critical. In their partnerships with community, each university has a distinctive presence. Accordingly, each university tries, in community service, to ascertain their distinctive rather than competitive position.

As also noted in chapter two, benchmarks are categorised as either:

- lagging – measuring outcomes;
- leading – measuring the drivers of future performance; or
- learning – measuring rate of change of performance (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999).

It is important to note for this project's purposes that both benchmarks 4.4 and 4.5 are categorised as 'leading', in that they focus on the drivers of future performance. This categorisation supports the benchmarking community service in teacher education project emphasis on comparison and continuous self-improvement rather than competitive position.

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### 6.3 Developing community service benchmarks

Community service is the third major role that public universities play (along with teaching and research) (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999). Appropriate and adequate benchmarks in community service will help ensure that universities take a strategic view of their obligations in this area and encourage the implementation of a course of action to achieve effective and efficient outcomes, not only in teacher education.

In developing appropriate and adequate benchmarks that will provide 'reference points for good practice and ways of improving' university functions in relation to community service, universities need a conceptual framework by which to formulate policy and improve their practices (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 3).

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### 6.4 A framework for developing community service benchmarks

The first aspect of this conceptual framework is to determine the nature of the benchmarks to be developed. Criterion referenced benchmarks define, 'the attributes of good practice in a functional area' and quantitative benchmarks distinguish, 'between normative and competitive levels of achievement' in an area (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. 6).

Each approach raises specific issues that must be addressed in benchmark development that will impact on teacher education, and other disciplines, in the area of community service, including:

- the balance between assessing process and outcomes;
- defining and describing 'good' or 'best' practice;
- measuring functional effectiveness rather than mere 'countables';
- finding the appropriate organisational level for benchmarks; and
- developing a manageable system (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, pp. 6-8).

To ensure a good fit, any new benchmarking in the area of community service must cohere with current benchmarks. In this sense, benchmarks will need to specify the area targeted, characterising both the element addressed and type of benchmark developed. Additionally, they will have to be accompanied by a rationale, possible data sources and descriptions of good practice broken down into levels (at present five - with levels one, three and five having descriptive indicators) where indicators reflect the extent of institutional achievement of the benchmark.

The development of further benchmarks in community service must recognise and respond to the current structure of benchmarks for higher education. In this current structure, community service is not a designated area for benchmarking. Unlike teaching and research, the other two major roles that universities play, community service is characterised as an ‘element’ within the area of ‘external impact’.

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## 6.5 Community service learning benchmarking

The focus in this project has been on the extent of explicit commitment of teacher educators in universities to community partnerships that find expression in the content and processes of programs. Such program expression reflects the reciprocity and mutual benefit of engagement with community in teacher education, albeit at a range of levels from superficial and isolated to complex and integrated. In teacher education, the focus is on community as a context for learning and in that sense the community provides significant benefit to the university and its students.

By contrast, both current benchmarks in community service relate only to the area of ‘external impact’ of university operations and represent community service as a one way process. In this sense the benchmarks reflect an ‘enterprise’ agenda rather than an ‘engaged citizenship’ agenda. Their focus is impact on rather than engagement with or participation in the community. There is certainly no sense in which the community’s contribution to the teacher education programs of universities can be measured or that faculty systems and plans might encourage, monitor or evaluate such a contribution.

The outcomes of the literature review, survey, case studies and participatory forum all pointed to the way in which mutual benefit and reciprocity characterised strong community and university partnerships in learning. Each phase of the project has highlighted the importance of an authentic process of engagement with community and shared reflection on action in delivering productive program outcomes. Accordingly, there are policy implications for the further development of benchmarks in community service.

At a national level, there needs to be recognition within the benchmarking structure that as a third key policy area, community service should feature more prominently than it does at present. As with the other two key areas of policy and practice in universities (teaching and research), community service should be a separate recognised area for benchmarking. This should be built into a framework for benchmarking community service.

At the institutional level, explicit recognition of the importance of community service within the benchmarking structure will lead to the development of specific and appropriate policy and strategies, including the allocation of adequate resources to support community service initiatives.

This influence on policy, strategies and resources holds also at the level of teacher education faculties and/or discipline groups. At this level, however, the effort of academic staff will necessarily be on the expression of policy in practice and on negotiation with members of community service agencies around the community involvement of students in specific kinds of programs.



## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

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### 7.1 Overview

In concluding this report and making the recommendations that follow, the project team is mindful of its role to inform government deliberations on policy rather than to prescribe or demand specific policy changes.

With this in mind, the concluding chapter will summarise the principles and key findings from the literature review, the survey, the case studies; and the participatory forum in relation to benchmarking community service in teacher education specifically, and higher education more broadly.

#### 7.1.1 Literature review: key themes

There is considerable debate within the literature regarding the characterisation of community service learning. This debate is reflected in the report's seemingly dichotomous title. The term "service to the community" does not adequately reflect the role that community contexts play in providing a dynamic learning environment for students. In its turn, "community as learning context" does not adequately reflect the crucial role that members of the academy play in maximising the potential of community learning experiences. Most importantly, the literature review highlighted that what is needed in characterising community service learning is a recognition that foregrounds mutual benefit and reciprocity between equal partners in learning.

The available literature also highlighted the transformative possibilities provided by community service learning: that education can make a difference to the way teachers and students see themselves, including their ability to influence others and bring about social change. The literature suggests these possibilities can be realised through a liberatory pedagogy that promulgates liberal democratic ideals and foregrounds issues of social justice and intercultural understanding.

In this liberatory context, the theme of engaged citizen operates at a number of levels, particularly those of policy, institution and the individual. In broad policy terms, learning in the community is seen as encouraging the development of students as engaged citizens. Institutionally, universities express their corporate citizenship through community engagement. Individuals involved in programs are said to develop a greater awareness of both self and society and therefore to be more fully engaged as professionals in the communities they serve.

#### 7.1.2 Survey: key findings

The survey of Faculties of Education throughout Australia emphasised the differing conceptions of community service held by teacher educators. The overwhelming view was that "community" is viewed as the professional community. Although all

universities surveyed engaged with their community, there were distinct differences between institutions in levels of awareness and extent of community service activity. Regardless, however, of definitional issues and differences in awareness and kind of activity, there was an extensive range of community agencies engaged with teacher educators in the delivery of their programs.

### **7.1.3 Case studies: key findings**

The case studies emphasised that the implementation of a community service learning agenda occurred along a continuum of practice from pragmatic practice through to an articulated vision. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) relating to levels of use of an innovation is useful to characterise this continuum (Loucks-Horsely, 1996). Innovative practice is described as proceeding through mechanical use, after initial planning, through to refinement and integration and finally to renewal as the user seeks more effective ways to implement their agenda.

### **7.1.4 Participatory forum: key findings**

The participatory forum focussed on closing the gap between the rhetoric of community service learning and the transformative possibilities expressed in the literature review. The realities of practice indicated the need to raise awareness of community service learning at both a national and institutional level and to develop (i) integrated programs that engage community, and (ii) appropriate benchmarks both to drive and evaluate change.

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## **7.2 Recommendations**

This report makes relatively few recommendations. They are tightly focused and, in the main, aimed at the current structure of the benchmarks in community service.

They necessarily impact on teacher education but are expressed as broadly as possible because the major changes suggested are national in nature. The suggested changes have implications, therefore, for all institutions and disciplines.

The recommendations are about policy and have implications for the structure and further development of the benchmarking document. Firstly, in relation to policy, it is suggested that the government should give prominence to community service in the same way as it does to learning and teaching, and research, within the benchmarking document. The recommendations below suggest this prominence can be developed from within the existing benchmarking structure.

Secondly, in relation to community service learning as one particular element of community service, it is suggested that the government develop a specific benchmark that addresses community service learning as a particular benchmarking element, with appropriate indicators, within a newly structured area for benchmarking community service.

The development of the community service learning benchmark and indicators that appears as appendix H is based on the data gathered from case study sites and from the analysis of survey responses.

The following recommendations build on the current structure and content of the benchmarking process as developed and presented in the *Benchmarking in Universities Manual: Version 2* (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, November, 1999). The recommendations are stated in this way to facilitate the further development of benchmarking community service within teacher education.

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## Recommendation one

That the existing community service benchmarks be removed from the section ‘External Impacts’ and that a separate ‘Area’ for benchmarking in community service be created (as is the case with learning and teaching, and research) that gives prominence to community service as the third major role that universities play along with teaching and research.

### Rationale for recommendation one

At present ‘Community Service’ sits within the area of ‘External Impact’ within the benchmarking structure. ‘External Impact’ is chapter 4 of the McKinnon, Walker and Davis (1999) benchmarking document that provides guidance to universities on the benchmarking process. In its present location, ‘Community Service’, is but an element of the broader area of ‘External Impact’. The recommendation suggests the withdrawal of ‘Community Service’ from this area and its designation as an ‘Area’ of benchmarking in its own right.

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## Recommendation two

That the following structure of a benchmarking ‘Area’ titled, ‘Community Service’ be considered. The constituent elements of the proposed area are:

- Community Context
- Community Service Plan
- Community Engagement Processes (including Strategic Community Service now benchmark 4.4)
- Community Service Learning
- Community Service Outcomes (including Exemplary Community Practices, now benchmark 4.5)

### Rationale for recommendation two

The structure attempts to recognise that while ‘community service’ is the technical term across the sector, community engagement denotes the inherent qualities of ‘leading’ benchmarks in the area (in that ‘leading’ benchmarks are meant to be both drivers and levers of change). The term, community engagement, captures the key

principles of mutuality, respect and reciprocity in a way that the term, community service, does not. Where service denotes giving on the one hand and receiving on the other, engagement signifies involvement for mutual benefit.

Importantly, the proposed structure utilises key features from the current ‘Good Practice’ indicators in the benchmarking document. In addition, the structure mirrors to some extent each of the current benchmarking areas of Learning and Teaching, and Research. For example, at present, within benchmark 4.4, Strategic Community Service, the existence of a policy and a plan in relation to community service is considered ‘good practice’. Additionally, the notes to benchmark 4.4 state the importance of universities defining the communities they intend to serve.

Finally, the suggested structure, mirrors the structures used in both the Learning and Teaching, and Research, sections of the benchmarking document (McKinnon, Walker & Davis, 1999, p. iii). Plans, processes and outcomes are common to both sections. Context is a feature of the research section and is both a necessary and desirable element in relation to benchmarking community service.

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## Recommendation three

That a Community Service Learning benchmark with appropriate indicators be developed as an additional ‘element’ of the benchmarking document (a model benchmark with suggested indicators is included as appendix H to this report).

### Rationale for recommendation three

The Community Service Learning benchmark is built from the data gathered in the project. It exemplifies the way in which community service learning exists on a continuum from superficial and isolated at one extreme to complex and integrated at the other. It is within this new ‘element’ of community service benchmarking that the key principles of mutuality, respect, reciprocity and engaged citizenship can be made explicit and part of the underlying structure of engaging in community service learning.

Community service learning impacts on staff and students, organisational units, and the university as a whole and signifies the extent to which universities are both connected to the communities they serve and responsive to their needs. It is an increasingly important element of benchmarking as universities are called upon to become more engaged corporate citizens.

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## Recommendation four

That benchmark 4.4, Strategic Community Service, be amended in light of recommendation two.

## **Recommendation five**

That benchmark 4.5, Exemplary Community Practices, be amended in light of recommendation two.

### **Rationale for recommendations four and five**

The suggested structure of a new ‘Area’ of benchmarking titled, ‘Community Service’, includes each of the existing benchmarks within newly defined benchmarking ‘elements’. Within the element of Community Engagement Processes, taking a strategic approach to community service planning and policy remains a valuable and central objective. That universities continue to develop and improve as good corporate citizens, in that they exemplify good practice, remains a central objective within the new element, Community Service Outcomes.

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## **Recommendation six**

That the government consider funding similar benchmarking projects in other discipline areas to further inform and validate the structure and process findings as presented in this project report.

### **Rationale for recommendation six**

The literature review drew on community service learning activities across a range of disciplines including architecture, medicine and health studies. It is clear that all disciplines within the higher education sector have the potential to establish reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships with their communities. There is an inherent need to document both the processes and outcomes of such partnerships to better inform the benchmarking agenda.

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## **7.3 Conclusion**

It is the hope of the project team that the implementation of these recommendations will necessarily impact on the development of institutional policy in relation to community service in both teacher education and across disciplines more broadly. As with other aspects of the benchmarking process, implementation of such an approach to benchmarking community service would influence the way institutions plan, resource, document and evaluate their engagement with the communities they serve. In this way, policy change will lead to structural change and impact on the practices of academic staff and the further development of programs established for students.

# Appendix A

## Survey questions and accompanying letter

- Question 1. What role/part does community service play in your teacher education programs?
- Question 2. What involvement in the community do students have as part of your teacher education programs?
- Question 3. What are the purposes of the students' involvement in the community?
- Question 4. What involvement in the community do staff have as part of your teacher education programs?
- Question 5. What are the purposes of the staff involvement in the community?
- Question 6. What community agencies are involved in your teacher education programs?
- Question 7. What are the roles of these agencies in your teacher education programs?
- Question 8. Describe the community-university partnerships associated with your teacher education programs.
- Question 9. What are the purposes of the described community-university partnerships?
- Question 10. What are the intended outcomes of the community service elements of your teacher education programs?
- Question 11. How do you support the community service elements of your teacher education programs?

*Benchmarking Community Service in Australian Teacher Education Courses-  
A Citizenship Approach*

*An Evaluation and Investigations Program Project*

**To Dean / Head of School / Coordinator**

Community service is a core business element for Australian tertiary institutions and is a targeted benchmark activity, by the Federal government. However, across Australian institutions the term community service has a broad meaning. Within teacher education programs a variety of activities exist where universities interact with various community groups. The purpose of this survey for the Evaluation and Investigations Program Project, *Benchmarking Community Service in Australian Teacher Education Courses-A Citizenship Approach*, is to gather data about community service and community service learning activities undertaken by teacher education institutions.

A comprehensive literature review on community service completed for this project has helped inform the structure of this survey. The survey provides institutions with the opportunity to inform the Federal government of the types and extent of community service being undertaken within teacher education courses.

Following the distribution and return of the surveys, representatives of teacher education institutions will be invited to a national working conference to be held in Sydney on November 19 2001 where the project's literature review, initial survey and case study results will be discussed.

There are three sections to the survey that you, as the nominated representative of the institution, are asked to complete. It is requested that the survey be returned to the nominated address by June 20<sup>th</sup> 2001. Responses will help in defining the term *community service* more purposefully for teacher education.

Yours sincerely

for Ass Prof Jude Butcher; Prof Marilyn McMeniman; Dr Graham Thom; Peter Howard

[Project Team]

June 2001

## Appendix B

### List of educational and community agencies named in Question 6

Disability Services	Lifeline
Employer groups	Sporting groups
Registration boards	Ambulance
Professional associations	Police
Special education centres	Emergency services
Teacher unions	Indigenous groups
Early childhood services	Ausaid
Historical societies	Migrant groups
Child care centres	Red cross
Hospitals	Department of Community Services
Royal Melbourne Show	Brotherhood of St Laurence
Child protection team	Local prisons
Scouts	Community health centres
Zoo education centre	Mental health centres
Youth Camps	Health centres
Museums	Women's centres
Land care	Surf life saving Australia
Water watch	Gymnastics schools
Parks and Wildlife	Swimming schools
Local Government	Electoral Commission
Welfare groups	Dept of Agriculture
Family and Child support agencies	Overseas Service Bureau



# Appendix C

## Case study one: metropolitan university – Monash, Peninsula

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### Introduction

This case study presents a portrayal of community service as it is enacted by university academics as a series of benefits: “what we are giving back to the broader community out there”. It embodies a contrasting perspective regarding the notion of ‘community service’, bringing to the term an understanding that ongoing, active and visible participation in the community by academic staff can be represented as a distinctive but defensible form. “Community service, for us, is connecting with and enlivening the community in a number of ways”. While the major emphasis is upon the voluntary work of the academic community of practice, it will become evident in the case study that many teacher education students also become involved and themselves develop an enriched understanding of community service, particularly in terms of advocacy for those who have little or no voice.

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### Context

Monash University is a multi-campus facility whose origins lie in a university established in the nineteen sixties and two institutions which were formerly components of Colleges of Advanced Education, one being in a rural area. The Faculty of Education conducts courses on all three sites, one of which is the object of this study, situated at Frankston on the Mornington Peninsula, hereafter referred to as Frankston.

Frankston offers Early Childhood and Primary Education through single four year degrees (BEd), double degrees (BA/BEd) and postgraduate degrees. No secondary teacher education occurs on this campus. Research degrees are taken at the main campus which is some 40 kilometres away. The campus mainly services students from the local area, although as each year passes they come from further and further afield. Many of them are working full time.

They may only be required to attend lectures for about 12 hours per week. They don’t really see themselves belonging here. They belong ‘out there’. Once lectures have stopped the place becomes quite dead. These students find it hard to connect to the community and we have to be the ones to model it.

The university campus is not a ‘hub’ for the students. Once they’ve finished their classes they’re out of here. We have to realise that their learning context is not only the university, but the places where they work, the families to which they belong, their friends and so on.

Students must complete “teaching practice” which consists of 80 days of supervised school experience. Requirements are governed by standards which have been set from outside the University by the Victorian State Standards Council and before that the Board of Teacher Registration. Currently a new state wide organisation is being formed “The Institute of Teaching” and it is anticipated that this statutory authority will formulate new policies regulating the registration of teachers. Staff perceive that they have few degrees of freedom in terms of varying the ways in which students undertake their professional experience. “There is little recognition of a wider, richer perception of the learning that can take place in the community”. Certainly a number of students can have placements in overseas settings ranging from London to the Cook Islands and interstate settings such as Alice Springs; however, the notion of placement in a community agency has not been considered. Indeed, where it had been in the past it was abandoned as control mechanisms became tighter and tighter.

It is perceived that the development of subjects within the teaching degrees are also governed by regulation, that is the preference for the current organisation of learning into distinctive key learning areas (KLAs). Interdisciplinary studies with a high degree of flexibility and which could well accommodate community service are difficult to argue for in an environment where there is an intensification of academic work and the need to “fit into University structures, even our timetable is managed for us”. There is a sense that there is little professional autonomy when it comes to designing and managing individual subjects within the teacher education program. “If you want to do something innovative, the question is always asked ‘Where does it fit?’”

The history of Frankston is important to an understanding of the ways in which community service has grown as something which is distinctive but nonetheless legitimate. The seemingly constant restructuring and amalgamations over two decades has left many members of staff wearied. They perceive that their professional expertise is insufficiently recognised in the current environment. They believe that community service, as a program component in specific courses, would not meet with acceptance “it would not be seen as sufficiently academically rigorous”. They feel that they are discouraged from being innovative and flexible in the face of the academic status of the main campus. However, they are strongly wedded to their participation in the affairs of the community and have been so for many years. “We have been building this place into the community for some time, in spite of the policy structures of both the University and those who regulate teacher requirements”.

It also could be argued that the strong presence of early childhood programs has an influence on the activity of the campus. Necessarily, early childhood educators are in touch with a range of community facilities above and beyond schools. As well, in this case, the take up of Emilio Reggio precepts, which regard youngsters as strong and capable analysts of their environment, has enabled some of the cross curricular links which we shall see have been drawn upon below.

How then is this achieved? What follows are three examples drawn from: environmental education, art education and music education.

## The university in the community

### **Environmental education: social research as activism:**

Karen, a widely published Senior Lecturer in Environmental Education, brings to Frankston the notion of social research as activism. Her doctoral studies engaged her in a struggle with powerful forces seeking not only to close down the school with which she was working, but also to disguise from the community the environmental damage being done to the local precinct through intense industrial enterprises. This work led her to have “a strong commitment to a socially critical curriculum”. She believes that students can best develop and exercise activism, in the first instance, outside the school setting. “It’s hard for students, when they are in schools, because they are required to demonstrate their ability to manage and control student behaviour, not stir them up”.

She believes that students, both school and university students, best obtain a kind of environmental literacy when they are connected to the community. She has, over a number of projects, noted how children can become adaptors of their environment in imaginative and liberatory ways when they are given the scope. Through her projects she has encouraged her teacher education students to become researchers in their communities, identifying community issues and considering ways in which they might be addressed.

### **UNESCO-MOST ‘Growing up in Cities’ project**

The aim of this project has been to promote the development of safe, stimulating and sustainable environments for young people in times of rapid urbanisation. It seeks to build “a child friendly city, that will be a people friendly city”. The project objectives are to:

- Develop a comprehensive and public database of young people’s perspectives on the places where they live;
- Train young people in the methods for articulating, expressing and enhancing their environmental knowledge;
- Educate teachers, urban planners, youth and social workers, government officials and police in the importance and value of children’s environmental knowledge; and
- Publish, promote and provide opportunities for young people’s voices to be heard in public and professional multi-disciplinary environments.

Karen is the Australian/Asia Pacific Regional Director of the project which clearly is committed to issues of children’s rights, social justice and environmental sustainability. She has not only worked in Australia, but also offered workshops in Papua New Guinea. Most of her time spent on the project is as unpaid volunteer work. She brings with her to the project a number of teacher education student volunteers who assist her in the realisation of the project’s objectives.

## Safer cities and shires project

The Safer Cities work is closely related to Growing Up in Cities and acts as example of the umbrella program in action. In 1998 the Frankston City Council was a recipient of a \$100,000 seeding grant from the State Department of Justice to facilitate the development of strategies that addressed community safety and prevented problems before they arose. The strategy had two phases, the first being the development of a comprehensive and sustainable community safety plan; the second, involving practical initiatives within the framework of the safety plan. Karen was a member of the management team. Along with her teacher education students she investigated young people's perceptions of growing up in Frankston and in particular focused upon the train station which was perceived by many young people to be unsafe.

Third Year BEd students undertook a series of projects, which looked not only at the station, but also recreation areas and the local mall. The projects provided the council with data, which was then used to develop practical strategies to ensure that these were safer places for young people. A particularly valuable outcome was the development of a child-friendly city map which the teacher education students constructed, published and presented to Year 6 students prior to their orientation to secondary school. In a local press article it was observed that "the (teacher education) students working on the map have been walking the beat, drumming up sponsorship and enlisting designers." The students themselves added, "The University has generously supported this child-friendly initiative. It shows a great commitment to the community and we've been pleased to have been involved. It's been a great experience."

## Science in schools

While it is arguable that any professional Faculty in a university should be reaching out to its constituent field of practice, it becomes community service when that reaching out is both systematic and sustained. Karen works closely with local primary teachers to develop science education in their schools. They meet in the new science laboratory at Frankston once a month. During the sessions hands-on activities give teachers opportunity to try new concepts, share ideas and utilise resources. As well a teachers' resource facility is being developed which will be able to be used in the local schools. Teachers can also bring their students to the laboratory where they work, in small groups with teacher education students. A series of emails from students provided evidence of the worth of the innovation:

*I found the session on Friday to be a great benefit to me, as it was the first time I had actually had an opportunity to work with just a small group for Science. The main benefit of having only seven children was that I could easily monitor their progress and document things that they had said. In a whole class situation, many of these conversations would have been lost, due to extensive monitoring of thirty or more children. ....*

## **Animals as metaphor**

The final example in this suite of projects undertaken by Karen in the community is one which was developed in conjunction with a studio art educator at Frankston. An exhibition ‘Art Animals’ representing the selective works of eleven artists incorporated images of animals into a diverse range of visual art practices including painting, works on paper, ceramics, sculpture, and installation. It travelled extensively around the State. Animals as Metaphor was a research project accompanying the exhibition. The researchers, using narrative inquiry constructed with the artists an interpretation of the works within their own biographies. The narratives embodied art as aesthetic and art as science and thus could be seen as an interdisciplinary study. While teacher education students were not directly involved in this project it is clearly one which is a service to the wider community.

It is worth noting that Karen, herself, in the context of this project, acknowledges the influence of the Early Childhood Educators on campus. For they introduced her to the work of the Emilio Reggio Schools in Italy, where very young children are encouraged to conduct in depth interdisciplinary studies of their towns and villages. “I find myself learning all the time, from my colleagues, from my students, from the community”.

## **Children and art**

Bob is an art education lecturer at Frankston. He, too, has a commitment to providing a service to the community. In many ways he believes that the risks have been taken out of childhood. Their time and their resources are managed for them. There are few opportunities for “messing about”. Children are given colouring books rather than encouraged to create and develop their own images. They are given kits which determine the outcome down to the last screw and rivet. Two projects are outlined here which demonstrate service to the community.

## **Children working with wood**

Each year at the Royal Melbourne Show Bob takes a team of teacher education students to work with children; each day can be counted as a practicum experience. Using a variety of wood collected throughout the year and materials offered by a large hardware chain, children are given opportunities to make objects which originate from their own ideas, rather than those which may fit into the school curriculum. Heavy equipment, such as bandsaws, are operated by the teacher education students; otherwise the children hammer, paint, glue and construct quite independently. Indeed, parents are not allowed into the action, but may only observe from the sidelines.

The Royal Agricultural Society has recognised the contribution of Bob and his students to the wider community by awarding them the President’s Medal for 2000 and the Highly Commended non-commercial activity award in 1999.

Such is his commitment to this work Bob also travels, as a volunteer to a number of smaller regional shows, to offer a similar service.

## **Play and education in a paediatric setting**

During a particularly tense time in the University Bob sought to find relief by volunteering to assist in the local hospital's paediatric ward. What began as a form of personal therapy for him, soon grew into a sustained program. Bob quickly came to appreciate some of the special challenges of children's hospital stays including separation anxiety and general boredom. As well he was able to identify that the medicalisation of the children's condition was such that less attention was paid to their broad social needs.

Working with 3rd Year Early Childhood students and 4th Year Primary Students, within an elective structure, Bob introduced them to working with young children in the hospital. Students spend two half days in the ward. They are required to document and reflect upon their experience in the context of how they would use the experience to inform their teaching in classrooms. Such is the students' experience that many of them continue with the commitment as a volunteer worker in the hospital and may give up their Saturdays and even time over the Christmas holidays.

Bob believes that the students have to overcome quite serious challenges related to serious illness in young children, "their initial gut reaction is one of fear and avoidance". They come into contact with the full socio-economic range in their dealings with the children and their families. They also have to negotiate their way through the complex social relations with medical staff. Through reading, drawing and talking they provide a medium for the children to express their own fears and anxieties as well as be creative and imaginative.

The final example of Frankston reaching out into the community to provide a service is in relation to music education.

## **Making music accessible**

The music education program at Frankston is a strong one. The department is comprised of three practising musicians, each of whom makes a contribution to music education in the community. This portrayal focuses upon Greg. As a conductor he brings his skills to a specialised orchestra and choir. He also leads, every two years, a European study tour for eight music students and eight members of the community. "We go to London, Berlin, Prague and Budapest and experience Opera, Cinema and a whole range of concerts. There are marvellous cross age friendships which develop". However, such services could be seen to be within the normal range of what any academic in a professional faculty might offer. What is over and above this contribution is that where music is taken by the teacher education students into the schools.

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## **Sounds infected**

Ten students, working with the music department have developed a 70-minute musical performance, which brings to school children an array of instruments and a

variety of soundscapes. The initial forty minutes is highly interactive, this is then followed by a performance of Lieutenant Kije which is scripted by the students themselves. A website has been developed with recommendations for follow up activities. Students receive a nominal \$15 per performance. Such an amount does not reflect the commitment of time by the students to the project. Many have to forego paid work to undertake “Sounds Infected” as a service to the school community.

It has been quite a struggle to have this work legitimated by the University. (It was important that it underwrite ‘Sounds Infected’ because there were insurance and public liability issues at stake).

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### **Occasional major productions**

As well as providing a touring service to schools the music department also has occasional major productions. In 1994 they undertook to stage Benjamin Britten’s Noyesfloude. Five local schools contributed 120 children for the choral work; while visual arts students built the sets and designed the costumes. All music students took part.

A second major production occurred in 1997, where Greg’s own piece Shepherd’s Noel was performed in a number of churches and cathedrals. Again Frankston students were involved in the range of support and performing activities.

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## **Issues**

Each of the examples offered above are ones where the University can be said to be itself offering a community service through the work of its academics. Most professional faculties would make claims that they connect up with their field of practice and that this is a form of community service. Whether it is by brokering and networking, sponsoring or providing linkages, they are involved in building the professional community. What is distinctive about the work at Frankston is that there appears to be a culture and critical mass of people who are willing to engage more fully in the wider community – one beyond schools and education. They are providing for their students not only opportunities for them to participate in these programs, but also to articulate models of intervention and activism. But this is at some cost.

It has been noted that Frankston has been a constant subject of changing structures. However, it is believed that while the structures continue to grow and change little attention is paid to the culture of the organisation. Frankston academics are concerned that their culture built upon community service is not as well recognised, or rewarded, as one which would be founded on research. In many ways this site is an embodiment of the cultural differences between pre-Dawkins Universities and the former College of Advanced Education Sector.

As a small campus Frankston has the potential to be one which is dynamic, innovative and responsive. However, it is not only part of the large University, with its established structures and management patterns, it is also required to meet

external regulatory frameworks if its graduates are to be employable. There are few degrees of freedom for academics to respond to community needs and build these into their programs. As one which has a strong Early Childhood component these constraints can be frustrating. Certainly, within Family Studies ECE students examine the range and purpose of a wide variety of agencies; but they would welcome more flexibility in considering and managing professional experience.

Certainly, Karen has demonstrated that by having open subjects such as Conservation and Environmental Issues she is able to use these to build in community service. It may be desirable that a campus Forum be held where such work is not only celebrated, but offered as a model to others.

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## Conclusion

Frankston's commitment to community service is manifest in the work which has been outlined here. However, such work is fragile when it is dependent on individual practitioners; albeit ones who are strongly committed and clearly recognise and respect each other's contribution. The University could be said to be truly meeting Benchmark 4.4. when this work is embedded in its teaching, learning and research, particularly in its professional programs.

Community service is considered to be an integral part of the work of universities across all levels. A strategic approach to community service that defines the communities the university serves and the actions the university is taking to serve those communities will strengthen external impact. (Benchmark 4.4)



# Appendix D

## Case study two: regional university – James Cook University

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### Introduction

This case study is presented as a portrayal of community service as it is emerging in a well established teacher education program. 2001 is the first year of its enactment and should be regarded as a pilot stage in that all stakeholders are concerned with its continuing improvement and refinement. The case study should not be read as an evaluation of the program. However, following the reporting of the introduction of the program there is a discussion of major issues which the study has revealed.

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### Context

James Cook University is located in two coastal Australian towns, Townsville and Cairns, which serve as regional centres for a large hinterland; the two campuses are some 350 kilometres apart with 80% of its students studying on the original campus at Townsville, and the remaining 20% on the other, which was only recently opened. Formerly the University was a College of Advanced Education, established in the early nineteen seventies. The School of Education is among the largest and oldest of its components. It mainly attracts local students; that is about three quarters of school leavers who go to university.

50 hours of Community Education Service (CES) is a requirement for all third year BEd. Students and first year Graduate BEd Students and normally is expected to be conducted within that year. As the term ‘service’ suggests, the student engagement is expected to be unpaid.

CES is said to be designed to:

... broaden graduates’ professional education base by developing:

- awareness of a range of community services; and
- ability to contribute to the provision of education community services. (student log)

CES may take place within the student teacher’s professional experience school with different grades/teachers and at times other than the formal professional experience program or in other education community services sites. Such sites may include hospitals, church groups, youth camps, museums, galleries and various government agencies which offer community support.

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Students are expected to organise the 50 hours for themselves and to approach the organisation directly. Undergraduate students may arrange to undertake the requirement during the long vacation between second and third year. This provides particular opportunities for students who may live in more distant and remote communities. Upon completing the requirement students submit to the Professional Experience Unit a verified log of their experiences.

The Professional Experience Unit has accumulated a folder of expressions of interest received from a number of schools and other agencies as well it has directories of community agencies from two local city councils. The folder also includes clippings where advertisement soliciting help in as wide a range of community activities as Lifeline, adult tutoring, people with spinal cord injuries, hands on conservation and leukemia patient support, have been placed. As it has been observed, a number of students are from rural and remote settings and they are encouraged to explore possibilities in their local area.

There are no campus based studies which directly support the Community Education Service requirement. However, during their second year of the BEd, or the first year of the Graduate BEd (Secondary), all students undertake a subject Education for Cultural Diversity. Within this subject there is an assessment alternative whereby students may complete and reflect upon at least 10 hours of their CES in organisations wherein questions of cultural diversity may be pursued. As well, it is perceived that there is connection to the third year BEd unit SOSE: Studies of Society and Environment which is also taken by Graduate BEd (Primary).

These, then, are the bare bones of the CES requirement at James Cook University. In order to develop the portrayal a number of strategies were undertaken:

Interviews were conducted with the Professional Experience Directors of the two campuses and a discussion was held with the academic responsible for the subject Education for Cultural Diversity. Two focus group interviews were undertaken with a range of BEd and Graduate BEd students. Telephone interviews were conducted with various community agencies and a site visit paid to one. Course documents were examined as were a series of emails where some discussion had taken place among students and between the students and the relevant Professional Experience Director regarding the merits of the CES requirement.

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## Origins and nature of CES

In order for its graduates to be registered as teachers, by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, James Cook University is required to meet specific standards regarding professional experience. During their teacher education students must engage in professional experience in schools for 80 days. As well, a further 20 days is required which may be distributed in a more flexible manner. Regional University believed that there was scope, in this latter provision, to be strategic in introducing a component which would expose its students to a wider, complex, social world.

We saw that students needed to be aware of what was ‘out there’. We wanted them to have a broader, social justice perspective... We wanted them to see that teaching is more than delivering lessons and being a star on the stage... We also saw that

they needed to see this (CES) as a way to broaden their base, not just another hoop to jump through. (Director of Professional Experience, DPP)

They (the students) crave to be out in schools; they want to teach, they say ‘that’s why I’m here’. But CES can help them see different processes for behaviour management. Also they get a perspective on life span learning, because quite a few work with older people. They learn that older people can be active learners still, not just locked away. (DPP – telephone interview)

Many of its students, particularly those in the BEd, come to the university straight from school (approximately 70%) and have little experience beyond their local communities. It was seen that the third year of their program was an appropriate place in which to position CES, as their fourth year was regarded as their “pre-professional year, where we want them to envision themselves as responsible professionals” (DPP). It was anticipated that the cultural diversity subject would have raised student awareness of difference and inclusiveness and that they would realise that the phrase takes them “beyond indigenous concerns, important as these are” (DPP – telephone interview).

The proposal was “met with warm professional regard” (DPP) by academic staff and the Professional Experience Advisory Committee, to whom all such programs are put. School based colleagues were similarly encouraging. A number of them indicated projects in which the students might have an interest, such as providing support to special needs students.

It was seen as important that the students understood that while the program was mandatory, the service itself should be voluntary i.e. unpaid.

We wanted them to learn something about taking on some aspects of other people’s lives (empathy) and also developing themselves and feeling good about it. (DPP)

It was important that the students see themselves volunteering to their full capacity. They were not to be just ‘committee sitting’, but actively doing something to improve things for others. They needed to get past ‘we are just doing this because we have to’. (DPP – telephone interview).

As the program developed it became clear that the matter of volunteerism was quite problematic. A number of students claimed that they had a long term involvement with organisations which paid them a nominal coaching salary, and that this should be acceptable as community service.

The ‘jocks’ who are paid do put in endless hours and this problem needs to be addressed. For many students these are valuable dollar earning hours ... also up here (on the smaller campus) the summer is the time when tourist related employment is available, so they are unlikely to want to use this time to do community service. (DPP – telephone interview).

A series of emails from a small number of students made their discontent quite plain. For example:

*I feel that it’s particularly generous of .... to donate our time to the community, especially when most of us are in a position to have paid work as a priority, and other less time consuming (sic) means to be made aware of the various community education services available. Seems a bit on the nose to me. (12th April)*

*...Why is such a loosely defined mish-mash of semi-useful stuff like sports coaching (stuff I've done lots of over the last 40 years) a compulsory part of a supposedly focused course on education, but it doesn't get assessed or taught like real university. Some of us don't need to be reminded that teachers work bloody hard, and many of us are already working to capacity. Give us a meaningful education for our money, not servitude, not time-serving just to get a signature on a piece of paper. ... the only other people who do community 'service' are convicted criminals (18th April)*

Student focus groups indicated that these were minority views, although the matter of confusing punitive community service with CES was mentioned by several participants. Nonetheless this resistance appears to be a significant issue and one to which this portrayal will return.

It was generally argued that the program is quite modest and that expectations should not be too high. *"We cannot get too ambitious about what is possible by working for 50 hours with the community."* (DPP).

As well as directly benefiting the students, the program was also seen to have positive impact in the community. It was also seen to contribute to the service function of the university. It is expected that some "up-line" support will be required as the program addresses specific issues such as insurance and entitlement.

As yet it was seen that the University, as a corporate body, was not fully alerted to the program and the contribution that it might make to the University's community service profile. *"This is a conversation that we have not yet had"* (Academic – Education for Cultural Diversity).

How then were the benefits perceived by knowledgeable stakeholders?

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## Benefits of CES

It was agreed across groups that there were specific skills which were enhanced by participation in CES.

- Students learned to negotiate appropriate behaviours and tasks;
- They learned to plan and organise themselves in environments which were often less stable than those found in the classroom;
- They developed their communication capabilities;
- Their self-esteem was enhanced;
- They found qualities in themselves of patience and empathy; and,
- Overall, it was seen that students gained in confidence, even those who were fairly shy and diffident at the outset.

As an indication of the success of the program, it was clear from both interviews with agency personnel and students that a number of students had elected to continue with their voluntary work beyond the requirements of the course.

## **Negotiation**

The very fact that students had to make the initial contacts placed a considerable onus of responsibility on them.

They were entering an environment which was unfamiliar. They had to pay attention to mundane details and understand they were important. (DPP – telephone interview)

It was often the case that they had to both accommodate to the agency's needs, while still meeting their university and paid work obligations.

## **Planning and organisation**

Students had to be alert to the ways in which the community organisation undertook its planning. They had to learn to follow procedures whose purpose may not have been immediately clear to them, but were well established and defended practices which helped the organisation run smoothly and safely.

It was reported that students were generally well organised and treated their experience in a committed way.

## **Communication**

Students found themselves communicating with people with a range of skills and capabilities. They had to become active listeners in new environments, this was particularly the case when dealing with disabilities and young people at risk.

## **Enhanced self esteem**

A further benefit was in relation to enhanced self esteem. It was claimed that students found themselves respected as professionals. As one community agency manager commented: "I knew that because they were being trained as teachers they could take the ball and run with it – I didn't have to keep telling them what to do and how to do it."

## **Patience and empathy**

Clearly patience and empathy are important attributes in a teacher. Students found themselves in situations which were particularly demanding and which drew upon and developed these virtues. Reflecting upon a student assisting her with children with cerebral palsy an agency director commented:

She (the student) needed to develop a different relationship with these children. She needed more patience and she learned to cut back teaching to its most basic level.

The demands were of a different nature to those required in classroom teaching where the day is defined by the school hours. A number of students assisted at camps for children who were significantly socio-economically disadvantaged. The camps were adventure based with canoeing, bush walking, climbing etc. Students were paired with individual children and required to act as their buddy and mentor.

If the child decided that he or she did not wish to do a certain activity it was possible for that child to demure. Students had to understand that they were the "servant to the child" (Camp Director), but of course could point out the advantages

and benefits of participation. After one day training, which included child protection issues, the encounter with the child was “full on”.

I thought that the students were really terrific. They were understanding, patient, attentive and dealt well with safety standards...they often had to deal with aggressive students and challenging behaviours. They were prepared to deal with the emotional demands and give of themselves 110%

Another student assisted in a church organisation which provided recreation for adults with a disability through craft nights, games, concerts and dancing. When taking people on excursions and picnics at weekends she was often working with them in an intense fashion from early morning to late evening. “She was so patient and a good listener”.

Several others worked with surf lifesaving clubs. They had to be alert to safety requirements and found themselves interacting with the ‘nippers’ in an environment which was very different from the classroom.

You’ve got your feet in the sand and you’re watching the waves. You are developing real knowledge. Knowledge that could save a life. This work really switches kids on to the community. ... It helps draw attention to voluntary organisations and the good that they do.

## Gaining confidence

The visit to a site was illustrative of the ways in which confidence might be gained. In this case the facility offered an adult training support service to people with intellectual disability. The provision of recreation and community linking was designed to meet the needs of high support clients. A small group (varying in size from five to eight people) met with the student over a number of weeks on a regular basis. She provided a craft program for them. The adults ranged in their ages from being in their twenties to in their forties. Initially, on meeting them the student was shy and unsure about ways in which she might converse (the matter of orientation is one to which this report will return later). It was clear that she was patient and engaged. She planned well and adapted her plans when they proved to be inappropriate.

I think it was absolutely worthwhile for her. There is not an awful lot of opportunity for the community to come into a service such as this. We do not have open days and people sometimes just don’t want to know about these people. Sharon was initially intimidated, she was timid and unsure and I felt for her, but she gradually became more comfortable and at the end had gained a lot of confidence.

In this instance it was also noted that the disabled people themselves benefited greatly from the program. “they are often limited in the experiences that they have, it’s important they move beyond the institutional culture and come out into the wider world.”

One student who spent time in an oncology ward related the experience of first walking into the ward:

*Just the smell was daunting. I wasn’t sure if I really wanted to be there. I wasn’t confident. But now I’ve learned so much about how families handle suffering. I still visit and I intend to go on visiting.*

## Continuing involvement

Engagement in such programs as the camps resulted in a number of students continuing their involvement as community service volunteers. It should also be noted that for some students CES was an extension of a commitment which they already had.

*I've been Venture Scouting since I was 15. This has always involved me in working with kids, helping them and coaching them.*

*(A country student) I've always been involved with the club when at home and on holidays. I grew up with the kids and their brothers and sisters, so it was really continuing something that I already enjoyed doing.*

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## Costs

Programs such as CES are instituted at some cost. Meeting the requirement is difficult. There were some ambiguities in what could count as community service. As well students may come to the program with unrealistic expectations. Some concerns were also expressed regarding the general “hands off” approach by the university.

## Meeting requirements

For some students, particularly mature aged students with children, even though they could see the merit in the program, finding the time was hard.

*It was so daunting. How can I fit this together (being a parent and working in my husband's business). In the end I tried to work it around my children and their school where I have put in a lot of volunteer work in the past.*

As well, meeting the requirements was economically costly.

*For some of my friends there was a lot of travelling involved. There are quite a few of them in the college and they found the cost of travelling about was more than they had thought.*

## Ambiguities

As might be expected in a newly developing program ambiguities as to what was acceptable began to emerge. For example the university has its own mentor program for incoming students. This requires the mentors to undertake a full day's training and to support their mentees during their orientation to the campus. This was considered as appropriate community service and was negotiated with the learning adviser of the academic support division. Later a student wished to claim an informal coaching arrangement which he had with a peer and felt it unfair that this was not able to be counted.

## Expectations

In the case of one agency it was reported that the student had hoped that she might have a one on one relationship with visually and hearing impaired people. However, the agency had wished her to assist in the organisation of materials for such people

within a library. Books and tapes had to be registered and catalogued so that they might be more accessible within the mainstream collection. This was important work, but the student was initially disappointed. However, “I think she found it useful to get outside the school environment and learn not only about disability and library services, but also she got a feel for a workplace and the demands it places on you.”

## Hands off approach

In the case of one large, national agency with a great deal of experience working with volunteers the case was made for greater university participation in the oversight of the students’ work.

I’d like to see it a bit more formal. The process is not organised enough. We also do work with TAFE and they have it together better. It would be good to have a liaison group. We have a high level of commitment to this work and so do the students, so we need to try to improve things.

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## Learnings

What then has been the learning arising from community service: for students; for agencies and for the university?

### Learnings

Students reported that they had developed insights into other people’s lives that they may not have otherwise obtained. They had seen children, adolescents and adults in new and different situations where the communication was not as bound by convention as it is in the classroom.

*You were seeing kids through a different lens. They were more open. They also swore more and you had to learn to deal with that.*

*For some of us the time was more strung out and then you could see real changes happening. That isn’t always possible during prac. The school I worked with implemented a motor program and I saw changes.*

*For the first time in my life I had to deal with death. This old woman was always in the same bed; then one day she wasn’t there any more and I had to speak to other patients about that.*

*I met parents in a different way. It’s hard to have much to do with parents on prac; I found I could be quite relaxed with them.*

*It was interesting getting more involved with the school as a mum, you were seeing both sides of the story. It was different.*

They believed that they had developed new strategies for behaviour management. Among them a capacity to take on the other person’s point of view.

At camp the power relations were different. In a way the kids were in control. You were there for them. They had to trust you.



Most importantly, they learned the pleasure of volunteering.

*The best part was making life enjoyable for someone else.*

Their advice to their peers was:

- Be selective (“Put yourself in a situation where you will have exposure to parents and an environment where the kids can open up and be much more relaxed. A lot can be learnt about how you deal with kids)
- Be organised.
- Be punctual.
- Plan early.
- Identify opportunities.
- Be dedicated (“You can’t afford to mess these people about!)
- Take it seriously.
- Enjoy it!

Their advice to the university was to explain the program on its merits, “not as something that just has to be done”. Also they believed that students needed to be more fully briefed:

*“Give students more notice and perhaps explain the importance of community service so there isn’t a long debate. Encourage students to choose something they love and will look forward to going to.”*

They also believed that there should be structures in place to counsel and advise students who are experiencing difficulties (transport, finance, adaptation to the service and so on).

Finally some questions were raised regarding quality control.

*“How does the university know that someone has done something worthwhile and really benefited. Some of us think that some students just bludge – have they really done community service at all.”*

One student suggested that there be some sort of closing ceremony where all the students and the organisations got together to celebrate, perhaps a barbecue, or something of the kind.

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## Future directions

It has been indicated that this program is one which is in its infancy. Those who have initiated the program have welcomed the feedback which the case study afforded. It has become clear that a number of larger and well organised community service agencies would welcome opportunities to become more engaged in the planning of the professional experience. The Director of Professional Experience believes that it would be possible to combine both a celebration of achievements and a forum for analysing current arrangements. This will be an important future step.

It is thought that some attention could be paid to the orientation of students to the sites in which they will be engaged in CES, with some guidelines which will assist them in raising salient and important questions. Visits from the university could assist in this process as well as providing academics with ongoing information regarding the challenges their students face and the learnings they derive.

It would be very satisfying for the staff to see their students' development from going on this type of course.

Other programs in the university have a community service component, for example nursing and the Bachelor of Community Work. It may well be worthwhile for a network to be established between such programs in order that common experiences and concerns might be shared. Similarly an alliance needs to be formed with the various regulatory bodies such as the Board of Teacher Registration, so that they too may more fully appreciate the benefits and value of CES.

Finally, the University itself should be thoroughly appraised of the initiative and offer support and encouragement to the program.

# Appendix E

## Case study three: Australian Catholic University

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### Introduction

This third in the series of case studies of ways in which universities, within their teacher education programs, have understood and enacted community service dimensions in the initial professional education of teachers is one which has a number of distinctive features. First of all community service is well embedded in the teacher education curriculum and has gone through a series of iterations, following ongoing and systematic evaluation over the five years of its existence. Secondly, it is particularly well documented, in that those responsible for the program, both from the university and from the community service perspective, have written about its work and presented their findings in a range of public forums and conferences. Thirdly, the program is built upon partnership arrangements which ensure that the broader community has an active voice in its design and enactment. And, finally, it is explicit in its consonance with the mission statement of the University and is recognised as such.

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### Context

The Australian Catholic University (ACU) is a national university comprising six campuses in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The amalgamations of the various sites occurred as a result of the Dawkins Reforms of the late eighties. Whilst each campus has its own history and culture what binds them together and brings them into partnership and fellowship is their shared Catholic ethos. The mission statement of the ACU identifies the University as having a “commitment to serving the common good” with a “fundamental concern for justice, equity and the dignity of all human beings”. (ACU Handbook, 1999, p.9). It is believed that this is what sets the Catholic University apart from those which are secular (Howard & Oxley, 2000).

This philosophy is echoed by Pope John Paul II, where in identifying that the ‘objective of a Catholic University is to assure in an institutional manner, a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture’.

Tim O’Hearn (Special Projects Officer for the Vice Chancellor) indicated in May 2000 that the University’s Strategic Plan contained among other things these statements:

[We] must identify salient justice issues.

[We] must be sensitive to justice and injustice.

Our graduates must be sensitised to the values and principles of justice.

There must be a values orientation; address ethical concerns.

Degree courses offering professional training must have a sharp ethical and social justice focus.

The University needs to target support for low socio-economic students.

He argued, on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, that the COP represented a desire to be guided by fundamental concerns of justice and equity and as such was strongly aligned with the University's guiding principles. This is the first instance, in the three case studies, of such an acknowledgment from the University, as a corporate body, of the primacy of community service learning within teacher education programs.

The campus with which this study is concerned is the Mount Saint Mary Campus located in Sydney's inner west. Teacher education has been core business at Mount Saint Mary for many years; with most of the graduates planning to teach young people in the various Diocesan schools and colleges, as well as Catholic Independent Schools.

The Community Outreach Social Analysis and Action Program (COP) is undertaken as a core subject by all Year 1 Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Year 2 Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts (Secondary) students during second semester. It involves students in an 80 hour placement in an approved community agency, supported by a course of lectures and a substantial handbook of reading materials. Students maintain a learning journal in which they note not only their experiences but the relevance of these experiences to them as intending teachers and informed citizens.

As a requirement of the subject students must attend the placement to the satisfaction of the agency and the university's liaison officer, and complete a learning portfolio, which has the following components:

- a reflection upon the lectures and their connection to the selected placement;
- the maintenance of a learning journal; and
- an analysis of community service learning at the completion of the placement .

Since 2000 the program has been guided by its Community Outreach Advisory Committee, comprising key community agencies, such as: Caritas, Amnesty, Mission Australia, Anglicare, Centacare, UNICEF; as well as Diocesan and University representatives and those from the Sydney Catholic Education Office and the NSW Department of Education and Training. While not involving themselves in operational decisions, members of the committee are active in offering policy advice and recommending strategic directions.

It is anticipated in 2002 that those in the Primary BEd Program will also receive the support of tutorials in which major issues and concerns may be discussed. It is also planned to introduce a full range of grades for the subject, which currently is judged on a pass/fail basis.

## Origins and nature of COP

The first systematic attempt to incorporate community service learning into its teacher education programs at Mount Saint Mary occurred in 1995. In this year the Community Experiential Learning Program (CELP) was introduced for secondary teacher education students. The notion was for students to extend their experience beyond that of the school and work in the community in a variety of ways. It was expected of them that they would be able to generalise aspects of their experience as a means of better contextualising the experiences of young people in school; and beyond that the families of those young people. The program met with some success and was extended in 1997 – 1998 to include primary as well as secondary teacher education students.

1999 saw a much expanded program, now identified as the Community Outreach Program. The framework was now a more explicit social justice framework in the belief that teachers have citizenship responsibilities which they must honour and which not only are intended to face the inequalities and unjust social structures faced by their students, but also with their students to become social activists.

Community service learning through an Australian Catholic University has to be based on field based experiential learning incorporating issues of liberation theology and social analysis with a framework of faith and justice (Howard & Oxley, 2000).

An examination of subject outlines for 2000 and 2001 indicate that the subject continues to be refined with clearer expectations of what it is that students will experience and achieve. The 2001 goals for the unit are stated as, to contribute to the:

- development of future educators who will act for the recognition of social justice and human rights in diverse contexts.
- development of critical thinkers, who are able to take informed action for social change.
- creation of a university culture in which social justice is a core value and a lived reality.

The organisation of placements is complex and overseen as part of the professional experience program of the University and accounts for 0.4 of the load of a professional experience officer. Students themselves can initiate placements, agencies can make application for placement and the University has engaged in formal links with over 100 agencies. During 2001 three hundred teacher education students will have completed 80 hours of community service being placed with over 140 agencies, among them such sites as the Matthew Talbot Hostel, Womens' Refuges, the Exodus Foundation and specialist refugee organisations. The program is quite firm that placements cannot be sought in school settings, other than special schools catering for disabled children. However, it does recognise prior learning if a student had previously worked in particular contexts, for example gerontology (13 mature age students had their prior learning recognised in 2001).

## Roles and expectations of students and their responses

During their community service students are expected to engage with the agency and its work in any ways of which they are capable. It may mean that they are cooking or coaching; reading or listening to people who are rarely heard or acknowledged; helping with craft activities or playing camp buddy with alienated and angry young people. Sometimes they do much needed administrative work. Whatever the task, they are expected to be fully professional and involved.

It is important to the program that the students do not merely see themselves as “helpers”; but rather they are being enabled to develop the kind of professional and personal efficacy which will allow them to feel confident to engage with confronting experiences and deal with demanding social situations when they become teachers and as they proceed through their lives. “They are expected to actively recognise the needs of people outside their ordinary experience and say to themselves ‘I can actually do this!’” (Academic)

During the early days of the program (CELP) the students were apparently “quite mutinous”. They could not see the relationship between it and becoming a teacher. Now that the program has matured it is generally well accepted. Students have heard about it and even look forward to it. They are beginning to understand that teachers need competencies beyond those required to survive in the classroom.

An analysis of student learning journals (Butcher, Howard, Labone & Breeze, 2001) identified six major categories of student learning as a result of their involvement in COP; these being:

- awareness of the extent of disadvantage within society;
- challenges to personal experiences and belief systems;
- development of coping skills and growth in social efficacy;
- growth in understanding of social responsibility and engaged citizenship;
- development of their own teaching identity; and,
- growth in understanding the role of teachers.

Further journal analysis identified thirty two constructs that gave insight into students’ development in social responsibility and social efficacy and the ways in which these were assisted or hindered through the difficult contexts students experienced (Butcher, Howard & Labone, 2001).

At the end of each cycle program evaluation is conducted by the course director. The feedback is designed to enable ongoing program improvement.

During the conduct of the case study it was possible to act as a participant observer on an occasion when a group of students were debriefing with their liaison person immediately following the community service placement. Of these young people, a mixed group of primary and secondary teacher education students, three had spent time with people in aged care, some of whom were in advanced stages of dementia. While each student told his or her story independently it was clear that there were some common features across their experience. Each felt that the experience was highly revealing:

*“It was an eye opener...” “I had my eyes opened”. “I don’t have grandparents, so have little to do with older people and how they live their lives, it opened my eyes to be more tolerant”. The students indicated that to them aged people were almost completely invisible. “At first I thought of them as ‘just old women’”. They had not realised that they had lived full lives. “One had been Miss Manly in the 1920s and had so much to tell, if only someone would listen.” “I listened to this old man and found out that he had been a colonel in the US army.”*

These students spoke poignantly of the institutionalisation of the old and the lack of recognition of their needs by the community and even their families. They learned that they had to first build trust before people would open themselves up. They also talked of their discomfort. One young man related his difficulties when he was required to feed a patient who clearly did not like or want the food. Another talked of her first encounter with death “I’d talked to her, I’d got to know her and then she was dead.”

Another student had spent time with autistic children. “I quickly came to realise that the great big lesson plan was not going to work, I had to go along with them and find out ways of getting through.” She reported that her first week was very difficult. She had to come to terms with how their abilities and aptitudes were quite unevenly spread. Gradually she built an affiliation with the boys in her care. She witnessed them spending time in mainstream settings and realised that her mission in the future would not only be to support and help the learning of such children, but also to assist able bodied and able minded children to be more accepting. “I’d want them to realise it’s not just a matter of ‘them and us’ but being more inclusive and compassionate.”

A mature age student had spent time at Stewart House, a residential facility for children who were in economically deprived circumstances. Because of their difficult encounters with poverty, drugs and abuse many of the children exhibited highly challenging behaviours. The student explained that she too had come from circumstances where there was little money, but not the levels of deprivation that she encountered here. She found that the lectures had given her some assistance on gaining a purchase on the problems, “if you had no explanation you’d get angry”. All the same, while she became more understanding and tolerant of the children she found it difficult to extend this to their parents, whom she saw less as victims and more as perpetrators. Interestingly she found the Stewart House facility, itself, to be an indicator of social justice “there it is, right on the beach, on expensive real estate, and its for these kids.”

All the students reported how quickly the time had passed. Several indicated that they had committed themselves to returning to the agency as an ongoing volunteer. They had learned skills of communication, management and resourcefulness. They believed that they had made a difference, “Like I had a chance to do some occupational health and safety work and I identified slippery carpet and a dark stairwell, which I think they will change.” As well they had learned from those with whom they had interacted “there was this woman who was a wonderful embroiderer and she gave me these great hints. Others gave me recipes and things once they knew I liked to cook.”

While it was clear that many of the students’ encounters had been challenging and unexpected their structured engagement in COP has provided them with the

opportunities and tools to begin to deal with these often confronting experiences and develop an enhanced sense of their own efficacy in dealing with them.

Furthermore, it was clear that the insights which were developed, particularly in settings dealing with disadvantaged people, were seen by students to be highly relevant to their future work as teachers in schools.

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## Roles and expectations of academic staff

Academic staff involvement in COP goes well beyond providing the necessary academic structures to enable the subject to become operative. After interviewing key staff members it became clear that there was a strongly held belief in the program and its intentions:

We see it as a kind of grounding device ‘teaching as an advocate’. We hope that it will carry forward beyond ‘that was something we did in 1st Year’ to ‘that’s how we do things. It gives the students skills in social analysis and hopefully they’ll bring that to thinking in the entire curriculum (Academic).

Lectures are supported by drawing on the life experiences of a range of people whose histories have typically placed them at society’s margins: gays; refugees; Aboriginal people. While students are expected to attend no records are kept. Next year, 2002, when tutorials are in place attendance will be a requirement.

It is argued here that staff engagement is substantive, that is to say it goes beyond the procedural. The academics are involved in an intersecting series of research projects, ranging from the analysis of roles (e.g. the role of the liaison officer) to an analysis of outcomes through artefacts such as the student journals. They are currently working on the development of support audio visual materials through a teaching development grant. The intended video will consist of five vignettes presenting voices from the community on current social issues at local, national and international levels.

The team’s writing and reflection is regularly presented at conferences both in Australia and overseas. They see this as an opportunity to engage in continuous improvement based upon evidence which is collected and discussed in publicly accountable ways. They also see their writing as a celebration of what has been achieved thus far “it really has been a marvellous effort, on a modest budget”. They constantly work to achieve a balance between critique and celebration and manage this by taking, as writing and research partners, those from their key contributing agencies.

It is clear from an analysis of the range of papers presented that there is a belief that the program is strongly emancipatory, taking students well beyond the acquisition of skills to a Friirian model of “listen, experience, dialogue and action” (Oxley, Howard & Johnston, 1999 p. 209). It is stated, through a number of the papers, that

*We increasingly live in an economy where once we lived in a society or community. No longer are we considered citizens with human rights, rather we are consumers with choices.*

(Howard & Oxley, 2000)



It is not by chance that the course readings (some 253 pages of them) commence with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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## Roles and expectations of the liaison officer

Liaison officers are engaged to liaise between the University, the students and the agencies. Each carries a load of approximately 20 students and is paid at the same rate as a practicum supervisor. They are expected to visit the students and support them in arriving at a deeper understanding of the agency, its role and related social justice issues. They complete an evaluation of the student's input and commitment. They mark the learning portfolios of those students whom they have visited and attend the debrief and final lecture to assist in the continuous development of the subject. Liaison officers can come from within the program, or be quite unconnected to teacher education. They may be youth workers, nurses, counsellors, members of religious communities – their asset is their commitment to the role of mentoring the students.

The project team has already undertaken a small study of the ways in which the liaison officer operates. Four people involved in the program over three years (1999-2001) have been interviewed by telephone regarding their motivation, interaction with key partners, mentoring experiences and learning (Howard & Breeze, 2001). The general consensus among the liaison officers was that the mentoring process was critical to transforming the professional learning of students:

*(It) does not provide answers but rather it raises questions that lead the student to recognise at the least the possibility of transformation in his/ her life.*

(Howard & Breeze, 2001, p.5)

At a debriefing meeting attended by the writer of this case study a number of issues were raised by the liaison officers. They spoke of the extent to which students were continuing with their volunteer work and that this year's cohort had been exceptional in that regard.

They believed that their own attendance at the lectures had been vital in them being able to support students in making sense of their placement. They indicated that they believed that while students' journals tended to just be a recording of actions they had many useful learning conversations where it was demonstrable that students were connecting the lectures and experience. "What they want to do is talk and talk and talk about things and they need the time and space to do it." However, it required the third party, the liaison person, to assist in these conceptualisations. "They didn't automatically make the connection, sometimes you had to prompt them with 'do you remember when this was talked about in class?'" One suggested that it might be profitable to continue to have contact with students at later points in their degrees so that the, "social justice issues can be kept alive."

They believed that prejudices about working with marginalised people were being broken down as a result of the program and that students were overcoming a number of often-unnamed fears.

There was general agreement that the program was an innovative and risky one. “We are doing pretty edgy work here.” They believed that for it to be sustained the culture of questioning large social issues would have to be explicit throughout the degree. There was a sense that not all of the academic staff, concerned with teacher education, were familiar with or understood the program. There was agreement that a tutorial program would be of great assistance to student community service learning.

The liaison officers were concerned regarding the grading of the subject. They felt that there was such variability both in placements and the extent to which the agency could give students the widest range of experiences and support, that comparisons would be hard to make if the grading was normative, or that criteria might be hard to satisfy if it was standards referenced. This is a matter of ongoing concern and will need to be resolved.

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## Roles and expectations of community agencies

A number of the cooperating agencies were contacted by telephone. Among them was the Director of Social Policy and Research at Centacare. His insights were particularly useful as he also serves on the program’s advisory body. Centacare is an organisation of the Catholic Church and serves the large Sydney Diocese. Its programs fall roughly into four categories: Children and Youth Services; Family Services; Aging and Disability Services and Employment Services. As a large and complex organisation it is mindful of the needs of those intending to become teachers to be familiarised with such provisions and the place they play in people’s lives.

The program takes up to twenty placements from the University’s program. This requires a deal of effort and organisation on Centacare’s part, but they believe that the outcomes make the investment of time worthwhile.

Some students arrive and work in groups of up to three or four. This has attendant costs and benefits. For while the students can use their peers as a support network, it is also the case that they tend not to venture more deeply into the work and purpose of the organisation. It is also the case that some students opt for this particular placement, while others are sent. The Director believes it is important that students make informed choices about where they are going and why.

This was a view which was supported by an aged care facility Director who believed that some students made their choice on the basis of proximity to their homes, rather than because they could see a particular contribution which they might make. In her view it would assist the students’ commitment if they first had to do some research on possible placements.

Agencies indicated that they value very much the involvement of the students and the purpose of the program. They also observed that they provide placements for a number of different programs including nursing, medicine, physiotherapy and social work; and that it is important that they are well briefed on the expectations held for the student as these often vary from program to program. They welcomed the role of the liaison person; for, while they are warmly supportive of the program

their major responsibility is to their clients for whom they are providing the services, not to the students.

It was seen that the program has become more refined over the years and the students' own level of engagement has increased. In a number of cases students have returned to the agency to continue their volunteer services.

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## **Conclusion:**

The Mount Saint Mary Campus of the Australian Catholic University has progressed the concept of community service learning further down the continuum than is the case in most teacher education programs in Australia. This is clear both from the national survey and from the experience of the researcher. The program is founded upon a belief that enhanced understandings of the many challenges surrounding disability and disadvantage not only contributes to a more sensitised teacher, but to a more sensitised citizen. While we have no long term evidence, it is hard to imagine that the experiences of the students in this innovative program will not stay with them for a very long time.

# Appendix F

## Forum agenda

Working conference: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm - 19 November 2001

Australian Catholic University

Mount Saint Mary Campus

25A Barker Road Strathfield

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### Conference Goals

- Participants to have an understanding of project
- Participants to be involved in informing the national agenda in the area of community service within a citizenship approach
- Participants to be involved in critiquing current literature and practices Draft recommendations for report

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### Participants

- Higher education institutions
- DETYA personnel
- National and state community agencies
- Immigration personnel
- Other special guests

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### Conference agenda

9.00 - 9.30 am	Registration
9.30 -9.45 am	Welcome
	Overview of project-
9.45 -10.30 am	Keynote by Dr Marcus Einfeld
	Engaged Citizenship, Teacher Education and the Community

10.30 -11.00 am	Morning Tea
11.00 -1.00 pm	Project Outcomes Literature Review (30 mins) Survey analysis (15 mins) Case studies (30 mins) Open forum (45 mins)
1.00 - 2.00 pm	Lunch
2.00 - 3.30 pm	Workshop: Advancing the Community Service Agenda What is possible in community service in the area of teacher education? What would facilitate the implementation of these possibilities? What challenges need to be addressed in achieving these possibilities?
3.30 - 4.00 pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00 - 4.45 pm	Citizenship, Community Service and Benchmarking: Informing the National Agenda
4.45 - 5.00 pm	Summary/Conclusion (Associate Professor Tim O’Hearn, Dr Michael Bezzina)

# Appendix G

## Participatory forum summary

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### Dr Michael Bezzina

Would the discussions have been different before the Tampa and September 11?

While benchmarking is one of the great tools of economic rationalism, we have moved away from a discourse about the citizen as consumer to that about the citizen as citizen. We've moved to notions of the public good rather than of the economy.

We've struggled with different concepts of community service:

- Something you sell to someone;
- Something you benchmark to demonstrate a university's progress;
- A form of quasi detention;
- The kinds of things kids in schools do as part of a social justice course;
- An exercise in charity.

We've adopted a much broader agenda regarding the type of graduate we want to turn out and then the type of curriculum we provide.

There is a gap between engaged citizenship and the more traditional and limited views of community service seen in some of the survey responses.

There is also a gap between engaged citizenship and benchmarking which seems to be about something completely different.

There is also a gap within the university curriculum between those experiences for students that are related to community service and other elements of the student programs.

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### Associate Professor Tim O'Hearn

There is a danger that as academics we will examine the butterfly captured and pinned on the wall and miss the beauty of the real life of the butterfly itself.

If linguists want to distance themselves from things they use nouns (community service, community engagement). If you want to get close to a subject you use verbs (I serve the community) which involves both an action and an actor. Community service tends to drift out there into the ether.

Be careful not to move into some form of reductionism. That's what benchmarking can do, narrowing us down to things that can be measured and labelled. When you listen to someone who is working all the time in a field where there is great social need, they talk about people, human beings who all have different circumstances. How do people in the university ever get to know that this is what it's like out there?

We have a tendency to rush to judgement. Perhaps we have to just describe, let the stories happen, and in listening to the stories perhaps we can then see what generalisations are coming out of them.

In universities we can get trapped very easily. With a focus on teaching and research, community service can easily get dropped off the end. But these three are organic they inform one another.

We do know the situation in America where a lot of the larger corporations will not fund research any more unless they can prove that some people in the community are going to benefit. They are moving away from the belief that the expertise is all in the universities. It is also out there in the community. Therefore we must get involved with the communities we serve.

# Appendix H – Community Service Learning Benchmark

**Area:** Community Service

**Element:** Community Service Learning

**Type:** Leading

**Benchmark Rationale:** Community Service Learning (CSL) impacts on staff and students, organisational units, the university as a whole and the community, and signifies the extent to which universities are both connected to the communities they serve and responsive to their needs.

**Sources of Data:** University Plans – Strategic Plan, Community Service Plan, Organisational Unit Plans; Community Service Activities Register; Advisory Committee reports; Community Partnership Agreements; and Annual Report Section on Community Service.

## Good Practice

Existence of a Community Service Learning (CSL) Policy and a Plan which provides a clear link to the goals and objectives of the most recent University Strategic Plan and the broader Community Service Plan. Clear evidence of community engagement processes underpinned by the key principles of mutuality, respect, and reciprocity. These key principles form the underlying structure of engaging in community service learning. Evidence of clear and formal procedures and mechanisms for implementing, monitoring, evaluating and improving community service learning and community engagement at both the organisational unit level and within community learning contexts. Evidence that the university has entered into learning partnerships with community agencies. Staff involvement in CSL initiatives is recognised and rewarded (eg., as a criterion for promotion). Organisational units, and the university in aggregate, are able to quantify the funds spent on community service learning activities and has data available to assess the impact of community service learning in any given year.

## Levels

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Pragmatic objectives, strategies and targets, and procedures to monitor effectiveness. Few unit plans. No formal mechanisms to monitor impact of CSL activities in the community. Little evidence that the university negotiates learning partnerships or engages with its community . Ad hoc approach to partnership arrangements. No university level tracking or analysis of funds spent on or impact of community service learning. CSL initiatives not recognised as a criterion for promotion.</p>		<p>CSL Policy and Plan clearly linked to university goals and objectives, and well formulated monitoring and improvement processes. Clear evidence of learning partnerships and engagement with community agencies but agreements lack specificity and role clarification. Most organisational unit plans demonstrate that CSL and community engagement are important parts of their programs and indicate the way in which students are involved in learning within community settings. Some evidence that the university and organisational units attempt to track spending and relate this to assessing impact. CSL initiatives taken into account for promotion.</p>		<p>Well integrated CSL Policy and Plan that incorporates community feedback mechanisms and qualitative and quantitative measures of community engagement. All organisational unit plans demonstrate that CSL and community engagement are integral components of programs and indicate the learning outcomes to be achieved and the processes by which learning is assessed and activities evaluated. Community partnerships are clearly articulated and regularly evaluated including funds expended and relative impact. CSL initiatives taken into account for promotion.</p>



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