

This dissertation is presented as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2005.
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been submitted previously for a degree at any tertiary institution.

Signed:

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ABSTRACT

In 1985 the Australian Government announced a momentous policy initiative allowing Australian universities to enrol full-fee paying international students for the first time. This case study is an analysis of the policy development that ensued at Murdoch University between 1985 and 1991 as it responded to this opportunity to alleviate problems, with finance and low student numbers, that were threatening its very existence as an independent university. In particular, it examines the factors that had placed Murdoch in such a parlous situation, and the reasons why it was able to respond quickly and effectively so as to implement a highly successful and comprehensive program for the recruitment, enrolment and support of full-fee paying international students.

The case study format allowed for the use of a wide range of data sources. Sources of documentary evidence included: formal written works about the events and concepts under investigation, newspapers and other media items, letters, memoranda, agendas and minutes of meetings, and other internal Murdoch University documents. In addition, archival materials such as annual reports, budgets and financial records were consulted. Verification and extension of the documentary and archival evidence was gained from interviews with past and present staff and students of Murdoch University who had been involved with the program.

The study found that organisational changes initiated by successive Vice-Chancellors in the 1980s had replaced a slow and unresponsive, collegial style of decision-making, based on very wide consultation, with a more centralised, bureaucratic and market-
oriented system. New, streamlined procedures, and the devolution of policy-
development to small, semi-autonomous committees, enabled the University to
rapidly develop policies and procedures for the inauguration of a program for full-fee
paying international students in 1987. The continued success of the program, both in
terms of enrolment numbers and financial returns, was found to be based on the
creation and development of an almost independent, and entrepreneurial, International
Office for the organisation of most aspects of the program, including the marketing
and recruitment process.
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