



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The parable of the search for low SES students: how ANU could turn high SES applicants (water) into low SES students (wine)

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What is a parable?

- ➔ a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.
- ➔ a statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like

Outline

- ➔ Background
- ➔ Inadequacy of Postcodes
- ➔ Barriers to Access to ANU
- ➔ Unmet Demand in NSW/ACT
- ➔ Key Markets for ANU
 - Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
 - Riverina and South Coast
 - Interstate
- ➔ Current/Future Initiatives/Strategies
- ➔ Conclusion

Background

- ➔ ANU's access and participation rates for Low socio-economic status (SES) students are historically low generally around 4% compared to national average of 15%
- ➔ Both retention and success rates though are regularly above national average
- ➔ Not many low SES students study at ANU but if they do, they are generally successful

(according to DEEWR 2007 figures)

Background

➡ “...need for enhanced equity in tertiary education, with a focus on improving the accessibility of tertiary education for all Australians”, and to this end, the Government “has set a target that by 2020, 20% of higher education enrolments at undergraduate level should be from low socio-economic backgrounds” Hon. Julia Gillard, Deputy PM on 9th March 2009.

➡ “Social inclusion must be a core responsibility of all institutions that accept public funding, irrespective of history and circumstances”, Professor Denise Bradley.

'THE DILEMMA'

DPM'S OFFICE

BY 2020 55,000 NEW
UNI PLACES WILL
BE AVAILABLE FOR
LOW SES BODS

SO WHERE ARE
ALL THESE BODS?

HEY JULIA! THERE JUST
AREN'T ANY IN THE A.C.T.,
SO WHAT DO WE DO?

BY DEROMAN

Inadequacy of postcodes

- ➔ DEEWR define socio-economic status (SES) by 'postcode'
- ➔ ACT postcodes are almost all High SES
- ➔ Surrounding major centres e.g Bega, Wagga are 'Medium' SES
- ➔ Continuing students become High SES once they change to ACT address
- ➔ According to ACTCOSS, 13.6% of ACT households could be defined in the lowest Australian equivalised quintile of income in 2007; as high as 21% in North Canberra;
- ➔ ANU only has 4% low SES students according to postcode.

Inadequacy of postcodes

➡ “... postcodes are useful indicators in national aggregate terms..., but as measures of performance of individual institutions they are blunt and inaccurate.” [1]

➡ Professor James also suggested that the “postcode measure must be replaced, and fast.”

[1] Professor Richard James, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The Australian, *Postcodes a poor guide*, 18 March 2009

Inadequacy of postcodes

- ➔ 2010 – data to be collected for parental education.
- ➔ Professor James believes that a student's parental education is indicative of the likelihood of a student completing school and for them to aspire to study at a university.
- ➔ He doesn't suggest that this measure is conclusive in any way but is less 'blunt' than the postcode measure.

Barriers to Access to ANU

- ➔ Geographical proximity –
 - Transport
 - Accommodation
 - Relocation and accommodation expenses

Barriers to Access to ANU

➔ University of Newcastle

- Hunter, Mid North Coast and Central Coast
- Large numbers of postcode classified as low SES
- In 2008, 20.6% of offers went to low SES applicants
- Offer largest number of places to Enabling students in Australia
- TAFE articulation and bridging programs
- Accessible transport and affordable accommodation (living at home!) make access easier

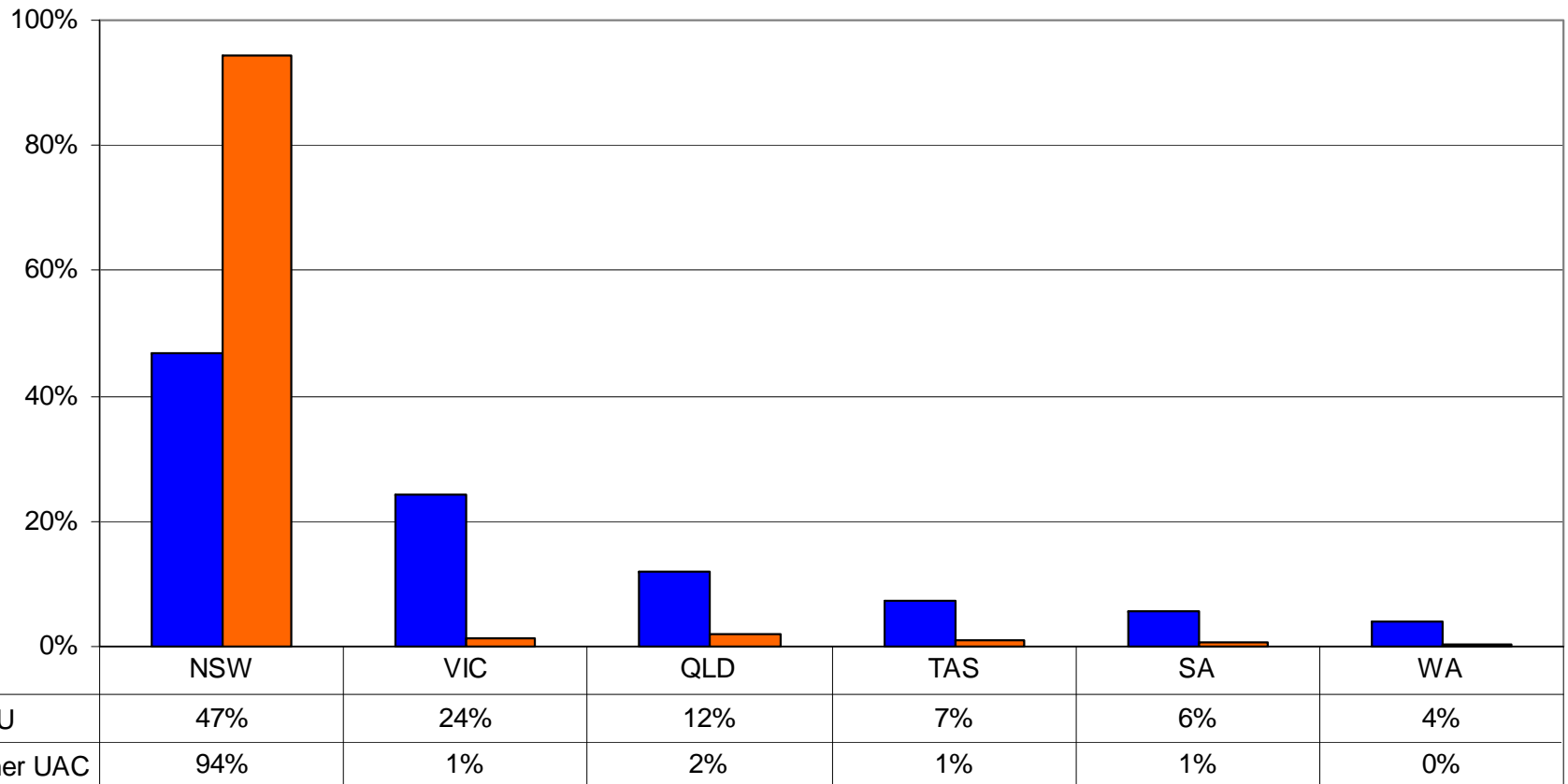
Barriers to Access to ANU

- ➔ University of New South Wales
 - Situated in eastern suburbs of Sydney
 - In 2008, 75% of their low SES offers went to Sydney city, western Sydney and Central Coast
 - These areas are all within commuting distance of their Kensington campus

Barriers to Access to ANU

- ➡ Geographical proximity –
- ➡ Density of Population within ANU catchment
 - regional centres are medium SES e.g. Wagga
 - low SES districts have small populations
- ➡ ANU though can still attract low SES applicants from interstate

Low SES Offers through UAC by State 2008



Key Markets - ACT

- ➔ 70% of UG intake comes from ACT mostly High SES;
- ➔ ~2,000 students receive Centrelink assistance each year
- ➔ Some Canberra households can be defined in the lowest quintile of income
- ➔ Main ANU low SES enrolments from Victoria (15%), Qld (14%), Riverina & Hunter (11%) & Sydney (9%)
- ➔ Developing links with:
 - Uni of Canberra – 4yr combined teaching degrees
 - Canberra Institute of Technology – better pathways
 - ACT Dept of Education and Training – enhancing school participation

Key Markets – Riverina and South Coast

- ➔ Murrumbidgee/Riverina provides largest NSW population of low SES students to ANU
- ➔ But many are from major centres → medium SES
- ➔ Engagement with the region
 - ANU Community Ambassadors – working with secondary schools in Young
 - School visits to Acton campus
 - Scheme expanded to include Goulburn, Bega, Eden and Pambula in 2009
- ➔ Relocation and accommodation still remain as barriers

Key Markets – Interstate

- ➔ ANU has the highest proportion of offers to interstate applicants through UAC
- ➔ 24% of low SES offers are to Victoria, 12% to Qld
- ➔ These applicants though have very low acceptance rates
- ➔ Having a presence in other states through offices in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane
- ➔ Developing links with institutions in other states e.g. Uni SA, CDU and USQ

Current Initiatives

➔ Countrywide Access Scheme – operated through UAC

Disrupted Schooling

Excessive Family Responsibilities

Financial Hardship

English Language Difficulty

Severe Family Disruption

Personal Illness/Disability

Adverse Study Conditions

School Environment

Suffered Abuse

Geographical Isolation

Current Initiatives

- ➔ New partnerships with Uni SA, CDU in NT and USQ
- ➔ Opportunities for indigenous students to do ANU courses
- ➔ A range of indigenous scholarship schemes e.g. Indigenous Australian Graduate Scholarships; Judith Wright Scholarship to support an indigenous female in 2nd year of study

Unmet Demand

- ➔ Of 20,470 UAC applicants receiving a UAI of 75 or more, only 77 failed to receive an offer. Of those only 7 were low SES and only 4 had a UAI over 80

- ➔ Of 22,242 students who received a UAI over 75, 979 did not apply for a Uni place at all. Of those only 77 were from a school located in low SES area
 - 109 of the 979 were from an ACT school and 78 had a UAI over 80

- ➔ No obvious pool of unmet demand

So what do we do?



Current/Future Initiatives/Strategies

- ➔ Request DPM to consider new national program of full cost scholarships to low SES, high achievers in each state to meet relocation and living needs
- ➔ Better ways to identify low SES students in ACT e.g. using Centrelink benefits
- ➔ Providing pathways for low SES in ACT e.g. Uni of Canberra, CIT
- ➔ Enhance Countrywide Scheme

Current/Future Initiatives/Strategies

- ➔ Continue to develop engagement schemes in our catchment of Riverina and South Coast
- ➔ Further develop alliances with other Australian unis that have strong equity pathways e.g. CDU, Uni SA, USQ

Conclusion

- ➔ ANU has low access and participation rates for low SES students but better than average retention and success rates
- ➔ Our lack of geographic proximity to low SES populations and high cost of limited accommodation restrict numbers
- ➔ Still able to attract interstate interest
- ➔ New initiatives in local catchments working

Conclusion

- ➔ But will only really work if we can resolve the relocation and accommodation expenses that non-local students experience

- ➔ We also need to redefine 'low SES':
 - Including parental education is one way
 - Centrelink benefits

- ➔ ANU has a unique relationship to the nation as its 'National University'

Conclusion

- ➔ Compact discussions will focus on leveraging this unique position
- ➔ Need to provide full cost scholarships for high achievers from each state.

Questions?

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