



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2016-2017](#))

Members:

MR M PETTERSSON (Chair)
MRS E KIKKERT (Deputy Chair)
MR C STEEL
MR A WALL

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2017

Secretary to the committee:
Mrs N Kosseck (Ph: 620 50435)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.28 am.

SAINI, Professor Hargurdeep, Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Canberra

WILLIAMS, Mrs Vicki Marie, Vice-President, Finance and Infrastructure, University of Canberra

THE CHAIR: Good morning. Welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs. The proceedings today will hear from the University of Canberra in the context of the committee's inquiry into the 2016-17 annual and financial reports.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. Witnesses are asked to familiarise themselves with the privilege statement provided on the table, the pink card. Could you please confirm for the record that you have read the privilege card before you and that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

Prof Saini: I do.

Mrs Williams: I do.

THE CHAIR: Before we proceed to questions, would you like to make a short opening statement?

Prof Saini: I would love to. Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you and to answer any questions that you may have pertaining to the 2016 annual report of the University of Canberra. I will take just a few minutes to give an overview of the university, particularly in relation to the matters at hand today.

The University of Canberra is appropriately named "The" University of Canberra. It is the only university that was established under the ACT statutes through the 1989 University of Canberra Act. The ACT government, as a result, appoints a majority of the members of our council—that is, eight out of 15—and the University of Canberra holds itself fully accountable to our government.

We are also accountable to our external community. An example of that would be that the council's proceedings are open to the public and the minutes of the council's meetings are publicly available. We are a university with very deep and proud connections with the ACT community. Along with the University of Canberra's precursor, CCAE, the former Canberra College of Advanced Education, we have been serving the education needs of the ACT as one of the leading engines of this economic progress and social wellbeing for the past 50 years.

The UC is known, first and foremost, as the university that forms the leading professionals in the country through strong experiential models of learning with above-average employment and earnings upon graduation, and for mission-oriented problem-solving research.

As a national beacon of equity and inclusion, UC is also one of the national leaders in the education of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizens. With an increasing emphasis on innovation, we have spun off technology companies in the recent years, notably EpiAxis, which is involving cancer therapeutics, and most recently Myocular, which is a leading technology company now in the treatment of myopia.

Today, together with the ANU—the only university with its primary base in the ACT—we have an economic impact of over \$1.7 billion and we account for approximately 10 per cent of the ACT’s workforce and population, which includes our students, of course.

Over 20 per cent of our students are international, contributing richly to the local economy and enriching our community’s increasingly diverse culture. These developments are contributing handsomely to the ACT’s constantly strengthening position as one of the leading educational destinations in the world. For example, most recently QS, which is one of the world’s leading rankings agencies, has ranked Canberra as the 17th best student city in the world.

In 2015-16, at the age of just 25, the University of Canberra entered the prestigious *Times* higher education world universities rankings for the first time and has been rising rapidly in the rankings ever since. Today we are placed among the world’s top two per cent of universities overall, and in the top 100 young universities under the age of 50 in both the *Times* higher education and the QS rankings, which are the most prestigious rankings of the world’s universities.

From this solid foundation we are launching an ambitious strategic plan called “distinctive by design” to take UC a quantum leap higher on the world stage and to provide the highest quality of educational, research and life outcomes to our community and around the world. A cornerstone of this strategy is our unique campus development plan, which is made possible through a 2015 variation to the crown lease that allows the University of Canberra to undertake commercial development within its precinct in addition to the main activities of education and research that it was authorised to do before.

This is not just a real estate development but a novel concept in the development of a university campus for the future. The plan will transform the University of Canberra’s campus into a vibrant, living, learning community with over 3,100 residential dwellings, multiple educational research and innovation precincts, and a confluence of scholars, industry, learners, residents and professional practitioners living what we are calling “the educated life”.

The leading developments to date on this precinct include the University of Canberra health hub, which was opened in 2015; a 495-bed the University of Canberra lodge, which is student residences, opened in 2017; the University of Canberra public hospital, with 140 beds and 70 day spots, which is destined to open in mid-2018; and the Icon cancer care centre, for which we are turning the first sod as soon as we finish this meeting today. Actually, I would like to invite any of you who can to join us there. That is a great, exciting moment for us.

There is also a modern aged care facility and an early childhood learning facility, with

150 rooms for aged care and 120 spaces for day care, which will start construction in early 2018, and a campus residence community, which is 3,100 dwellings, at least, starting in late 2018. All of that, as I said earlier, is not about real estate but about creating a community where the learners, industry, the professionals and so on work together as one community where we learn from each other and we have a symbiotic relationship.

Just to close off, this development is also projected to result in approximately 120 full-time equivalent jobs throughout the 15 to 20-year period of construction. A 2017 report by Deloitte revealed that University of Canberra campus development contains \$2.7 billion of expenditure in the ACT economy over the period from 2017 to 2039. This campus development will result in the ACT economy being \$1.02 billion larger over this period compared to the baseline scenario without this development.

Just to make sure that you have noticed, the University of Canberra is a financially sound institution that has posted healthy financial surpluses for the past five years in a row. These surpluses are meant for a purpose. As it is a non-profit organisation, we re-invest all our surpluses into the purpose of the university; in fact, we are required to pay for all the infrastructure renewal, additional space and new technologies out of our earnings.

It is against this backdrop that I would like you to look at our 2016 financial reports and general report. We would be very happy to answer any questions that you have.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will lead off with the questions. I want to start by asking about the Australian Human Rights Commission report into sexual assault on university campuses. Can you tell me how UC has responded?

Prof Saini: The first thing is that we decided as an entire group of universities across Australia—all 39 of us—not to compare and contrast among universities. We thought that it is a sector issue and we needed to confront it as a sector issue. So it does not matter who is better or worse; we took a sector approach. In that regard, the University of Canberra actually already is among the leaders in the area. We actually fare better than many other universities, just for this closed committee. Recently, we have had a very high profile sexual assault case on this campus, as you probably are aware. This university stands alone.

I was actually watching that from Canada at that point. It came across as a shining beacon of how a university needs to deal with such issues, where the university had enough prima facie evidence that the person was an offender and it did not wait for the outcome of legal proceedings but actually chose to dismiss the person and then face the consequences in the court. In the end its decision has been vindicated.

The university has an absolute no-tolerance policy to any kind of sexual harassment or assault. To make it better, we have engaged the services of Elizabeth Broderick, the former human rights commissioner—no—

Mrs Williams: Sex discrimination commissioner.

Prof Saini: Sex discrimination commissioner, yes. My apologies for a still shallow knowledge of Australian history. She is going to be working with us starting soon on doing a complete examination of the status of our policies and procedures to help us make it even better and stronger. That is where we stand.

THE CHAIR: Without trying to pre-empt that review, is it a university-wide review you are doing or is it also going to look into specific college cultures?

Prof Saini: It is everything that is under the University of Canberra family that would be subject to this. We have a college on the campus, the University of Canberra College. That is included in it. Our residences are included in it. Everything that is within the University of Canberra group is included in that.

Mrs Williams: When you say “college”, do you mean residential-type colleges such as are in Sydney universities and the like?

Prof Saini: Yes.

Mrs Williams: We do not have—

Prof Saini: We do not have those colleges.

Mrs Williams: We do not have that type of structure. So we have residences, student residences, but they are part of the university or they are managed by other operators for us on behalf of the university. But it is not that college separate entity structure that it is with some of the bigger universities in Sydney.

THE CHAIR: I am not sure I entirely agree with that. There are different cultures within the different residences—

Mrs Williams: I am not saying there are not different cultures. All I am saying is that they are not separate entities like they are in other universities. They are all part of the university. They have to comply with all of the university’s policies and procedures. Then they have their misconduct procedures and things that are within that. I am not saying they do not have their own cultures. What I am saying is that they are not separate entities like they are in some other universities.

THE CHAIR: What is the training in place now at these residences?

Mrs Williams: Training or trading?

THE CHAIR: Training, courses, advice given to students in regards to sexual assault on campus?

Mrs Williams: They work very closely with our welfare area and all our areas on our misconduct rules, what is accepted as a charter of values and the way people are meant to behave. Whilst they have their own residents’ agreements—a person who is staying in there agrees to all of that—their residential advisers and their staff all have inductions and meetings when they start in residence. Then they work with our medical, counselling and welfare areas. We provide all that type of training

throughout the year in conjunction with both of our operators. We have two operators on campus. Both of them work very closely with the university and comply with the policies of the university.

THE CHAIR: Is it a case that one trainer does the UniLodge residences and one trainer does university village?

Mrs Williams: They are separate companies. They have their own training procedures, but they both work with the university's welfare, medical and counselling areas. They work with the same people in the university. They have their own ways of delivering specific training other than the general training provided by the university.

Prof Saini: There is also general training that is uniform for all students during the orientation week.

THE CHAIR: We will come back to that. I think that is a very interesting one. Just on the residences, though, is the training provided at the new lodge residences the same as the training provided at university village?

Mrs Williams: Specifically, in what those operators provide, there are probably different nuances that they deliver. But the core of it is the same in terms of their messages and things. They are different operators; so they would probably have some differences in what they deliver. But in their communications back and their liaison with the university policies, they deal with the same people.

THE CHAIR: I did some research on it. For example, the training at the university does not include information about sexual consent training, does not include information about ethical bystander training, whereas the UniLodge residences do include that.

Mrs Williams: I need to take that on notice. They have all been reviewing their policies recently. So I would have to take that on notice to be able say what they are combining with.

THE CHAIR: I would appreciate that. The other thing you mentioned was the general training and support provided for all students. What training and information do everyday students get?

Prof Saini: Every start of every term when there is an orientation period they all go through a thorough set of information: a complete set of the university's policies regarding sexual harassment and assault, including the responsibilities of bystanders and so on. That is provided by the university's central student staff, the student services staff. That is not college-specific. That is given to every student who is admitted, regardless of where they are resident.

THE CHAIR: Is that a lecture. Is that material in show bags?

Prof Saini: No, it is in the form of lectures and material. They are provided with the written material but also they are invited to lectures where we actually have experts coming at times who would deliver lectures on issues pertaining to sexual conduct.

THE CHAIR: Students were invited to it?

Prof Saini: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Do you know what the attendance rate at things like that is?

Prof Saini: I cannot tell you the percentage number but I do remember attending one of them last year myself, just being there. There were several hundred students sitting there in the refectory where it was set up.

THE CHAIR: How many students are there at the University of Canberra?

Prof Saini: At any time—in any term, the new students would be in the range of about—the new students would come in at about 2,000.

Mrs Williams: Two or three thousands, yes.

Prof Saini: Yes, two or three thousand students.

THE CHAIR: I am just spitballing here, but not every student is going to those lectures. A certain number would be.

Prof Saini: Yes, these are things that are delivered in multiple locations, in multiple ways. So my assumption is that every student ends up getting exposed to these trainings in one way or the other, whether it is in the centralised orientation period, in their residences or elsewhere. So the university's policies on this are very well known. Every student is provided with written material to make them understand that there are policies and that they have to familiarise themselves with the policies.

THE CHAIR: Can you tell me more about this written material?

Mrs Williams: Student conduct areas, yes. It is readily available to everybody when they enrol. All of that stuff is available on our portal for them to look at.

THE CHAIR: Do you think students are reading it?

Prof Saini: The fact that we are among the universities with probably one of the best records—with a few spotty areas—among the best universities in this indicates to me that at least our students are getting the message one way or the other and that they are listening to it.

There are also student-led initiatives in this. There are a number of student-led initiatives led by the student representative council. This is a cooperative effort. We have multiple parties involved. University administration is involved; the residences are involved; students themselves are involved. The number of hits those students would get are so large that they would catch it one way or the other. Whether it is 100 per cent—I would be surprised if there is no leakage at all. I think that is just the normal nature of these things. Not everybody will pay attention to everything but at least as a university we do not have a particular negative record in this area. In fact,

the record is quite positive.

THE CHAIR: I do not want to go into the record. I am more interested in the processes. When I bring all this together, I feel like under the current system you are missing lots of students. If you go to a certain college, you will get certain training. If you go to a different college, you will get different training. If you attend one of the lectures, you will get training. If you choose not to go to lectures, which would be most students, you do not get training. If you do not seek out information on student conduct you will not know what is unacceptable, explicitly. You would think common sense would kick in, but it has not. Is there any talk, are there any plans for compulsory training of students?

Prof Saini: That would come out from the Broderick review. I am sure if there are gaps—we have had conversations with Liz—our instructions to her are to look deep and to look broad and to educate us where she sees opportunities for improvement.

MRS KIKKERT: It was recently reported that international school students in Canberra were targeted at Woden bus interchange. Have there been any reports of UC students being harassed or being targeted because they are from overseas or because they are from a different background?

Prof Saini: Not that I know of. Nothing has come to our notice. We actually paid very keen attention to that. We worked with the school directorate at that point to send a message to all our students that anything like this, first thing, is unacceptable. Second, if anybody is facing any of those kinds of situations, they should report them immediately. To my knowledge nothing has come up.

MRS KIKKERT: That is good news, thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary on that. What work do you do to manage the reputation of UC and Canberra to international stakeholders when unfortunate incidents like that occur?

Prof Saini: The first thing is that actually that is a theoretical question, because we have not had an incident like this. If one were to happen, we would take immediate action. We have 24-7 security on the campus.

What happens outside the campus, as you can imagine, we unfortunately have no control over that. If something happens outside the campus, depending on the severity of it, appropriate authorities would kick into action there. But on the campus, we have 24-7 security that would hear about it. We would take whatever action is needed, depending on the severity of the situation. It could range from education to the arrest of a person involved; we would call ACT police to take action. Our security works very closely with ACT.

In the past, one thing that we have not done is ever hide behind the shroud of reputation protection to confront the situation. A case in point would be this extreme situation that we had with the sexual assault on some of our students who also happened to be international students. As I said, I was watching it from Canada, because this made international news. I believe that a lesser university would have

tried to focus on reputation control rather than doing the right thing, whereas the University of Canberra stepped up and did the right thing immediately without worrying too much about their reputation.

It also made sure that the students received all the help they could. We reached out to the families. We provided counselling for anybody who needed it. We continue to do that even today. The matter has been settled in the courts. We still continue to reach out to the students and to the families. If anybody is in need of any kind of support, we will be there. That is the approach of the university.

THE CHAIR: I am particularly interested in how you manage international stakeholders. I think back to Victoria a few years ago when some Indian students were assaulted. In the following years Indian student enrolments cratered. What is the outreach you do overseas to manage those relationships?

Prof Saini: This is part of our package to the students that we recruit. We give them information on the nature of safety in this community, inclusion in this community, and the university's own policies on safety and inclusion for international students.

I travel broadly internationally. Last week I came back from a trip to India doing exactly that with our recruitment people. I go to great lengths to assure them. I actually live only about two minutes' walk from the student residences. So I am on the campus kind of as the father of the entire campus. I find that parents particularly react to that very positively.

They understand that this is a campus which cares. It has become even more important for us now. Right now our international student population is about 20 per cent. We are now aiming to get to about 30 per cent of our population. We are launching a major campaign to attract more international students. So we are doing even more of this now. The fact is that Canberra is such a safe community, Canberra is such an inclusive community; not that we never have any incidents—Woden is an example. But, overall, compared to the bigger cities, I think we are in pretty good shape. We actually promote the university in the context of the city itself and everything that is great about the city.

MR STEEL: My questions were also about international students. You mentioned that you have a target to increase the number of international students studying at UC. What measures are you looking at undertaking as part of your strategic plan to increase the number of students at the university, aside from assuring them that this is an inclusive place to study?

Prof Saini: There are two types of approaches we take in our recruitment. One is what is commonly called the retail recruitment of students, through our agents and so on. We use agents internationally.

MR STEEL: Yes, I was about to ask about that.

Prof Saini: Yes, we do use agents internationally. We vet our agents very closely. In the past, several years ago, we had some bad experiences and lessons have been learned from that. We have tightened up very carefully on who we approve as our

agent. That is one process. They have the material to promote the university. That is the retail side of it.

The other, increasingly more and more important, way of recruitment for us is to strike partnerships with international institutions. We are finding that that is actually in some ways a safer and better way of recruiting international students. Students would do part of their study in their home country, then come to the University of Canberra to finish for the next two years or so, and then transit to a graduate program, which means that they have already been filtered, in some ways, because they have spent a year or two at the university abroad. They are serious students. You have dealt with the academic attrition at that point. By coming here they really have already proven that they are serious students, that they intend to stay in the university.

We are increasingly relying on that model for recruitment of students to UC. That brings a larger number, but for shorter periods. But overall it works out. The turnover is faster in that case. Those are two parallel approaches we are using.

MR STEEL: What universities do you have partnerships with?

Prof Saini: In terms of our overall articulation agreements, there are in excess of 500 agreements across the world. But among the institutions that are our key partners, there are about a dozen around the world. Some examples would be in India, where I have been very active lately. We are working with Amity University, which is India's largest private university and the highest-ranked private university. The students have not started flowing yet, but we are putting the agreements in place.

We are working with two major colleges of the University of Mumbai, which is one of the top universities in the country. Again, it is these so-called two-plus-two or one-plus-three programs, where they would come in various packages, in groups of between 60 and 120. There is a system in India. They enrol in batches of 60; so that is how we will get them. There are also a number of other universities where we have conversations going on right now.

We have similar arrangements in the works in China. Some of our partnerships are such that the students actually do not come here. There are nine locations outside Canberra where we award a University of Canberra degree without students coming to Canberra. They have the option of spending some time here, but they do not have to come. Some of them are within Australia, others are abroad.

MR STEEL: Do you have any permanent presence overseas?

Professor Saini: Not as the University of Canberra per se, but we have presence in our partner institutions where we are co-badged, Ningbo University, for example. We do an MBA there. It is co-branded the University of Canberra-Ningbo MBA. We have a kind of a tangible physical presence on the campus. But it is on their campus, not independent.

MR STEEL: You mentioned the recruitment agencies that you work with. There was obviously some concern about this a few years ago particularly around quality assurance and—

Prof Saini: Yes.

MR STEEL: accepting students who perhaps had not proven that they actually had genuine transcripts and so forth. When you are recruiting students, where they have not gone to university before, directly from schools in other countries, what sorts of assurances do you have from these agencies that they have proper rigour in their processes?

Prof Saini: This is working with schools directly, not with the universities. If you work with the university, the university itself is responsible for quality control. We tell them what quality we want. That is why that is actually a much safer way of recruiting students. It is the way to almost eliminate any fraud.

For the direct recruitment from schools, we train our agents on what our standards of quality are. We monitor them very carefully. Any time we see a failure in a student that comes from that agent, that goes as a strike against that particular agent. Whether the failure is academic or the student disappears after coming to Australia, whether it is an immigration failure or academic failure, both of them count against that agent. So we monitor that very carefully.

We periodically review our own processes to make sure that we are filtering these agents very well. We have our own in-house people who go abroad. They work with these agents to make sure that agents are properly informed and that they are doing due diligence on the ground.

The person who is heading our global recruitment now, Mike Ferguson, is actually a co-author of the simplified visa framework for Australia. We hired him out of DFAT exactly for that reason. He was hired after some of the difficulty that the university faced in 2014. We went out to bring him into the university. He has overseen all our quality control filters.

MR WALL: Professor, I was hoping that you might be able to give the committee a longer term insight into education life at the university. In your introduction you touched on the health centre, the public hospital and the lodge that are underway or completed at this point. But where is it going to end? What does that end point look like, in physical terms particularly?

Prof Saini: Let us start with the Bruce campus itself. Then I will speak about its connections, the way we want to build those connections beyond that. The physical development of the Bruce campus is going to involve multiple precincts. The largest one would be the residential precinct, with 3,100 dwellings. It could change a little, depending on the market and the mix. The master plan is still being developed and the master plan has flexibility, depending on how the market changes. But that is roughly the number that we are looking at. It would be a mix of single family homes, townhouses and high-rise apartment buildings.

The other precincts that have already been conceived are the health precinct, which is the first one out of the blocks. That is where the largest development is happening right now with the hospital, with the private aged-care facility, the health hub, the

Icon cancer care centre and so on. Those building are already either under construction, completed or about to be started.

Then there is the sports precinct. Sport, as you know, is a major strength of the University of Canberra. We are building it further. That involves facilities for research and teaching on campus in the sports precinct. One new building has gone up in that regard. It involves a very tight relationship with the Australian Institute of Sport. They are our traditional partners. We collocate some of our activities but also collaborate otherwise. The Brumbies have their headquarters on the campus, so they work very closely with the university. We are one of their lead sponsors, but conversely they are also one of our lead locations for our students to get the experiential learning component of their studies.

We own the Canberra Capitals, the University of Canberra basketball team. They form a very important part of this precinct. That now in some ways extends to the National Convention Centre because that is where they are playing. Some of their players are actually studying at the university. They are part of our research efforts and they provide internships and so on for our students as well. There is a similar relationship with the Canberra United soccer team, the Rugby Sevens and so on. A large group of teams are involved in the university.

We are also restructuring the way our university sports teams and our research are going to interface with this. In fact, in the coming days we will make a major announcement about that restructure. Actually, an iconic figure from Australian sports, whose name I am not at liberty to reveal yet, will be taking over, coming to the university to lead that effort. Major development is happening in that area.

There is something that has been referred to as the innovation precinct in the university. It was an idea before I came. We have actually worked very hard on giving a shape to that idea. What would an innovation precinct look like? It is not going to be a physical location in one corner of the university. We are working on a different model where innovation is being embedded across the whole university. You have small nodes of facilities for students and for research staff to engage in innovation. We bring in external experts and so on to work with them. We have connected with various entities in Canberra and elsewhere in that regard.

An educational precinct is another one that we are conceiving. Education is the foundational faculty of the university. We have just taken a large faculty that we had and separated education from science and technology in that faculty. We created two faculties with the intention of strengthening both areas. Our dean of education, who has been on six months' sabbatical, is coming back in three weeks' time to lead the transformation of that new faculty with a very tight relationship with the ACT education directorate, which is kind of an extension of that education precinct.

We also have long-term plans hopefully to establish a school on campus which would be used for our training. Our teacher training model is very clinical. The students learn a lot in the classrooms in the schools. We want to have at least one school on the campus in the long run, which would be not an elite school but an elite training school where we train the cream of the cream of our teachers in that facility. It is actually owned by the university and we get to set the standards and so on there. We have a

couple of schools which are somewhat like that right now, the Kaleen and Lake Ginninderra schools. But they are outside and they are still fully managed by the directorate. Those are some of the ideas on the side of education precincts.

We are bringing industry to the campus, some of these players that I just mentioned. We sign an agreement with each one of them that they are not coming to the campus just to do their commercial activity. They will do their commercial activity, but in doing so they will provide access to research and to our student training within their facilities. That is a fundamental requirement for any commercial entity to come to the campus—that they have to become part of our educational model, which is driven by this experiential learning.

We are in conversation with a number of other players like that, either within Australia or abroad. I have just come back from India, where I spoke to one of the leading technology companies in the world, Wipro. It is a \$16 billion, \$17 billion, company. We are looking at possibly establishing a training facility on the campus, helped by them, in the IT area. That gives you a general idea of what is happening on the campus.

We want to connect that activity to our locations abroad and elsewhere in Australia. I have mentioned nine of them. That number will probably change a bit. There is a possibility we may shut down a few of them that are not performing as well as others. It is an experimental thing. You experiment with something and make adjustments. Others will go and new ones will probably come on board.

We want to create a linkage between students studying there and this campus. Technology would be a very central part of this campus. It is going to develop as an intelligent community. We are highly empowered by technologies. There would be, in some ways, transportation of ideas, people and so on through technologies as well as physical mobility of people between these locations. So the Canberra campus, in the long run—20 years—would become a vibrant hub of interconnected nodes across Australia and abroad.

MR WALL: With the residential side of the proposal, when is the first stage of that likely to begin?

Prof Saini: We are expecting to start in late 2018; about a year from now construction will start.

MR WALL: What work is being done to try to identify the leasing arrangements that will occur for that? I understand that largely the university is on one lease.

Prof Saini: Yes.

MR WALL: It starts getting into a tricky space with government and planning. I would be curious to get an understanding of what the university's intention is. Is it going to be a sublease of the university's plot or—

Prof Saini: Yes. This has been the most complex part of this whole thing. We have been working on it for a while. This is why it has taken actually probably a year more

than it would have done otherwise. We could have had shovels in the ground last year. I will let Vicki explain, because she is fully across that whole idea.

Mrs Williams: Yes, it is a sublease.

MR WALL: Okay.

Mrs Williams: So there is a sublease that attaches to the residential side. As in the rest of the ACT with the 99-year lease that people have, it is a slightly different style of lease, but it is a 99-year sublease that attaches with it.

MR WALL: Okay.

Mrs Williams: A lot of work has been going on to make sure that that is in its proper form and that it is not something that is a distraction. It is slightly different. It is coming off our perpetual lease or our crown lease. In its legal form it is actually a little different, but in its intent and what it is delivering it is like another residential property lease in the ACT.

MR WALL: How will that then work for government rates and services and those sorts of things?

Mrs Williams: That is under discussion at the moment. The only entity that can collect rates in the ACT is the ACT government. So they would be collected by the ACT government. We are talking with them about the way that then works around the private roads and things that are sitting in there. Those ratepayers are paying rates to the ACT government. At the moment that is university land that actually needs to be maintained.

MR WALL: The negotiation are around who maintains ownership and does ongoing maintenance of those assets?

Mrs Williams: That is right.

THE CHAIR: I had some questions about the recent reporting on completion rates. New figures show that fewer than sixty per cent of UC students who started their degree in 2010 had finished by 2015. This is below the national average. Can you explain to me what might be occurring here?

Prof Saini: Yes. That is a very interesting question. Actually, I would love the opportunity to explain that a bit because the way the figures have come out and the way they have been released leaves a lot of unanswered questions. In Australia, like anywhere else in the world, not all universities are equal. They are not all doing the same thing. We are distinctive in that we have an unusually high percentage of part-time students. I do not remember—do you recall it off the top—

Mrs Williams: No.

Prof Saini: It is actually very high; it is like 50 per cent or higher part-time students, unlike, say, the University of Melbourne, which predominantly has full-time students.

I come from a university in Canada where only seven per cent of our students were part-timers. So it is a very high percentage of part-time students. In fact, long completion rates in some ways are a good thing in those situations. We are giving the students the flexibility to complete their degree at their convenience, the way they want, while they are working elsewhere.

It looks like bad news when you look at it on the surface and you put all the universities in the same pot. It looks like: “My goodness, the University of Canberra is doing really badly.” But it actually reflects the nature of the university, the kind of education we provide. If you break it up between full-time and part-time students, the numbers are not that bad. Full-time students are completing their degrees like any other university. It is the part-timers that are pushing the averages more towards the longer durations. As I said, we actually are quite happy with that. That means that we are giving the students all the flexibility they want. They can continue to be students while they are studying. Just imagine holding a full-time job and trying to do studies. It takes a longer period.

THE CHAIR: That is interesting. Could you provide some of that further breakdown? I would love to see it.

Prof Saini: Yes, I would love to do that.

MRS KIKKERT: My question is in regard to the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs leadership and strategy. The report talks about the improvement in community engagement. I would like to hear more about that. How is that office reaching out to the community, in particular Aboriginal youths?

Prof Saini: Vicki, do you have any historical perspective on that or should I take it on notice?

Mrs Williams: Yes, definitely.

Prof Saini: I do not have the historical perspective that I should of everything, because it has been only a year since I have been at the University of Canberra. But we are one of the first universities to go out and actually hire a person at the dean level to deal just with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategy and engagement.

Among the activities that we do are initial programs for Aboriginal students in the schools. We go out to the schools. We are looking at stepping that up further. I have been talking with the dean myself. We need to find ways of engaging these students more broadly.

Across the whole system, there is actually a lesser challenge to get the students into the university and a very good challenge to get completion rates higher. When you start dissecting those completion rates, you come up with the conclusion that the students are not finishing because their prior formation is not strong enough to handle the rigours of university, because of the nature of schools they come from.

We are actually looking at putting together a program where we go into the schools

from where our students come and do enrichment, particularly in the STEM disciplines, where they tend to have the weaknesses. They falter because they have poor chemistry, poor maths and physics and so on. That is where most of the problems are encountered.

That is one area that we are in the early stages of developing. It is going to take some significant investment on the part of the university. The person sitting to my left holds the purse strings. We are looking at ways of creating some room in our budget so that we can actually start launching these programs in the schools.

We are a university with four full professors, which is the highest rank you can attain in a university, who are of Aboriginal background. That includes our chancellor himself. He is of Aboriginal background. The commitment of the university to actually do something about the issues affecting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander compatriots is very high.

We have just recently released our university's own strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is more ambitious than the Universities Australia strategy itself. There are four pillars to it. It includes student success, staff inclusion, research, and employment outcomes after graduation. In all of those areas the minimum we are targeting is parity. If you need some more detailed information on historical data and so on, I will be happy to get it to you.

MRS KIKKERT: That would be great. I would also like to be updated on the progress of that program as you get more funding in the future to implement that into high schools and colleges.

MR STEEL: You mentioned that the university has done very well in the world university rankings. What areas have the rankings identified for improvement in the University of Canberra and how is that reflected in your strategic plan?

Prof Saini: The first thing is that our strategy has always been to focus, not to try to do everything for everybody, but to choose to do what we do and do it really, really well. That has been the secret of the University of Canberra's success. Some of the areas where we have done exceptionally well are our environmental sciences, ecology, governance and policy. Law: we have done very well in that area. We have done well in the design area and so on. In genetics we have done very well. Health sciences—broadly speaking, we are very strong in those areas. The current strategy is to further strengthen those areas. In the next strategic plan we are continuing to be very disciplined about how far we want to expand. We still remain very disciplined about our footprint and breadth, but going deeper and making it even stronger.

Some of the additional areas where we have to expand include education. That is why we have done this split of a very large faculty where there were just too many disciplines. We have taken education and science and technology. There will be a standalone faculty of science and technology. That signals that we are going to be moving much more strongly into the science and tech area, particularly in environmental engineering, sports technologies, the IT area, big analytics and so on. Medical devices is another area that we are targeting.

The second one is our business school. We have had a business school which, frankly, is not as good as I would like to see it. It is not bad, but it is not at the world standard where I would want to see our business school. We are also doing some structural changes to make it possible for that school to start flourishing and put some resources behind it. Business, commerce, finance and accounting and so on are areas that link up with the business school. They will be another preferred area.

The last one I would flag is governance. We have done well in that area, but we could do better, especially being in Canberra. We have a very collaborative relationship with the ANU. They are very strong in the governance area. That is another area that we are privileging as a discipline, that we want to create some strengths in.

MR STEEL: And research?

Prof Saini: The rankings, the international rankings, are 75 per cent based on research. Whenever I refer to rankings, you are looking at strengthening research first and foremost.

MR STEEL: Is that an area that you think you need to strengthen?

Prof Saini: Research, yes, broadly. Yes, that is right. We are very good at the things that we do, but we are not very big. Becoming big is a function of time. It just takes decades before you get anywhere close to, let us say, where the ANU is or the University of Melbourne is and so on. We are a small player, to be honest, in our research footprint, but we are a very strong player in the quality of areas that we operate in. We will be gradually expanding those areas.

MR WALL: Professor, mostly recently I heard you at the alumni awards highlight that, going forward, every student that graduates from the University of Canberra will do so having completed some form of practical work experience. How has the university been engaging with local industry to facilitate that? For the student themselves, how much control will they have over where they can go to fulfil that component?

Prof Saini: We already have a lot of experiential component to our education. But, beyond that, turning it into a 100 per cent experiential learning university, our plans are to wait about a year before we start investing in that. This is going to take some very significant investment. I have done time back in Canada at the University of Waterloo, which is the world leader in work integrated learning. They are ranked the number one university in the world in terms of their experiential learning.

We actually are talking to them as well to come and help us. They do some consulting. Since we are not competitive with them, they are very happy to work with us. Because of my old connection, we will get access to some of their know-how. It takes a lot of investment. Just to put it in perspective, they have over 100 people in the department that enable students to be placed. They work with over 4,000 companies worldwide. I am not saying that we will start with that kind of an ambitious plan. That would bankrupt the University of Canberra if we tried to do that. We are going to start gradually building that kind of infrastructure.

My expectation is that at about this time next year we will have experts from Waterloo with us, helping us. We already have a conversation going there. The way it works is that you embark on a spirited plan of educating the business world that this is actually in some ways less about helping students and more about helping the employer find the right talent. Once you take it to that point where they start understanding that it is in their best interests to engage with a university that wants to go down this route, they actually begin to compete for those students. I have seen through experience that that is how it works, but that phase of education takes time.

We have been talking to companies in Australia. So far I have not come across one that has said, “Get out of town; this is a harebrained idea.” They all say, “Wow, this is fantastic; we would like to work with you.” We will see how much money they put where their mouths are. Only experience will show us that, but we are going to start on that path within about a year.

Mrs Williams: I also add that with the partners we are bringing on to campus, part of all of that is providing that experiential learning. As Deep said earlier, they have to engage with us at a teaching and research level to come onto campus. It is not a leasing play. It is about being on campus with us and partnering with us. Part of what we are dealing with all of them is getting placements into their own companies, their contractors or whatever it might be along those lines and taking a form of experiential learning. It is not necessarily always an internship, either. It could be working on a project. It could be doing those types of things that give them real-life experience.

For example, we are just about to go into master planning for the residential development. Involving our students in that process is extremely valuable to them to see how it actually works and what goes through that thing. It will take lots of different forms, but all of those partners we are bringing on to campus will actually be engaging in that at the same time.

Prof Saini: Experiential learning actually works best, in my experience, when it is flexible and diverse, because one size does not fit all. It goes anywhere from working on a master plan while you are studying to actually doing formal work drills during your studies, multiple times during your degree, in one or more companies off campus and maybe sometimes even abroad. And there is a lot between the two extremes.

MR WALL: How does that work experience then relate to, say, an undergrad degree? Do they get credit towards the degree completion?

Prof Saini: It becomes part of your transcript then, yes. In ideal situations, in extreme cases, you work collaboratively with their work supervisors. The workplace and the academic supervisors work closely both to help and evaluate the student.

MR WALL: How many universities in Australia are in that space currently?

Prof Saini: Virtually every university in Australia has some component of experiential learning, but there is none that would claim that every student has to have an experiential component. We are the first university that has openly declared that we want to get there. If we get there, we will probably be the first one.

Mrs Williams: There are natural disciplines—nursing, teaching and those types of things—that have natural placements in them. That is experiential learning too, so that is counted because you do not want to duplicate all that as it is going through.

MR WALL: Yes, but for an arts degree or—

Mrs Williams: You do not always do it.

Prof Saini: Certain ones do not. Certainly with teaching now, experiential is part of it. That is where we are actually very close to being 100 per cent already, because so much of our education is professional. In those professions there is an experiential component built in, by the nature of the degree itself. With others, if you are doing classics, it is less obvious. We do not do classics, but if you were doing it you would have to work harder there, but there are ways to do it.

THE CHAIR: I wanted to talk about affordable accommodation on campus. There have been reports that what is designated as affordable accommodation on campus is actually more expensive than similar private rentals nearby. Has this been your experience as the developers of the project?

Mrs Williams: No, it is not, because it is actually very hard to compare what is offered in a residential student environment with the private market. A share house with three or four bedrooms where you have a kitchen and a garden and everything else to look after, no pastoral care, no support, no connection into the university, is a very different product to a multi-shared five bedroom that has share kitchens, has residential advisers that are there for them, has the pastoral care that comes with it, has all of the programs that come into that college or lodge.

It is very difficult to make that comparison in the market. But, having said that, because most of our on-campus accommodation is subject to the national rental affordability scheme, it is assessed every year against the CPI that the federal government provides us with. Every three years we have to do a market assessment by a registered valuer, who has to go and test those sorts of things and look at how it compares. In the last two years we have actually dropped rates in those areas. They have not gone up. That is because there has been a negative CPI in the ACT for the rental market. So they have been dropping.

Whilst, if you look at it at face value as a pure dollar figure, it may appear expensive for that particular product, it is the whole package that comes with that residential living. Having said that, though, we do have other beds on campus that are at much lower price points, that are not subject to the national rental affordability scheme but are of a different standard in terms of the quality of their build and the amenity that they have in the room. There is still the same pastoral care, still all of those types of things that come with it, but just different levels of accommodation. Some of those cheaper price points are very appealing to students, even though they are older. One is a 12 share. It is just a different style of accommodation.

THE CHAIR: I note you have an accommodation guarantee. I am going to go out on a limb and assume that you have a near zero vacancy rate across the semesters?

Mrs Williams: A couple of our lodges are close to 100 per cent. The university village still has vacancy sitting there. Anybody who wanted a bed could get a bed. That is still the case at the moment. They might not get their place of choice. If they wanted to go into Cooper Lodge or UC Lodge, for example, we would have a problem, because they are full. But in the university village there is still vacancy there to be able to go into those.

THE CHAIR: Is it often the case that students apply for the lower price point and that is full, and they then have to go to UniLodge?

Prof Saini: It is actually the opposite—

Mrs Williams: No, the others would fill quicker, actually, to be honest. It varies. Sometimes the students stay together as a group, so they are very happy with the multi-bed, five shares. But it is a bit varied, really.

MRS KIKKERT: My question is in regard to the sexual assault and harassment survey that was done in August. How many Canberra University students participated in that survey? Do you have the results?

Prof Saini: Yes, we do have our results. They have been made public, actually. The number of students from the University of Canberra—across the system—that participated was disappointingly low.

MRS KIKKERT: Why do you think that was low?

Prof Saini: We launched a major campaign through the whole survey, because it was in our interest to have the numbers as high as possible, to have statistically credible results. It was 400-some. It has been a while. I do not have the exact number in my head. It was in the 400s. So the participation rate was very low. Yes, that is where it was, despite the fact that there was a spirited campaign to get as many of them to respond as possible.

MRS KIKKERT: I think 400 is a good number.

Prof Saini: Yes.

MRS KIKKERT: From that result, what is the plan to move forward?

Prof Saini: Actually, I think we discussed it just before you came.

MRS KIKKERT: You discussed that before I came?

Prof Saini: Yes, we went—

MRS KIKKERT: That is okay; I will go back and read it.

Prof Saini: Yes, just to recap—

MRS KIKKERT: You do not have to go through it again.

Prof Saini: Just one major thing we have done is that quite independent of that, we have hired Elizabeth Broderick and her company to do a thorough, comprehensive analysis of the University of Canberra's policies and procedures, do a complete review and come up with a report as to how we can improve the situation even more. For us, it has been a good situation—I should not use the word “good”. It has been less bad compared to the average of the sector for us. I have taken the position that one case is one too many, and we need to fix this.

MRS KIKKERT: Yes. I agree.

MR STEEL: My question is in relation to the social enterprise hub. You were awarded a grant from the ACT government. What is the progress on the hub and what is it hoping to achieve?

Prof Saini: It is relatively new. It has been a couple of months only since it has been operational. Is that right?

Mrs Williams: Is that Mill House or Entry 29? Which one are we talking about?

MR STEEL: The social enterprise one.

Mrs Williams: Mill House?

Prof Saini: Mill House, yes. That has been up for only two or three months now.

Mrs Williams: Since July; so a bit longer.

Prof Saini: A bit longer than that. It is still early days, but I can only give you the general impressions. From the activity that I see there, it seems to be active. People are going there and getting involved. I would wait a year or so before I would judge how effective it has been. We are monitoring that, as we are Entry 29 also, which is more technology based. These are new ventures for the university, so I would wait for a few more months to really understand what the numbers are and what the outcomes have been.

MR STEEL: How is it delivered? Does it have a presence at the university?

Prof Saini: Yes.

MR STEEL: Is there a particular location? Who accesses it?

Prof Saini: It is open to everybody, not just the university students. Anybody can come and become part of that community. It is a co-working space, which is enabled not simply by UC students who are more experienced in those areas and who have stronger interests and so on but also by outsiders. We bring in speakers; we bring in mentors and so on. Our associate vice-president, research and innovation, is very deeply involved in that. There are multiple levels of support for the students essentially to let their creative juices loose and see what comes out. The idea is to provide a supportive environment in which people can think outside the box.

MR STEEL: Not a formalised program?

Prof Saini: Yes, some formalised programs, but the whole idea is about letting the mind explore and explore with others of the same mind.

MR STEEL: Do you have some outcomes that you are hoping to achieve through it? Presumably, in the grant process you had to articulate—

Prof Saini: When the first student walks up to me one day and says, “Professor Saini, I have this brilliant idea. Can you help me find a venture capitalist?” that would look like a resounding success to me. That is where I want to take it, yes.

MR WALL: You did touch briefly before on the University of Canberra’s involvement with the high school at Kaleen and also Lake Ginninderra college. Can you explain a little more clearly how that relationship works between what is a directorate-run school and the university?

Prof Saini: They are branded University of Canberra schools. They have worked with us traditionally to offer leading sites for teacher training. We work interactively. Our dean of education and their principals work closely, interactively, to create conditions in which student training can happen effectively. Our contract with them expires some time mid next year, so we have been renewing them on an ad hoc basis because we are looking at a slightly different model. We are actually in conversations with the schools directorate to expand this kind of relationship. Instead of just two branded schools, we would have a fairly large number of schools, around 25 schools, that are affiliated with the university.

It is a slightly different model in that we take the same model and expand it, but without necessarily branding them as University of Canberra schools. Early next year the dean will come back with his strategic plan that he has been working on. I actually have an agreement on my table right now that I am looking at with the directorate to move forward on that new model. That is where we are.

MR WALL: There seems to be a lot of opportunity for students in the university to engage in that classroom setting and to get that practical experience. What benefit is there in the opposite direction, for the students of the colleges to engage with the university?

Prof Saini: Here are two major components to the agreement. One is the research part. They benefit from all the pedagogical research that is going on in the university in our faculty of education. Some of our researchers are already involved. For example, we have a hot global star, Tom Laurie, who has come up with new approaches to STEM education and how spatial reasoning impacts the learning of mathematics. It is proving to be particularly effective with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. That is one area that we are trying to take to the Aboriginal schools where we have larger Aboriginal populations. He is funded to do that study to the extent of about \$6 million right now by various entities.

It is a case of providing access to that research and actually using schools as living

laboratories to test the outcomes of that research. Conversely, it is a case of providing scholarships for the teachers from the schools to come and teach and do PhD degrees at the university. We are developing a special relationship where they will have preferred access to scholarships to be able to do higher degrees at the university.

MR WALL: For a student at, say, Lake Ginninderra college doing their year 11 or 12, is there any involvement with the university in areas of accelerated learning and that sort of thing or is it business as usual for the student body?

Prof Saini: I do not know enough about that.

Mrs Williams: No, I am not sure either.

Prof Saini: I am not sure about this.

Mrs Williams: I know they have a sports preference down there and they link in well with our sports programs, but I am not sure about the accelerated learning areas.

THE CHAIR: I have a question on where international students are coming from. What are the top five places across the globe that students come to UC from?

Prof Saini: The number of countries our students come from is about 120. At the top is China, then India, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Increasingly larger numbers are coming from Nepal. These are some of our top countries.

THE CHAIR: I have never heard that students were coming from Nepal. Is there a particular reason that students are coming from Nepal to Canberra?

Prof Saini: I do not know, actually.

THE CHAIR: Is there an outreach program there that is particularly active?

Prof Saini: They come in business and IT quite a lot. But I do not know why particularly Nepal. One reason may be that in the neighbouring country, Bhutan, we deliver an MBA there. So the University of Canberra may be well known in the region because of that. We work collaboratively with the Royal Institute of Management there in Bhutan. We have been delivering an MBA there for quite a number of years. That could be possibly one reason, because Bhutan and Nepal are side by side. But, other than that, I do not know. We are getting an increasing number from Nepal now.

MRS KIKKERT: My question is a flow-on from Andrew's question. You mentioned that you want to expand the program to reach out to 25 extra colleges, on top of Kaleen and Lake Ginninderra. Will some of those colleges have a lot of Aboriginal students that you also want to reach, to help them so that they can enter university, attain their degree and so forth?

Prof Saini: Yes. Aboriginal education is a very important part of the university's strategy. In selecting schools, that would be one of the factors that we would be looking at. We want to create a diverse mix of schools where we touch different

segments of the population and we cover the whole gamut. Our aim is not to go to Red Hill, for example, and have our school sitting there or to do something like that. We want to have a broad spectrum of schools. We will be working across the territory. We actually have relationships with schools even outside the ACT. It is not limited to the ACT. We place students in New South Wales as well.

MRS KIKKERT: But it is 25 schools within the ACT?

Prof Saini: These are 25 ACT schools. This is one major part of our clinical model of teacher training. But we actually work with New South Wales schools as well, in rural communities and so on. That is one area we pay attention to: what is the mix of schools? Are we covering the entire spectrum of the population? Yes, it is Aboriginal students and schools with special emphasis on Aboriginal education. Even today it is part of our strategy.

Let me make one thing clear. We are creating a formal relationship with 25 schools. That is our aim. That does not mean we do not have those relationships now. We work with a large number of schools as it is. It is just that we are trying to formalise it so that we have guaranteed access to this number of schools and a guaranteed reciprocal, symbiotic relationship with them. But otherwise we go out every year and we talk to every school that will talk to us to place teachers as necessary and as the opportunities present themselves.

MRS KIKKERT: Is funding is part of this project that you are doing?

Prof Saini: Yes.

MRS KIKKERT: Is that funding local or federal, or is it both?

Prof Saini: It is from the schools directorate, I guess. They would have to fund it. Do you know the funding part of it?

Mrs Williams: I am not across that.

Prof Saini: Funding is an issue. We cannot fund all those students, as it is for clinical placements as well. To be honest, I do not know exactly what the funding source is, but funding is involved. I can get back to you about that.

Mrs Williams: Funding of placements is done by the university.

Prof Saini: Yes.

Mrs Williams: The university has to pay for those in most instances.

Prof Saini: Yes, but where our funding comes from—

Mrs Williams: For this particular issue I am not able to say.

MRS KIKKERT: You do not know if it is federal or local funding required for it?

Prof Saini: I do not know fully, no.

MRS KIKKERT: Is it okay to find out and get back to us?

Prof Saini: I will get back to you.

MRS KIKKERT: Also, can you advise how much are you expecting to spend on this program that you are doing, which is a fantastic program.

MR STEEL: I have a quick question around the other grant that you have received, which you are using for innovation vouchers. Have you provided any of those vouchers to any organisations as yet?

Prof Saini: I do not have that number with me. I can find out, if you like.

MR STEEL: Yes. Thank you.

MR WALL: A final question from me. I take this opportunity to thank you both for coming in. I understand that it is quite unusual for the university to appear before the education committee in this format. It is very much appreciated. This is more of a selfish question, coming as I do from the southern part of Canberra. There is a lack of tertiary options, particularly in Tuggeranong. What, if ever, would it take to get a second campus on the mind of the university? Is that something that sits within your longer term vision? We have heard of collaboration with universities around the world and some fairly comprehensive plans for Bruce. Is there ever an opportunity to expand the footprint in Canberra for a second campus?

Prof Saini: At this point there is no particular plan to have another campus in Canberra, except that we are constantly talking to the government to improve access to our current campus. Public transport is a major issue for us. We would like to see more public transport connecting to the campus to make it easier for students to get there.

There are a couple of conversations going on with outlying communities. Goulburn is one example. We have been talking to the municipality. They have university centres there. They are still embryonic entities. There is one in Cooma as well. I have been there and have spoken with them as well about creating an area where the students who are enrolled at the university can go and study when they are not on campus. It is not the same thing as having a campus. It is like having a facility which can supplement some of the learning for the students.

We have looked at various areas. I have looked at Yass; I have looked at Goulburn; I have looked at Cooma and so on. We have some activity there already, which is part of it, but we have not done anything to really increase that participation. There are challenges with that. Funding is a major issue. If it happened, I think Goulburn would probably be the first place, because we have a large number of students coming from there. The idea is that when they are there for the weekend they have some place to go where they can study, where they can get some tutoring and so on. It is not to have a full-time campus there.

We do some activity in the central Canberra area, non-degree activity—professional training and so on—particularly in the government-related areas. We hope to increase that activity in the central Canberra area, whether it is in Civic or across the lake. We do some activity in the Museum of Australian Democracy. Those are the kinds of things we are looking at, but not actually offering full degrees at this point. It is just not economically feasible at this point.

THE CHAIR: This is a strange question. Has the university been approached about pill testing at Groovin' the Moo?

Prof Saini: It was approached last year. I was out of the country. Were you here when that was happening?

Mrs Williams: I was not involved in it. We were approached, but we did not end up doing it. We did not do anything about it.

THE CHAIR: Have you been approached about the next?

Mrs Williams: The next one coming up?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mrs Williams: Not that I am aware of.

Prof Saini: Not that we know of, no.

THE CHAIR: Does the university have any objections to pill testing occurring on its grounds?

Prof Saini: There are pros and cons. It has not been a big enough issue where we actually have had to sit down and have a discussion about it. If we were approached for a second year in a row we probably would have to sit down and have a discussion as an executive. As I said, there are pros and cons from our perspective. We would have to look very carefully at whether we go down that route.

THE CHAIR: That is my last question. As there are no further questions, you get an early mark.

Mrs Williams: Thank you very much.

Prof Saini: Thank you very much. It has been a pleasure.

THE CHAIR: The committee's hearing for today is now adjourned. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all the witnesses who appeared today. The secretary will provide you with a copy of the proof transcript of today's hearing when it is available. If witnesses have taken any questions on notice today, could you please get those answers to the committee secretariat within five business days.

The committee adjourned at 10.47 am.