

OPEN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT REGIONAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract: This article presents transparent, Australian education management and communication strategies to serve international and regional community aims for improving health and the environment. Discussion is first based on a description of key regulatory contexts and related theoretical views now influencing governments in Australia and more broadly. New institutional approaches to governance, competition, education, communication and research are addressed before a supporting management model is offered for education content production and broad dissemination through communication partnerships to promote health and sustainable development. A contract model is proposed to assist implementation of health and sustainable development goals of governments, industries and communities. Consultation and pilot development are now required for testing the hypothetical model, but outdated institutional requirements for confidentiality appear to require change in order to allow this to happen.

Key words: Health education for sustainable development

The current international context of Australian health and education service provision

Health and education are primary drivers of productivity and the poor have the worst of both ((United Nations (UN), 2003; Murray and Lopez, 1996; United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2005). Measured by longevity, health is improving internationally, but not for all. Many countries face increasing problems in providing for the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed and poor. The United Nations (2003) noted that globally, primary education provides the greatest return on investment for individuals and communities and that fertility control is also necessary for avoiding poverty. In post-war Cambridge, Snow (1964) claimed Western intellectual life was split into two polar camps – with scientists and literary intellectuals ignoring each other's approaches, sometimes with mutual dislike and incomprehension. He argued academic specialization is unhealthy and that the main problem for science should be closing the gap between the rich and poor. A related, holistic World Health Organization (WHO) strategy to improve health has since arisen. It is not well implemented, partly because the academic specialization problems that Snow identified continue. This article presents Australian tertiary education and communication strategies to reduce all these problems while promoting skills development and communication to improve governance for health and sustainable development as widely and flexibly as possible.

The WHO has promoted broadly coordinated approaches to managing social administration since 1986 when the Ottawa Charter stated that necessary health supports include peace, shelter, food, income, a stable economic system, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. The Charter called for development of public policy, reorientation of health services, and community action to support health goals. The WHO program aims to increase the span of healthy life so that the disparities between social groups are reduced. The UN Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) stated health concerns should lead sustainable development. A holistic approach to health should therefore teach basic skills and management principles related to identification and prioritisation of environment problems, in order to devise injury prevention and rehabilitation solutions. However, the president of the World Bank lamented that traditional economic policies to address growth have seldom been accompanied by an equal focus on

governance for health, education and environment improvement. Those with a narrow professional or short-term commercial focus drive development outcomes (Stiglitz and Muet, 1999). How to deal with this is discussed later.

Galbraith (1973) viewed nations and the international economy as having a central tendency towards planning and monopoly, with a highly competitive but impoverished economic periphery where rural dwellers, migrants or those with comparatively little of the requisite education seek paid work. He advised governments to bring dual economies into greater equilibrium by increasing competition in monopolistic sectors, and strengthening communities in peripheries. After a period where the unconditional liberalization of markets was championed, the World Bank and other economists appear again to be calling for more effective and stable governance of economic institutions, and for more attention to health and education expenditure and management (Stiglitz and Muet, 1999)(Stiglitz, 2002). Sen (1999) explained the early Chinese Communist preoccupation with basic health and education for the masses as necessary precursors for successful entry into global manufacturing. He argued the Indian government has supported growth in bureaucratic and professional classes to the detriment of surrounding communities. Governments, universities and other educational institutions should avoid this problem. Education which aims to do so is discussed later.

Sen (1999) supported the Japanese Prime Minister's address to the Asian Crisis and Human Security Conference. This contrasted the aim of 'human security' and the values of creativity and dignity with traditional notions of national security and defence. 'Human security' is seen as the way of addressing all menaces that threaten the survival, daily life, and dignity of human beings, while also strengthening efforts to confront these threats. Sen argued that support for the poor, freedom of speech and transparent management are essential for effective operation of the market and for equality. The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs has called for a global partnership for development as Australia's contribution to achieving the UN Millennium Development goals which aim at eradicating poverty, hunger, disease and gender inequality, as well as achieving universal education, health and environmental sustainability (Australian Government/AusAID, 2005, p.1). The holistic, risk management approaches to health, education and communication which are discussed later in the Australian context support the above goals, to encourage sustainable development locally and globally.

The general governance direction for sustainable development to meet 21st century needs

Weber thought the development of government bureaucracy should be understood as the progressive extension of more rationally planned approaches to community governance, which must also reform the common law, under the increasing pressures of democratic demand (Gerth and Wright Mills, 1977). From this perspective, increasing taxation mandated insurance covers or other funds must support national goals for improving health and environment standards for all. Managing public funds effectively, in the public interest, must also become a central preoccupation of the democratic process. In pre-war Britain, Keynes called for the extension of 'publicness', with the government as war fund leader rather than sole owner (Skidelsky 2000, p. 274). A related management perspective based on social insurance funds, which are gathered at the workplace to provide protection in case of injury, and to attain financial stability and full employment through planning to avoid market fluctuations, was central to the post-war British welfare vision (Beveridge, 1942). Australian governments have followed similar directions in regard to funding health care, workers' compensation and workplace based provision for old age (superannuation). Australian national, regional and industry platforms now exist from which to consider skills development and related community education, communication and research, to achieve health and sustainable development goals.

Drucker (1999) noted the 20th century growth sectors were government, education, health and leisure and that none operate according to traditional supply and demand. He pointed out that it is no longer enough for organizations to meet the interests of shareholders for success and that concerns of workers, consumers and communities about health, environment protection and individual development must all be met. Following Bell (1973) and Drucker (1993), Florida (2003) argued knowledge is now the major means of production rather than capital, natural resources or labour. Knowledge production is different to other forms because its value to the community multiplies and increases through its creation, spread and use, rather than the product being used up or the production destroying the 'global commons' for private gain, as is the case in agriculture, mining or manufacturing. Florida argued that traditional societies overprotect intellectual property and reduce opportunities for creativity, which he conceptualised as the useful combination of new forms out of existing knowledge. Exercising creativity often involves crossing the disciplinary boundaries which Snow wrote about and which the WHO strategy faces. The open education and communication strategy discussed later hopes to meet these challenges.

Florida argued that because a good idea produces more value for the community the more it is used and built upon it also produces increasing returns on production rather than the diminishing returns which traditional economists think is normal. The broader the reach of education, the broader is also the dissemination of knowledge and all related productive and creative strategies. The quality of education is partly in the eye of the beholders who consume it depending on their personal capacities and needs. Education openness may therefore logically be seen as a necessary but insufficient test of education quality. The more one knows about education beforehand, the more one may judge if it is worth consuming. Aspiring postgraduate students may be particularly grateful for information on key principles of undergraduate teaching and learning, which they may be expected to build upon through their research. Certification of student competency is a separate matter, which may be managed by the most relevant institutions according to various specifications related to the stakeholder and broader community need.

In 1994 the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Conference saw growing consensus about the roles of governments and markets. Leaders agreed to create an Asia-Pacific free trade zone by 2020, and supported the protection of health and the natural environment. Members have diverse political regimes including those of Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia and the US. Governments based on the British model have traditionally separated three principle governance powers. Elected politicians, government administrators, and the judiciary are central but independent pillars of governance in this model. In more recent models, the emphasis is primarily on clear separation of policy and administration, with the former in the driver's seat (Rich, 1989; Hilmer, 1993; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). The principle role of government is to promote competition to achieve social and environmental objectives, rather than to make money for its constituent organizations. Australian governments began to implement this direction nationally in 1989 with legislative review to update laws progressively and make requirements plain. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) also agreed to mutual recognition of state laws, and to national standards for health, the environment, related occupations and training, disability services, social security benefits, and labour market programs (Premiers and Chief Ministers, 1991). Recommendations of the Hilmer Report (1993) were implemented in the Commonwealth Competition Policy Reform Act (1995). Legislative review then continued ideally to promote equal competition between public and private sector service providers on a level playing field of national standards, unless another course of action appears to be in the public interest (Fels, 1996). Education is ideally developed in this context.

Key professional and industry management models stress the importance of consultatively developed policy and aims, supported by transparent service delivery and outcomes. Health planning, health promotion, workplace risk management, action research and program budgeting all reflect such requirements (Eagar, Garrett and Lin, 2001; Wass, 1994; Standards Australia, 1999; Kemmis and McTaggart 1990; Wilenski, 1986). They may also apply to resolution of disputes (Braithwaite, 2000; Strang and Braithwaite, 2001; Standards Australia, 200X). For example, evidence based health care management ideally proceeds in spiral steps composed of consultative planning, action and evaluation. Decision makers should deviate from expert recommended practice if the evidence is that other action appears safer in a particular context. This is then documented. A broad, iterative administration and recording process may produce evidence which modifies an earlier approved process or direction (Johnson, 1997). The risk management requirements of Australian state occupational health and safety (OHS) acts provide a similar approach to identification and control of risk, based on use of approved codes of practice. From an action research perspective, all social administration may be envisaged as experimentation which combines discovery and implementation in a continuing process which also attempts to improve outcomes.

However, as independent reviews outlined below have suggested, achieving this approach is still made difficult as a result of the proliferation of outdated legislation and practice which inhibits more transparent and therefore effective and democratic management. (Review of Professional Indemnity Arrangements for Health Care Professionals, 1995; Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council, 1996; National Expert Advisory Group on Safety and Quality in Australian Health Care, 1999; Senate Economic References Committee, 2002; Australian Government/Productivity Commission (AG/PC, 2005). More open education could assist reduction of these problems and the management of health and related vocational services is a key area of necessary discussion.

Australian health, education and welfare systems are mainly taxation based. However, major expansion of funds under public and industry ownership has occurred in regard to health, workers compensation and retirement savings. Duckett (1997) showed the national, Australian Medicare design outperformed the US market based health insurance system in terms of population access, equity and cost. Australian governments have often inquired into the management of health and injury insurance funds, as is indicated in the reference list. This has led many to believe that insurance and related funds should be regulated and underwritten by government and industry stakeholders, but openly and competitively managed by private sector fund managers, in order to achieve injury prevention, rehabilitation and related aims through more open service delivery, driven primarily in the stakeholder rather than the stockholder interest. Critics of competitive contracting by government (Pusey, 1991; Hancock, 1999; Smyth and Cass, 1998) failed to discuss any relationship this may bear to broader management processes which have recently extended Australian government and industry ownership of funds and thus encouraged related management accountability, through greater openness to scrutiny than exists in traditional commercial models which are more narrowly designed to protect the interests of the stockholders.

The opportunity should now be taken to design tertiary education and communication policy to meet regional health needs and skill shortages in a suitably coordinated fashion. The report of the competition policy reform review (Australian Government/Productivity Commission (AG/PC), 2004, p. xxi) noted provision of human services such as health, education, aged care, and natural resource management (other than water), have been largely outside the purview of national competition policy. It recommended COAG initiate independent public review of Australia's health care system as the first step in the development of integrated reform to address structural problems that prevent the system from performing to its potential. A related health workforce

planning inquiry has also been undertaken by the Australian Government and the Productivity Commission (AG/PC, 2005). The report of the review of the skills base in NSW, which was produced by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART 2006), provided recommendations which apply to universities as much as to technical and further education (TAFE) institutions. The report concluded that increased levels of vocational education and training should be a key element in a whole of government strategy designed to increase the supply of skilled labour. It also called for 'broader, more sophisticated' responses than traditional approaches to skills creation which ensure that skills are 'used and applied in the real world of work.' The report recommended a shift in focus from vocational education and training to a newer concept of workforce development, noting that a collaborative approach between government, employers and training organizations is needed, to achieve viable long-term participation of individuals in the labour market and sustainable productivity and economic growth. It suggested the state will need to expand its role from being a provider of funds and training to also being an enabler whose function is to help, encourage and support its partners to play a greater role in future workforce development. There are many ways that universities and other higher education providers may collaborate or compete effectively with each other. This potential might usefully be discussed as an aspect of more broadly coordinated management models and related requirements which hold the community interest in health and sustainable development paramount, while providing incentives to allow commercial interests to flourish.

Unlike the situation for medical practitioners, rural centres have comparatively high levels of nurses and up to 30% of doctors' work could be undertaken by nurses (Duckett 2004, p.83). However, there is already a shortage of nurses of around 2.2 percent by 2006, requiring an additional 4000 graduates (AG/PC 2005, p.xxiii). The open education model proposed later could be designed to meet such skill shortages. Basic management education for injury prevention, rehabilitation and sustainable development in work and community contexts could also be made available. The National Expert Advisory Group on Safety and Quality in Australian Health Care (1999) recommended that health ministers lead the way in promoting a safety and quality enhancement ethos throughout the system. The group suggested education to work in a team environment and advised that curricula for quality management should be included in all undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education and training. The National Health and Medical Research Council became a statutory authority in 2006 which means its formerly collegiate goals need to be adapted to meet government, community and commercial goals better.

One in five Australians of workforce age are now dependent to some extent on pension related support provided by taxpayers. (Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women 1999, p 1). This is usually paid on a means tested basis, to the unemployed, people with disabilities and their carers, lone parents and students. The elderly may also access a means tested pension. Florida argued that the answer to improving the lot of disadvantaged, underpaid, underemployed people everywhere lies in tapping the creativity which all possess and integrating them into the creative economy. Consistent with this approach, U.N. agencies (UN, 2001) define community-based rehabilitation (CBR) as a strategy within community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all people with disabilities which should be implemented through the combined efforts of disabled people, their families and communities, and appropriate health, education, vocational and social services. Community services may be delivered in regionally coordinated ways which also meet goals of poverty reduction. Broad, effective and cheap education is necessary but not sufficient to achieve this.

A direction linking education management and communication policy to promote health

Australia is a minnow in a global knowledge market. In a comparison of seventeen developed democracies, Tiffen and Gittens (2004) showed the US has the highest level of total investment in knowledge, accounting for 45% of total international spending on research and development. When Germany, France and the United Kingdom were added, 85% of total international research and development funding was accounted for. On the other hand, Australia appears comparatively well placed for competition in the future. It is a highly educated, English speaking nation, close to large Asian markets and it has the highest immigration rate of the developed nations. Its community health management, including HIV/AIDS, and crime related death rates are comparatively good, while the US has a comparatively poor record on community health and crime (Tiffen and Gittens, 2004). Australian policy needs to build upon these strengths. The market potential for education to assist health and sustainable development seems likely to be large. Education product could be identified and delivered openly and cooperatively for a variety of management contexts and through a variety of media, with relevant institutional support.

Australia is in the top five exporters of education services (Nguyen-Hong and Wells 2003, 2). However, the continuing education market potential is not currently met effectively (Gallagher, 2000; Nelson, 2002; Marginson, 2004). This depresses all Australian trade and research. For example, Sydney University apparently believes market opportunities for distance education are best met through closed, on-line ventures, like Universitas 21. But, as the President of the Australian National Tertiary Education Union (Allport, 2001) lamented, less than 5% of the world population is connected and the wealthiest communities have nearly all the Internet users. On-line learning production costs cannot compete with those of the traditional classroom and the venture has not so far been successful (Marginson, 2004). Alone, the product appears too opaque, narrowly available and expensive to be good. Does it assist an elite 'brain drain' towards increasingly lucrative opportunities abroad, at the expense of the large majority in any population, let alone the poorest? If this is the favoured approach, a huge potential student pool of talent and related commercial opportunities to promote education, and healthy development are ignored.

Earlier discussion suggests a new approach to skills development is needed which is based on the national collection of educational film and written educational product which can be used in a multiplicity of environments. Feudal Europe had libraries, and universities grew up with them, mainly to dispense book learning. Guilds and related apprenticeship structures later developed to deliver industry based teaching and learning methods. In the twentieth century, as a result of the invention of film, the best development might appear to have been to start up a rational archival approach to educational films and texts, in order to aid skills development for all. However, education systems which appear to be in the interests of all Australians may not be developed for legal reasons which are also related to academic and professional views, whether or not this appears to be in the interests of the institution, or the community. This is discussed again later.

To challenge skills monopolies through more education provision is almost always a good thing. Such education and communication for development is also essential for effective democracy. Certification of competency is a separate but related issue which must be addressed.

Today, it seems both depressing and ironic that international systems for collaborating and contributing to genetic research appear more acceptable and advanced than the development of broad and open systems for educational improvement. For example, thanks to their data exchange policies, the three members of the International Nucleotide Sequence Database collaboration, allow scientists from all over the world free access to 100,000,000,000 bases, or 'letters' of the genetic code, representing both individual genes and partial and complete genomes of over 165,000 organisms. These scientists also contribute to genetic knowledge held by Genbank in the U.S., the European Molecular Biology Laboratory's European Bioinformatics Institute in the UK, and the DNA Data Bank of Japan. Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia,

provide a more humble example of how many people may contribute to the development of a free database by contributing their knowledge. Wikipedia users are also their own assessors of quality, and may keep changing each other's entries. This approach to quality may not be the best. However, managing key educational texts and films requires a comparatively simple library approach which all may freely draw upon.

Education in Australia will inevitably be driven by freer trade and communication development requirements in future, which presents threats and opportunities. Telecommunications is a fast growing international industry characterised by large investment in new infrastructure, rapid change in the range and complexity of products and services and technological convergence. For example, messaging, email and videoconferencing are all new services and mobile, satellite and cable are all new platforms. Separate sectors such as broadcasting and telephony are converging. In its submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties inquiry into the Australia /United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA), the Australia Council for the Arts warned:

‘By 2010, virtually all entertainment and media is expected to be in digital formats, easily fed via satellites to cinemas and homes from sources outside Australia. As a result, many of the existing broadcasting rules governing local content will become irrelevant and new forces will come into play’. (Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, 2004, p.188).

The committee said it does not wish to see Australian content requirements lowered. However, it recognized the Australian market is too small to sustain a diverse range of program types and recoup production costs, which gives the American market a competitive price advantage that Australia ‘will never overcome’ (Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, 2004, p.168). Telecommunications services currently comprise around 3% of Australian gross domestic product. The major services are fixed voice (telephone) services, mobile services, Internet services, data services and content services (including TV and on-line information). Fixed voice services accounted for 45% of total sector revenue in 2000, down from 75% in 1994 (Productivity Commission, 2001). Global communication businesses are powerful drivers and it is not easy for Australia to avoid following in the US commercial footprint, which poses dangers for cultural diversity, community health and employment. However, as GlobeCast international satellite representatives point, big businesses like theirs depend partly upon fostering as much diverse community communication as possible. This is reassuring if it suggests that big investors may support a variety of national and community education related ventures to their own advantage.

A major focus of government and media attention has been on Telstra, the largest operator in the Australian telecommunications industry. The Commonwealth owns 51.8 percent of Telstra, which it intends to privatise fully. The Productivity Commission estimated Telstra currently accounts for around two thirds of total services revenue. Its market dominance is because it is the original government owner and provider of all the lines and switches that are currently used for sending or receiving voice and data on fixed phone lines. If a rival to Telstra wishes to compete in non-local services, such as mobile, national and international long distance calls, it must have access to the ‘local loop’ of aging copper wires historically funded by government and inherited by Telstra. The carrier has been called the biggest consumer of legal services in Australia (Productivity Commission, 2001, p. xxv). It has faced many charges from the National Competition Council that it prevents competition by monopoly power. Rural dwellers oppose the government's final sale of Telstra shares until satisfied they would not be disadvantaged.

In 2000, the Treasurer initiated inquiry into telecommunications competition regulation. The Productivity Commission concluded there is an inherent difficulty in defining anti-competitive

conduct in an objective sense and it is not possible to undertake a full benefit cost analysis of the merits of anti-competitive conduct regulation. It stated that lack of transparency in the Trade Practices Act (Part XIB) also limits the ability of telecommunications providers and the community to analyse and comment. Lack of pricing and related transparency is often problematic for assessing the benefits or otherwise of competition (Standing Committee on Law and Justice, 1997; Senate Economic References Committee, 2002; The HIH Royal Commission, 2003; AG/PG, 2005). The Commission's view of its own inquiry into allegations of unfair use of market power is summed up in its own quote from the Hilmer Report (1993, p. 69):

The central conundrum in addressing the problem of misuse of market power is that the problem is not well defined or apparently amenable to clear definition.... Even if particular types of conduct can be named it does not seem possible to define them, or the circumstances in which they should be treated as objectionable, with any great precision.....Faced with this problem.....the challenge is to provide a system which can distinguish between desirable and undesirable activity while providing an acceptable level of business certainty. (2001, p. 154)

The education proposal put below is consistent with this view. It supports a cooperatively planned and open approach to education and related serviced competition, in order to achieve health and sustainable development goals as broadly as possible. From this perspective, continuing to define the concept of unfair competition through litigation between rich and secretive market players, often funded from the public purse, does not seem a sensible option. Openness of operation seems likely to be a better guarantee of consumer and community trust.

A tertiary education contract proposal

A tertiary education contract appears necessary which assists development of transparent education content production and related communication ventures to implement regionally identified health and sustainable development goals. The contract should primarily seek to meet skills shortages and improve all related service accessibility, comparability, quality and cost, through open availability of education and economies of scale related to dissemination of the educational product. This approach may also combat continuing problems of intellectual specialization which may otherwise interfere with skills development and effective implementation of holistic, community based approaches to treating health and related problems. A secondary goal may be to develop relationships between those seeking to meet health, communication or other sustainable development goals and student producers of media product, to the advantage of all. Many countries appear likely to have a high demand for good quality vocational education which teaches English in the process. The simple combination of TV or videos, PowerPoint overheads and supporting books of lectures could open up educational access to many, whether or not they have personal computers or are yet ready to gain the relevant certificates of competency. Many people currently teaching and learning in Australian tertiary institutions may also benefit from an educational approach which increases content availability.

Although the proposed contract may be designed primarily to meet specific skill shortages and assist related research, students may also be provided with an understanding of basic governance principles, especially those related to injury prevention, rehabilitation and insurance. They may be given opportunities to undertake practical exercises in the consultative identification and control of risks to health and sustainable development which may be applied in any community or workplace setting. They may also learn and apply the more established academic disciplines. A related educational goal is to broaden students' understanding of their own subjectivity and that of others, through demonstrating how all individuals must partly be conceptualised as products of

their particular geographic, economic, political and cultural environments. Students ideally learn to situate and study themselves and others in these contexts, in order to promote cultural understanding. They may also have opportunities to make short films or other media products as assessments, which draw upon diverse information within their community and beyond.

However, as the Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University has pointed out:

“One of the dangers in a developed economy is that universities conceptualise themselves partly as businesses, which of course you must, but you must never lose sight of the core objectives of the university, and absolutely fundamental to that is academic freedom”
(Australian Financial Review, 14.1.05, p. 29)

The recommended education approach aims to achieve these goals by harnessing the traditional academic, government, professional and commercial incentives more effectively in the service of health and sustainable development, rather than leaving them each to meet their narrower and inconsistent objectives, which may be dysfunctional from a broader community perspective. In their discussion paper on Gene Patenting and Human Health, produced for the Australian Government and the Australian Law Reform Commission (AG/ALRC), the authors address the National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research (National Principles)(AG/ALRC, 2004, p. 321). These principles seek to serve the needs of stakeholders, not stockholders, when they aim:

To recognize the rights and needs of all stakeholders involved in the research and define the ways in which benefits from the development and exploitation of the intellectual property will be allocated; (AG/ALRC, 2004, p.323)

It seems logical to treat education in a consistent fashion, which might, for example, define ‘commercialisation’ goals as:

‘maximising the process of transferring outcomes to the community in a manner which optimizes the chances of their successful implementation, encourages their use, accelerates their introduction and shares the benefits among the contributing parties’.

A representative of the Sydney University Business Liaison Office offered the above definition of commercialisation to the Medical Foundation and the College of Health Sciences Cell to Society Conference in 2002. However, the Business Liaison Office and all related areas of Sydney University administration currently appear to be ignoring this approach in favour of continuing with commercially driven, stockholder rather than stakeholder based management approaches. For example, under new Australian Workplace Agreements (AWA) provisions, which apparently apply to all at Sydney University and which have common law origins, one is required to keep Sydney University 'trade secrets and institutional knowhow, strategies, plans and initiatives' secret. One wonders exactly what trade secrets we have in academia. 'Institutional knowhow' seems to cover anything and everything done in a university, and appears to conflict with freedom of information legislation as well as freedom of speech. Educational plans, strategies and initiatives which are kept secret are unlikely to succeed at all, let alone in a timely fashion. Attempts to reform administration in higher education now risk being driven only by individuals and organizations seeking profits, and not by the well being of the broader community of stakeholders. Such dysfunctional management must be logically addressed in all education.

Communication developments which potentially support open education

New broadband technology is designed to assist carriage of many different forms of communication more effectively. The national broadband strategy provided \$142.8 million to assist Australian regional development. It followed an independent regional telecommunications inquiry in 2002 which aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment of telecommunications services in regional Australia and make recommendations to ensure that regional, rural and remote areas share in the benefits of new technologies. The strategy is designed to allow broadband investment across all levels of government to be coordinated with regional priorities and the needs of key industry sectors such as health and education, while providing a national focus to all activities. Open education aimed at more effective health governance, or to meet skills shortages and prevent unemployment may be considered in this context.

In addition to the major national broadcasters, many small regional broadcasters with special interests are currently provided with broadcasting licences. However, they are often economically marginal. In 2001, the Australian Broadcasting Authority conducted an investigation into regional community TV licences. It recommended such organizations might like to enter consortia which draw a clear distinction between their financial and community interests. This seems a good idea. Regional planning potentially involves development of many voluntary, public/private partnerships across many areas, including with a wide variety of non-profit, community aid or related advocacy groups. Effective education and broad communication both appear necessary for the attainment of healthy, creative and sustainable communities. All organizations and communities may benefit from clarifying how their community service and commercial goals may relate better in this context.

The education funding measures in Backing Australia's Future, the statement delivered by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training in 2003, provided a regional loading and an enabling loading to support education of disadvantaged people. There was also increased government money for nurse and teacher education to meet skill shortages. The proposal for more transparent education development may assist this management direction further and also provide a means of reducing dysfunctional, professional or related bureaucratic rigidities which, by narrowing the market for education, may reward comparatively poor performance and increase social inequality rather than reduce it. However, outdated attitudes to commercial confidentiality must first be changed in order to proceed.

Conclusion

International and Australian health and competition policy should be used to assist Australian communities and businesses to improve health and sustainable development for as many people as possible. An education model designed to deliver this is offered, which may be driven by any academic, government, industry and/or community partnership with the primary aim of promoting health and related skills development through more open, flexible and broader dissemination of education content. Students may also be provided with an understanding of basic governance principles related to injury prevention, rehabilitation and insurance, and have opportunities to undertake practical exercises in the consultative identification and control of risks to health and sustainable development which may be applied in any community or workplace setting. They may also choose to make short films or similar communication related products as assessments. The proposal requires a contract designed to allow greater educational transparency in order to promote education and communication in the service of health and sustainable development, as broadly as possible, while using economies of scale to produce lower

education unit cost. However, outdated institutional requirements for confidentiality hinder this approach and change is necessary to achieve it.

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