

Deakin at Your Doorstep – a university-TAFE partnership

The *Deakin at Your Doorstep* project delivers an innovative two-year Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences at Deakin's Warrnambool Campus and on the campuses of three TAFE partners in regional Victoria: Sunraysia at Swan Hill, East Gippsland at Bairnsdale and Chisholm at Dandenong. The Associate Degree can be studied concurrently with a range of Diplomas and provides a supported transition to a number of Bachelor Degrees.

Deakin at Your Doorstep, funded by \$8.2 million from the Australian Government's Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund, is designed to maximise the chance of success for people unfamiliar with higher education. The first 75 students commenced the program in March 2010 with students linking via state of the art video conference technology. Lectures are delivered from Deakin's Warrnambool Campus and learning support tutors work with students at the TAFE campuses. Initial student feedback has been positive.

The project is complex, requiring university and TAFE systems to work together on everything from academic course content and credit transfer, through IT systems, facilities, marketing, libraries, student support, enrolment processes and timetabling. Getting the system up and running, with students enrolled and sitting in newly refurbished facilities in four sites connected by dedicated high speed broadband, and lecturers and support tutors ready to deliver on day one of trimester one was a testament to the flexibility and commitment on the part of many staff at Deakin and our TAFE partners.

The *Deakin at Your Doorstep* delivery mode is more cost effective than traditional face to face teaching while still providing the support required by regional and disadvantaged students not familiar with higher education. *Deakin at Your Doorstep* addresses key aspects of the Federal Government's Higher Education reform agenda to improve participation of students from low socio economic backgrounds in higher education, support regional education provision through new models of delivery and to build stronger connectivity between the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

The main learning from *Deakin at Your Doorstep* is not to underestimate the complexities of working across sectors. Curriculum and competency, HECS and FEE-HELP, VTAC and equipment compatibility are just the tip of the iceberg. There were many changes needed within Deakin and TAFE systems to accommodate the Associate Degree and its delivery mode. It was the attention paid to building excellent working relationships at all levels from senior university and TAFE leaders through teaching and academic support staff to recruitment people and IT technicians that have ensured the success of the initiative to date.

Deakin is working to extend this concept and its related benefits in other locations including at least three more TAFE campuses, community centres and libraries.

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