

**The University Of Melbourne**  
**Goulburn Valley Initiative**  
**Strategic Plan**  
**2003-2006**

**1.0 Background**

1.1 The University of Melbourne is committed to a process of strategic planning which involves regular reappraisal of priorities and resetting of goals in the light of changing internal and external operating environments. The University's ongoing Strategic Plan for the Goulburn Valley (GV) is framed in this context.

1.2 Externally, there have been several recent developments at state and federal level which impact on University initiatives in the GV. The Commonwealth government's reforms to Higher Education, announced recently in the 2003 Budget, included loadings in funding for students enrolled at regional campuses, accommodation and study assistance for disadvantaged students from rural and regional areas, additional places for nursing in regional campuses, and funding under the Collaboration and Structural Reform Program for collaboration between vocational providers and universities, universities and their rural/regional communities, and increased funding for indigenous education and staff development. The operational details of these programs are still to be provided.

1.3 A State Department of Education report highlighting the need for collaboration between universities, especially in the regional context and the recent State Government report on the provision of agricultural higher education also may have implications for the University's activities in the region. Implementation policies are also still being developed by State authorities.

1.4 Internally, parameters for formulating policies for the GV are set by the University's Strategic Plan. *Perspective 2003* notes a desire to "strengthen [the University's] educational and research engagement with the agricultural sector and the related value-adding industries". Specifically, the University is committed to:

*"5.12 Maintaining the momentum of initiatives in Shepparton and the Goulburn Valley designed to establish a major regional focus for selected University initiatives."*

Also affecting policy setting for the Goulburn Valley Initiative (GVI) Strategic Plan are the expanded guiding values of the University which include a commitment to;

*"advancing the intellectual, cultural, economic and social welfare of Melbourne, Victoria and Australia, and recognizing the particular needs and aspirations of indigenous Australians."*  
*Perspective 2003*

1.5 Deans of most faculties were consulted in late 2002 about interest in and opportunities for future involvement in the GVI. Apart from the three core faculties (Medicine Dental & Health Sciences [MD&HS], Institute of Land and Food Resources [ILFR], and Education), it became clear that any concerted involvement in the GVI by the other faculties would most likely be made through multidisciplinary approaches addressing specifically rural and regional issues accorded priority by external funding agencies.

1.6 In this context and after consultation with its key external stakeholder groups the University has developed its Goulburn Valley Initiative Strategic Plan 2003-2006.

**2. A Revised Strategy**

2.1 The University continues to believe that its most effective and enduring contribution to the GV will be the delivery of programs that:

- provide selected specialized responses to demonstrated demand for regionally focused education and research, and
- draw on the best expertise and resources of the University's metropolitan campus.

2.2 The University will pursue the development and delivery of programs in the GV that have:

- clear regional/rural specificity;
- demonstrable demand for delivery in a rural/regional setting; and/or
- substantiated pedagogical benefit from such delivery.

This approach supports the University's aim of delivering and expanding specialized, world-standard responses for the needs of the GV, regional Victoria and Australia.

2.3 While recognizing that GV community expectation focuses on the provision of a larger suite of locally available undergraduate programs, the University's research and experience-based assessments

show that the demand for broad-spectrum undergraduate programs does not outstrip the current supply by all providers and would not make new programs viable. Without additional State or Commonwealth financial support or earmarked additional ongoing funding to cover the full and economic costs of delivery, it is unlikely that the University could expand significantly its undergraduate offerings in the GV.

2.4 In the absence of demonstrated evidence of robust demand for undergraduate programs, the University has elected not to develop a consolidated campus-based presence in the GV. In the interests of the long-term viability, University programs must come within the University's Faculty system and structure. The University will continue to operate under an "activity" based structure that permits specific localised programs to be developed on individual sites where and when required. This strategy supports the University's existing operations across a range of sites and will enable future specialised expansion.

2.5 Consultation with key internal and external stakeholder groups has identified two major areas where the University feels it can make a significant contribution to the GV, utilizing relevant research and teaching capabilities already developed across a number of disciplines and addressing regional and rural community priorities as well as the University's commitment to the needs and aspirations of the indigenous community. Subject to community acceptance and the identification of funding, it is proposed that following two new Centres be established:

#### **2.6 The "Academy of Sports Health and Education" (ASHE)**

A feasibility study, including market research and a draft business plan, commissioned and funded in 2002 by the University and three Victorian government departments was completed for this project at the end of 2002. It proposed that ASHE be a partnership with indigenous communities, and relevant State and national agencies. The City Of Greater Shepparton has supported this initiative. ASHE is conceived as primarily for indigenous students, engaging them by linking further education with sport in a setting for which the Shepparton indigenous community will feel a sense of ownership.

#### **2.7 The "Centre for Water and Landscape Management" (CWLM)**

The proposed centre is a response to the water and land management issues of the Goulburn Broken Catchment and urgent need for national policy development and research programs. It is proposed that the Centre constitute a partnership with state, national and community agencies and groups concerned with these matters; and a catchment-scale approach be utilised to develop education and research programs in areas of need for landholders, local communities and towns.

### **3. The Goulburn Valley Initiative 2003-2005**

The core elements of the strategy for the Goulburn Valley Initiative for 2003-2005 are:

#### **3.1 Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences -The School of Rural Health**

To strengthen the role of the faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences' School of Rural Health as a major regional hub for the development of teaching of medical, nursing and other health professionals for practice within a rural and regional context and research on rural health issues, and in particular:

- **Rural Clinical School**
  - By 2005, to increase intakes to 25% of the University's medical students;
- **Department of Rural Health**
  - From 2003, to introduce a compulsory four-week Rural Health Module for all medical students;
  - To facilitate placements and rural training for dental and allied health students;
- **School of Nursing**
  - From 2003, to introduce a three year B Nursing Science, in conjunction with the Department of Rural Health and Goulburn Valley Health.

#### **3.2 ILFR - Dookie Campus**

To expand education programs in resource management and rural-business at the Dookie campus of ILFR and the GVO in Shepparton to include rural business as well as agriculture resource management and agribusiness and in particular to offer the following programs:

- **School of Agriculture and Food Systems**

Undergraduate programs:

- Bachelor of Agriculture – new program in 2004 to incorporate a systems approach to agriculture and integrated land management;
- Advanced Diploma in Agriculture- continuing program providing practical education in agriculture and land management –delivered flexibly and providing articulation into the degree programs at Dookie;
- Bachelor of Rural Business – planned to commence in 2004 to be delivered both at Dookie campus and GVO and
- Double degree in Agriculture/Rural Business to commence in 2005.

Postgraduate Coursework programs:

- Graduate Certificate in Wine Technology and Viticulture
- Graduate Diploma in Wine Technology and Viticulture
- Graduate Coursework programs in Land and Water Management to commence in 2005

Postgraduate Research programs:

- Master in Agriculture
- PhD

- **School of Vocational and Further Education**

TAFE and short course programs:

- Certificate in Food Processing (Wine);
- Diploma of Wine Making;
- Diploma of Viticulture; and
- Short Courses for Wine industry.

### **3.3 Faculty of Education**

The Faculty's objectives are

- to extend the Faculty of Education's programs in indigenous early childhood education;
- to upgrade 'rural & regional' teacher education;
- to increase use of the GV as a field site for international students on 'study-abroad' programs;
- to conduct research into educational policies and practices for rural and regional areas
- in collaboration with the Goulburn Valley Office, to co-ordinate development of the ASHE proposal in consultation with the, the Faculty of MD&HS, the Centre for Indigenous Education and Koorie community groups

- to introduce or expand the following programs:

Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies, pathways program
- Extension to Primary 2004
- 'Study Abroad' field site visits
- Student teacher placements in the GV

Postgraduate programs

- Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary)
- Bachelor of Teaching
- Diploma in Education program based at Shepparton for initial intake in 2005.

### **3.4 New Centres and Activities**

Establish the Academy of Sport, Health and Education and a Centre for Water and Landscape Management, ascertaining GV priorities, sources of external funding and opportunities for collaboration and research between the University of Melbourne faculties and their national and international connections and outside agencies.

#### **3.4.1 Academy of Sport, Health and Education (ASHE)**

In consultation with the GV Koorie community the University will support the development of quality programs designed specifically to engage and meet the needs of the indigenous GV community to

enable indigenous students to achieve their educational potential. The programs will cater for varying levels of prior education to enable indigenous people to start on educational pathways which will lead to real job prospects or to further education. The primary focus of the programs will be health and education. Sports and sports education will be incorporated into the programs as a source of educational innovation and student motivation. The University's major involvement will be through the Faculty of Education supported by the Goulburn Valley Office, the Centre for Indigenous Education and the Faculty of MD&HS. Other areas and faculties expected to provide support and programs include Melbourne Sport and the Faculty of Arts. The University will identify and consult with potential partners in the ASHE, including the Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE and Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network.

**Action planned in 2003:**

- Consultation with the indigenous community about the concept, options for governance and programs;
- Approval and establishment of a governance structure;
- Development of an initial three-year business plan;
- Securing start-up funds, including contributions from the Victorian Government;
- Appointment of a Program Director; and
- Initial programs offered

**Action planned in 2004:**

- Consolidation of funding, programs and staffing
- Development of capital facilities.

### **3.4.2 Centre for Water and Landscape Management**

The University will further investigate establishing a multi-disciplinary water and land management centre utilising the Dookie Campus of ILFR. Involvement will be sought from stakeholders such as the CSIRO, the departments of Primary Industry, and Sustainability and Environment, as well as the local GV water institutions- Goulburn Murray Water, Goulburn Valley Water and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. The ILFR will liaise with the Faculties of Science, Engineering and Arts, and the Office of Environmental Programs as the potential major contributors to the research, training and outreach activities conducted through such a centre for the development of sustainable agricultural and resource management systems for the region and wider application.

### **3.5 New Student Services and Marketing Support**

The GV Management Group comprising the Development Manager, GV; Manager of the School of Rural Health and the Head of campus, ILFR-Dookie will:

1. ensure coordinated action locally on common service provision, stakeholder and media liaison and the marketing of locally provided programs and public activities;
2. improve access to student services in the GV by developing a co-ordinated approach to the definition and delivery of these services. Services will include:
  - counselling for students and staff;
  - information about and a guidance to financial advice, housing, jobs and careers;
  - programs for academic skills support for undergraduate and postgraduate students;
  - support services to local indigenous students and the community through the activities of the University's Centre of Indigenous Education; and
  - the fostering of student and recreational bodies and entertainment activities;
3. develop a marketing strategy to support faculties to increase the uptake of programs offered, undertake joint evaluation of demand for existing courses and programs and recommend on programs to meet the future specialised workforce needs of the region appropriate for University consideration.
4. supported by the University's Media and Publications Services Office, develop protocols for and undertake co-ordinated media liaison to promote the activities of all faculties and centres within the GV.

### **3.6 Distance Education**

The University will investigate future extension of the menu of programs and study options available to rural and regional students, through a mixture of UniMelbourne Online delivery and attendance at study centre facilities at GVO, SRH and Dookie. This is unlikely to impact significantly on course delivery in the GV before 2005.

### **3.7 Cultural and Community Relations Program**

Through the GVO, to assist in the development and implementation of a University of Melbourne Calendar of Community and Cultural Events drawing on the resources of the cultural and public programs resources of the University. Key components will include:

- A Public Lecture Program to deliver quarterly topical lectures or seminars of interest by University staff or expert visitors sponsored by the University;
- Performances and exhibitions drawing on the resources of the Victorian College of the Arts, the Ian Potter Gallery, the Melbourne Theatre Company and other museums and centres of the university; and
- Alumni activities and programs.