

Section:	MAYORAL MINUTE	18 April 2006	CVC0032
Item:	05.009/06 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY AND CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL		

REPORT SUMMARY

Clarence Valley Council has the opportunity to engage with Southern Cross University for mutual benefits in the nature of eg shared amenities, co-hosting functions, study and professional development opportunities, scholarships and access to the University's repository of regional data. Such benefits would be engendered by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the University.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Clarence Valley Council support in principle a Memorandum of Understanding with South Cross University.
2. That the General Manager negotiate with Southern Cross University the final wording of the draft Memorandum of Understanding provided for Council's consideration by the University.

BACKGROUND

Since elected as Mayor, I have arranged a number of meetings with University personnel at both University of New England (UNE) and Southern Cross University (SCU) with the objective of enhancing relationships and University services in the Clarence Valley for our citizens.

In relation to UNE, I have met, on two occasions, with the Vice chancellor and other Pro Vice chancellors. The central thrust of those meetings was to establish a UNE "satellite campus" in the Clarence Valley. Unfortunately Vice-chancellor Professor Moses left UNE at the end of 2005 and the proposal lost momentum. I am endeavouring to arrange a meeting with incoming Vice-Chancellor Professor Pettigrew on 21 April at Armidale to progress the "satellite campus" proposal.

Discussions have been conducted with SCU Vice-Chancellor Paul Clark and I have met Professor Peter Baverstock, Ros Derrett and three lecturers on separate occasions to progress a closer relationship between Clarence Valley Council, Clarence Valley citizens and Southern Cross University. Ms Ros Derrett has been especially helpful in this regard.

ISSUES

Ms Derrett has provided a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Council's consideration. The Draft is contained in the attachments. My understanding is that its framework is effectively working in regard to SCU arrangements with Lismore City Council and Byron Shire Council. The MOU may require some modification for Clarence Valley Council purposes.

The purpose of the proposed MOU is to express the intention of CVC and SCU and is not intended to be legally binding on either party. However, significant benefits

would be available which would promote the strategic objectives of the parties. The catalyst for co-operation is mutual recognition of benefits derived from an ongoing formal relationship.

The terms of co-operation for each specific activity contemplated under an MOU would need to be discussed and agreed upon in writing by both parties prior to the initiation of that activity. Agreed activities would be recorded and governed by a separate legally binding agreement. It has been suggested that CVC and SCU each designate a liaison officer to develop and coordinate the specific activities agreed upon. All financial arrangements would have to be negotiated and would naturally depend upon funds availability. The MOU would not impose financial obligations on either party and each party would be free to have arrangements of a similar or difference nature with other institutions (eg CVC and UNE) during the currency of the MOU.

This MOU proposal can promote cooperation and advancement of academic and educational input into the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of Council's programs and with Council's broader constituency. Naturally the MOU would assist SCU to satisfy its core business of its research, teaching and learning portfolio.

A MOU between SCU and CVC will work best I believe when the following conditions and objectives exist:

- Trust exists between the parties entering into the formalised relationship,
- Parties can identify specific beneficial ways to work together,
- The exchange of assistance is equitable and balanced,
- Expectations can be stated in simple, straightforward terms,
- The arrangement is for a specified period of time,
- The reputation and public standing of both organisations is enhanced to better service the needs of internal and external stakeholders,
- Regular communication and exchange information of mutual interest, respect and appreciation is a permanent public record of the mutual aspiration of both organisations.

The University's Office of Regional Engagement (ORE) can provide regular contact with Councillors and staff of CVC investigating collaboration opportunities. It acts as a clearing-house to facilitate –

Regional research initiatives; student internships; mentoring; case study development and assessment; benchmarking; guest speaker opportunities in specific disciplines represented in the existing SCU portfolio of academic and administrative programs; short courses; project management; consultancies; policy advice and reflection; and global connections.

Consideration can be given to shared amenities, co-hosting functions, study and professional development opportunities – encouragement for Council staff to undertake undergraduate and postgraduate study and provision of course information sessions or specialist short courses; Mayor's scholarships; and SCU being a repository of regional data.

Key economic sectors like the creative industries, tourism, aged and health services, information technology and business can be the focus of initial attention.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil at this stage, but over time there would be budgetary requirements for projects and/or mutual initiatives.

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Cllr Ian Tiley
MAYOR