

## **Submission to the Evaluation of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) - September 2016**

We appreciate the opportunity to make this very brief submission to point out what we consider to be an obvious and fundamental shortcoming in the HEPPP.

The aim of the program is to ensure that Australians from low SES backgrounds who are able to undertake undergraduate study have the opportunity to do so.

Logically, and following on from that aim, students, especially those who need encouragement, should be free to choose the course that will best meet their needs and aspirations. The HEPPP however is restricted to universities, and not available to the wide range of private sector higher education providers registered through TEQSA for the delivery of higher education.

A further inequity is that students enrolling outside the public universities are not eligible for a Commonwealth Supported Place.

Despite that, the 2014 data indicates that 15.99% of students in non-university providers (NUHEPS) were low SES compared to 17.55% in Public Universities.

This is remarkable given that the students enrolled with NUHEPS receive no subsidies and have to pay a 25% administration fee on their FEE HELP loan.

Smaller institutions that focus on teaching, with smaller classes and a concentration on specific disciplines can build excellent relationships with students. These institutions, given access to HEPPP, would be in a position to further encourage outcomes for students from low SES backgrounds.

### **About COPHE**

The Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE) is a peak body representing higher education institutions that are not public universities. The membership is diverse and includes private universities and institutions operating from more than 80 campus locations across Australia. Members vary in student enrolments from under a hundred to a few thousand and include not-for profit and for-profit operations. Courses offered range from pathway diplomas, where non university operation underpin the backbone of the critical international student market in our public universities, through bachelor and master's degrees, often linked to professions and employment, and on to research degrees, including PhDs.

Some COPHE members have been delivering higher education since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and we would observe that many parts of public universities had their origins in private institutions.

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