

*A critical policy analysis of the Crossroads Review:  
Implications for higher education in regional  
Western Australia*

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### *Declaration*

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is the result of my own research. The material has been prepared expressly for this dissertation and has not been presented to any other university or institution for any other degree or award.

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## Abstract

This work is a critical policy analysis of the *Crossroads* Review, especially those aspects of it that are most likely to have a significant impact on higher education in regional Western Australia. It aims to understand the place of higher education in regional Western Australia historically with a view to critiquing current policy directions and the potential consequences of *Crossroads*. The thesis argues that the ideologies of marketisation and corporatisation are driving current higher education policy and this may significantly damage the long-term viability of regional campuses and learning centres as well as public and private funding allocations. The implications for the dismantling of the social contract (or social democratic settlement) in the knowledge economy is an important issue for regional populations for their continued growth, health, education and welfare.

The issues examined here are relevant to regional higher education in this State. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the potential policy effects with regard to accessibility of higher education in regional Western Australia. The thesis analyses the advantages and disadvantages of studying in regional WA in the current policy environment where there has been a dramatic shift in ideology from the welfare state to economic rationalism. Factors that impact on higher education in regional Western Australia include the provision of telecommunications services for access to and participation in the knowledge economy.

The thesis considers the evolution of higher education in Australia in general and more particularly in Western Australia, as it has evolved since its foundations in the mid-nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this time there have been radical changes in higher education in Australia in line with changes to our society and its place in an increasingly globalised environment.

The thesis concludes by considering some possible options for the future such as the development of learning communities and branch campuses. In discussing such possible alternative forms of delivery of higher education to regional Western Australia, this thesis seeks to raise awareness in relevant government bodies and in rural and remote communities of their particular higher education needs. It is hoped also to encourage regional communities to become more confident and pro-active in their own endeavours to gain greater access and equity in higher education.

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