



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

**TALK
ABOUT
UNI!**

Talk About Uni: making a difference?

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Outline

- ☞ The problem: university and low-SES/ rural student participation*
- ☞ Early intervention and ‘aspiration raising’*
- ☞ “Talk About Uni”*
- ☞ Challenges*
- ☞ Questions*





Background

- 1990:
 - *A Fair Chance for All* announces an equity framework aimed at “changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole”
- 2008:
 - women, people experiencing disability and NESB participation improves... Indigenous Australian, rural and low-SES participation flat lines ...



Access Rate	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Population Reference Point
<i>Total low SES</i>	15.86	15.54	15.36	15.2	15.23	15.56	25.0
Low SES and urban	8.63	8.49	8.43	8.35	8.66	9.02	
Low SES and regional	6.50	6.35	6.23	6.17	5.96	5.93	
Low SES and remote	0.73	0.70	0.70	0.68	0.61	0.61	
<i>Total medium SES</i>	45.62	45.22	45.24	45.07	45.86	46.12	50.0
<i>Total high SES</i>	37.33	37.31	38.05	38.53	37.92	37.46	25.0



*...all the running you can do, to stay
in the same place*

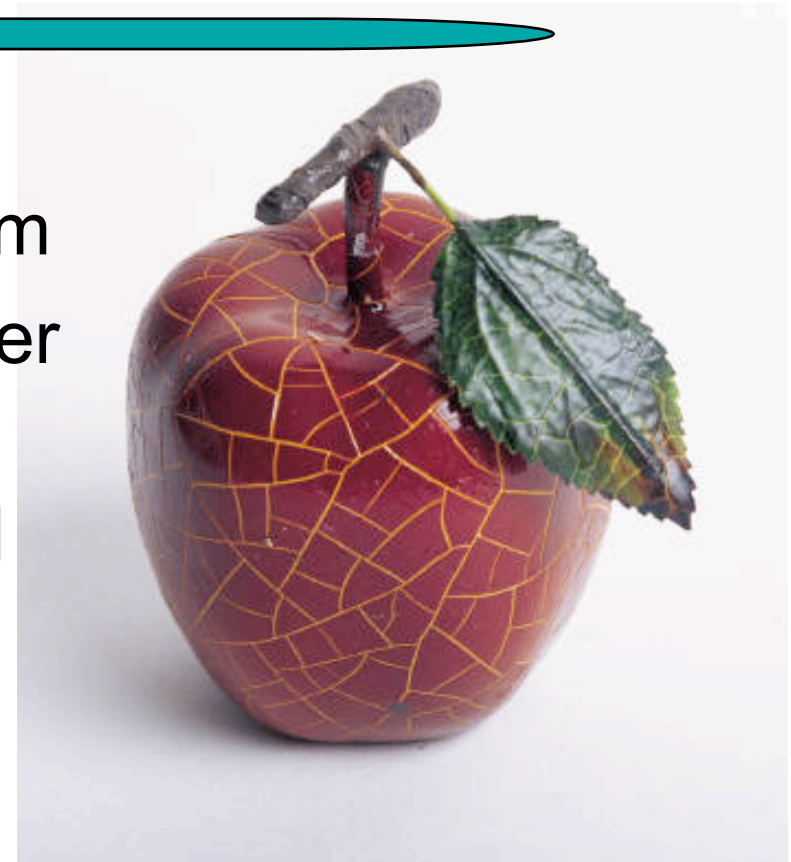
- 18 years of outreach programs
- Committed focus on access and equity
- Increased Higher Education participation across the board
- Most universities still below the notional 25%
- Particularly so for Go8 universities (UoM 8.3% in 2006 cf state 14.2% and national 15.6%)





What does this have to do with First-Year Uni?

- diversity vs monoculturalism
- cohort should mirror broader community composition
- access programs of limited value unless students already considering uni

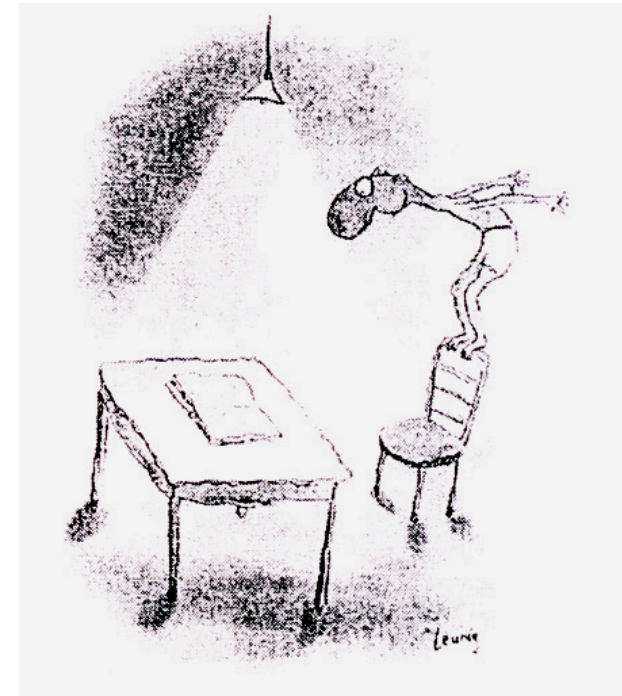




Celebrating the First Year Experience?

Not if you can't get in...

- UK and US research:
 - that early intervention aimed at 'raising aspirations' is essential in attracting low-SES and rural students
 - that family and community support are fundamental to this process
- Corroborated by Australian research
 - e.g. *Australian Young People: their stories, families and post-school plans*, joint ACER and The Smith Family report





One possible response: Talk About Uni

- ❧ Developed with an eye to international and national research
- ❧ Built on sound knowledge of, and relationships with, the secondary sector
- ❧ Aimed at raising the aspirations of years 9 and 10 students
- ❧ Committed to exploring new and diverse outreach methods





Talk About Uni: debunking the myths

How?

- Hard copy resources
- Online resources
- Personalised contact
- Ongoing development
- Feedback and Evaluation





Hard copy resources:

sent to approx 300 underrepresented schools

- Case studies of students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Information booklets for parents and students (and teachers)
 - *The Uni Book, Parents' Uni Book, Uni and You*
- Classroom activities
 - with teachers notes and student activity sheets
 - with offers of on-campus or school visits
- Follow-up mailout
 - bookmarks, postcards, reminder letter





Online resources

- Developed in a number of phases
- Development ongoing
- Promo to schools (retargetting original cohort)
- Consultation began in early 2008-
since rethought and revamped
 - Teachers, students and families
 - Relevant community groups





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Welcome to Talk About Uni!

This website is all about uni. Here you'll find true stories about getting to uni told by real people:

- People for whom the decision to go to uni wasn't a given.
- People who had to overcome obstacles to get to uni.
- People who went to uni and changed their lives.

But this website is also a resource: it's for students, parents and carers, and it's also an aid for teachers. It aims to help high school students, and those close to them, take part in a conversation about possible and desirable futures.

So... let's talk about uni!



Brandon

What can uni give you?

Two words: Freedom and choice.

[More from Brandon](#)





Challenges:

☞ Reaching young people through schools

- 'crowded curriculum'
- preconceptions may dominate
- potential can go unrecognised

☞ Reaching families and communities

- parents and carers vital
- young people rely on range of advice and inspiration – not just teachers/schools





Responding to challenges: Building relationships

- Schools:
 - Enlist teachers as partners in aspiration raising
 - Establish relationships with schools
 - Provide assistance to teachers at both a local and global level (beginning with pilot schools)
- Communities:
 - Develop links with students and families via community and youth groups
 - Promote in libraries, youth centres and via online communities

Consultation Consultation Consultation



Responding to challenges: Into the future ...

- ☞ Mentoring
- ☞ Online interaction – podcasts?
- ☞ Building relationships with specific schools and teachers - re-visiting ‘the well’
- ☞ Multi-badging, linking to other equity/educational sites
- ☞ Parents and families - workshops and activities
- ☞ Further collaboration and developing relationship with the Centre for Indigenous Education (CIE)

Collaboration Collaboration Collaboration



Into the future ...

Is it 'making a difference'?

- ☞ A great resource, but how do we make it continue to work and grow?

- ☞ Working backwards to increase participation by:
 - identifying challenges and barriers
 - identifying positive approaches
 - broadening our networks and consultation processes

- ☞ Evaluation



Questions?



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Talk About Uni: [http://
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