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# Preface

The Australian Journal of University Community Engagement is a refereed journal published twice a year by the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance Inc. , a not for profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the engagement capabilities of staff and universities by developing expertise, fostering collaboration and building their communities across Australia.

The interests of the Journal include University Community Engagement in terms of social, environmental, economic and cultural development. Articles will be refereed by a peer selected Editorial Panel, with extensive experience in community engagement and higher education. Thus the Journal is designed to promote and develop the scholarship of community engagement.

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[Guidelines](#) concerning the preparation and submission of manuscripts can be at the end of the journal at page 278

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# EDITOR'S FOREWORD

AUCEA was established to bring together those Universities interested in engaging with their communities, communities of place – local, national and international – and communities of interest. This engagement is for mutual benefit, resulting in new knowledge and understanding, engaged learning and research which relates to its community. A further benefit of an engaged University is the opportunity to relate to people in the community with knowledge and experience, furthering the notion of education without walls.

The next volume of the e-Journal will be published in Autumn, 2008 and submissions are now invited. Research papers and papers of a philosophical or historical nature will be considered. The theme is broadly **University and Community - engaged learning and research**

In compiling this e-Journal, it was decided to use three groups – the first contains papers which are research based, the second which are essays of a more philosophical kind and the third are papers describing case studies and projects. This decision was made at this time because Community Engagement is an emerging field and a mix of research, background and exemplars of good practice seemed a useful way to enhance the Australian based literature and to encourage others to not only engage with their communities, but to document the process and further enhance the engaged literature in this country.

Each of these papers was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual AUCEA Conference which was held at Charles Darwin University in Alice Springs from July 2-4, 2007. Each paper was refereed for the conference, and was further refereed before being chosen for inclusion in this journal.

AUCEA has also published the Conference Proceedings which includes the abstract of each of these papers, and the remaining papers in full. It is available at [www.aucea.net.au](http://www.aucea.net.au)

I would like to acknowledge the assistance from Professor Barbara Holland and Di Paez

Professor Barbara van Ernst AM  
Editor

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#### **4. Human capital, innovation and the productive ageing: Growth and senior aged health in the regional community through engaged higher education**

**Steve Garlick, University of the Sunshine Coast**  
**Jeffrey Soar, University of Southern Queensland**

##### **Abstract:**

This paper examines how low relative economic growth and high service and infrastructure costs in non-metropolitan regions that are increasingly attractive to lifestyle-seeking seniors, can be offset by focussing more positively on the human capital dimension of this cohort through closer engagement with higher education learning and innovation.

At present, many senior-aged persons attracted to 'lifestyle' locations are allowed to let their knowledge, networks and skills ossify through a lack of engagement with processes of learning and innovation and institutional impediments of a structural and attitudinal nature. It represents poor return on sunk investment in human capital, has cost impacts on enabling health and community services and infrastructure and does not contribute as positively as it could to regional growth outcomes through productivity gains.

The spatial impact of this will exacerbate as the demographic profile of the nation continues to age. Higher education in these places could be a key instrument in the learning and innovation required to realise the greater productivity gains from senior-aged human capital and the consequential growth and health outcomes at the local and regional scale.

The paper reports on the literature, research undertaken and analysis to understand these potentially important issues of policy and practice. The paper has a particular focus on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Burnett regions of Queensland which have some of the highest concentrations of senior aged people in Australia.

##### **Setting the scene**

According to the World Health Organisation, the global population over the age of 60 is increasing faster than any other cohort (WHO 2002). Education and learning are regarded importantly by seniors as assisting them to more fully engage in a rapidly changing society (Cameron, et al 2001). Seniors being actively engaged has positive health benefits (Butler 2002, Boulton-Laws, et al 2006). Cruikshank (2003) argues that one of the ways older people can self-

reinvent themselves is through education and learning, but that institutions are not yet particularly supportive in terms of the provision of access to technology and modes of education despite the rhetoric of life-long learning.

An Australian study identified six barriers facing older workers in obtaining and benefiting from education and training: These were: the absence of paid work; a decline with age in the capacity to learn; particular education and occupational characteristics of the current older age cohort; a policy environment that encourages early retirement; discrimination by employers, and; older persons' self perceptions about the lack of value in undertaking further training (Wooden, VandenHeuvel, Cully and Curtain, 2001). The report suggests the need to raise public awareness through legislation and at the workplace level, by promoting lifelong learning; and improving access to training for older unemployed persons.

However while education and learning are viewed importantly by many older people, a connection between their desire to take up more education and learning and the impact it can have on the stock of human capital as a determinant of economic growth is not yet made in the literature. In this paper we are interested in how active seniors, as human capital, can download their knowledge within a framework of engagement with higher education and innovation to generate increased productivity outcomes.

In particular, we are interested in the spatial aspects of an ageing population as the impacts of it are viewed most acutely in small regional locations where there is a certain 'attractiveness' for living because of 'more favourable climate', relatively lower living costs, connectivity with the community, and access to relevant services (Salt 2003, National Economics 2003). We are also interested in the spatial aspects of senior-aged human capital generation because of the increased concentration of regional growth and decline (Garlick et al 2007) and the regionalisation of higher education in certain locations that has occurred over the past two decades (Garlick 2000).

Recent studies and reports into the spatial economic implications of an ageing population in Australia have generally focussed on two areas. First, the disproportionate negative cost impact of providing enabling local community and health services and infrastructure. Second, there is an apparent correlation between high levels of senior in-migration driven population growth in some regions and their poor economic growth performance. This point is argued on the basis of the cumulative impact of reduced per capita consumption expenditure from fixed incomes, low non-housing investment expenditure and the low realised productivity of this cohort (National Economics 2006).

Thus, the spatial incidence of an ageing population in economic terms is at risk of being seen only in a negative way, or at best as unpaid volunteerism. This view sees the regional economy with a high concentration of senior aged people, only

in service support terms rather than as a potential source of high value-added production and professional skills, and it sees no worth in further realising the tacit knowledge of years of sunk investment in human capital. The only ameliorative policy suggestions for the spatial economic impact of an ageing population relate to the subsidisation of local service provision in high senior-aged migration areas (National Economics 2003), or boosting regional economic growth in these areas through initiatives that seek to offset the so-called 'negative spatial effect' of this growing cohort (National Economics 2006).

These negative views about the impact of an ageing population are not new as Lloyd-Sherlock (2004) has outlined. The World Bank (1994) has stated:

“The world is approaching an old age crisis...The proportion of the population that is old is expanding rapidly, swelling the potential economic burden on the young.” [in Lloyd-Sherlock, p.5]

In this paper we argue a different position in relation to the 'productive ageing' that sees their spatial incidence in terms of: (a) extending the human capital return on accumulated tacit knowledge in ways that enhance 'knowledge economy' outcomes in the region, and; (b) viewing the engagement of higher education as the vehicle for realising this human capital through learning and innovation. In presenting this case we focus on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions of Queensland, two of the fastest senior-aged population growth regions in Australia. We also report on research into the opinions of stakeholders that were gathered in several focus groups and structured workshops over the past two years.

### **Literature themes**

The extent of the spatial incidence of an ageing population is identified in a number of sources including the *State of the Regions* report (National Economics, 2003) and Salt (2003). These reports highlight so-called 'life-style' regions that have more than 25 percent of their population aged 55 years and over, compared to a national average in this age cohort of 22 percent. Regions with the highest concentrations, averaging around 30 percent of their population aged 55 and over, include Wide Bay-Burnett Qld, Sunshine Coast Qld, Central Coast NSW, Mid-North Coast NSW, Richmond-Tweed NSW, and Central Adelaide SA.

The Commonwealth, states, many local councils and non-government organisations have now developed strategic plans that attempt to recognise issues relating to an aging population. Embedded in these plans is a recognition that apart from issues to do with health and well-being, financial and physical security and access and mobility, there are matters to do with future economic development.

The Commonwealth Government's *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia Challenges and Opportunities for all* (2001) talks about opportunities for Australians to make a lifetime contribution to society and the economy, including through training and professional development, and 'lifelong learning for mature age workers and learners (p.2). The *Strategy* says, that for Australia to "...achieve sustained economic growth, there will have to be a continuation of current productivity growth and better utilisation of the skills and experiences of mature-age workers." (p.13). In the main however there is little discussion about how this will occur or what the role of the higher education institution might take in relation to lifelong learning.

At a state level, for example, the Queensland Department of Community Services issued a 1999 policy document *Our Shared Future: Queensland Framework for Ageing 2000-2004*, that specifies five principles and strategies that seek to improve a coordinated approach to the design and delivery of aged services. The policy paper recognises the contribution seniors can make through knowledge and learning to society, culture and the economy of their communities.

At a local government level, where there are relatively high concentrations of older ages, many councils are attempting to put strategic plans in place. For example, the Caloundra City Council on the Sunshine Coast, with 33 percent of its population aged 55 and over and estimated to be 45 percent by 2026, says in its 2007 strategy plan (*Positively Ageing in Caloundra City 2007 to 2017*) that it wants to develop a learning environment and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge of older people with younger people in the City.

In their study of ageing and the economy of the Wide Bay Burnett region, National Economics (2006) conclude that the only way the regional economy can boost its productivity levels is to balance the current ageing population growth with working-aged population growth and skilled migrant growth (p12). Such a conclusion assumes population growth as a driver for regional growth and assumes away the sunk investment in education and knowledge in endogenous senior aged human capital and the possibility that this can be realised through stronger engagement with higher education.

### **Regional growth**

A study of the patterns and determinants of economic growth in 94 Australian regions between 1984 and 2002 by Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) suggests population change is not a determinant of regional growth. It also suggests nearness to demand, business links, the power of the large corporation and access to information are not significant regional economic growth drivers. Human capital (based on education qualifications) has the most significant contribution to regional growth. Other positive determinants of regional growth are industry specialisation and technological change. Together, in their various

combinations, these three positive determinants have a significant contribution to economic growth in all regions.

Regions with a relatively high proportion of population of senior ages have low economic growth due to the low level of human capital compared to the average for all regions. This low level of human capital in regions of low relative economic growth manifests in a brain drain of young graduates, underemployment of skills, sometimes a relatively high out-commuting workforce, and, importantly for this paper, the non-engagement of senior-age knowledge.

Any strategy for regional growth in high senior-aged migration regions therefore should, among other priorities, focus on the way human capital is engaged. Our argument is that given the sunk investment in the human capital of the older age cohort, those regions that naturally tend to attract a high concentration of older ages should seek to harness this knowledge within a learning and innovation framework.

Based on Garlick et al 2007 modelling, Table 1 shows the ranking, out of 94 regions Australia-wide, for local areas in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett in relation to long run economic growth, and the performance of the three significant positive determinants of regional growth (human capital, industry specialisation and technological change).

The data show those regions with a high proportion of senior-aged population rank very poorly in terms of relative regional economic growth over the period 1994 to 2002, and that poor human capital is strongly related to these regional growth outcomes. The other significant determinants of regional growth (industry specialisation and technological change) are less strongly related to economic growth in these high senior-aged population regions. The pattern in other high senior-aged population regions in New South Wales (eg Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Nowra, etc), and in other states, not shown in the table, in relation to economic growth and human capital is similar.

Any strategy for regional development in these places therefore should focus on the way human capital, and in particular senior-aged human capital, is engaged in the growth transmission process.

**Table 1. Growth and determinants in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett regions 1984 to 2002 (rank out of 94 regions)\***

Local area	Percent of population 55 years and over**	Economic growth	Human capital	Industry specialisation	Technological change
Hervey Bay	36.1	93	94	70	71
Maryborough	28.5	83	80	38	42
Bundaberg	27.2	86	88	34	47

Caloundra	37.9	87	86	80	32
Maroochydore	36.6	88	90	80	38
Gympie	26.3	89	91	24	56

\* Calculated from Garlick et al 2007.

\*\* Calculated using 2001 Census data, ABS.

### **Enterprising human capital**

Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) introduce the concept of 'enterprising human capital' as those people who have the education and learning skills to create on-the-ground outcomes of practical value in the regional communities in which they are located. They:

“...understand the way markets operate; can access finance; see an opportunity; understand risk management without necessarily being risk-takers; and can mobilise resources, particularly teams, to good effect.” (p.33).

Our argument is that many in the productive ageing cohort, identified as having unrealised human capital, are seeking an outlet to be enterprising in the communities in which they are located. The absence of an enterprising human capital culture in regions is an impediment to stronger economic growth outcomes in Australia (Garlick et al, 2007)

We argue however that such human capital is being held back by a range of institutional and personal barriers of a structural and behavioural nature, the relative significance of which we are currently exploring through a study of the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions in Queensland.

Ranzijn and Grbich (2001) have identified, generically, a number of practical and psychological barriers to greater productive involvement by seniors. We are particularly interested in those barriers of a structural and behavioural nature that specifically relate to senior-aged people becoming actively engaged in processes of learning and innovation in the higher education system at the regional scale.

### **Barriers to senior learning and innovation in the higher education environment**

The last decade has seen a regionalisation of higher education in Australia (Garlick 2000) to the extent that most regional areas now have access to a higher education campus. However, HEI engagement with their regional community to enhance endogenous human capital is patchy and approaches to lifelong learning, while an objective of the regional community, is not embedded in the HEI.

Despite the general ageing of the population, HEIs still have a strong prescriptive orientation in their program design and delivery towards school leavers. In course design, there is little opportunity to encourage the downloading of tacit

knowledge by senior-aged people within a framework of education that emphasises an 'enterprising' approach which focuses on real world application. Course marketing tends not to focus on the productive ageing cohort as potential students or contributors to regional innovation system processes. Senior-aged people are not actively encouraged and, structurally, universities can be confronting places to those with no prior university education experience. As Cruikshank (2003) has observed, the education system does not always welcome older persons.

Behavioural barriers relate to issues such as perceptions that higher education and innovation is for young people and that older people undertaking higher education take institutional places from young people. There is a perception that older people's capability to handle learning is hampered by their mental and physical limitations (Boulton-Lewis et al, 2006). There is also a perception that older people's interest in higher education is in the area of simple 'life pursuits' for self-satisfaction, rather than in areas of significance to wider society. They are often directed to U3A as the default solution to their education desires. Older aged people feel confronted in a learning environment populated with school leaver age people. As Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say, motivation and confidence are big factors for older people taking up learning (p.273).

### **Informatics, technology and senior health**

Technologies offer the potential to better enable seniors to access education and innovation and better equip them to participate productively in economic activity. Many Australian and overseas universities provide much of their teaching through distance education enabled by the Internet. U3A also provides on-line educational resources for seniors. These allow students to study at their own convenience and pace.

There is a need for research to identify opportunities to better enable seniors to access education services. Issues might include access to high-speed broadband telecommunications which are usually more available in major cities than in less populous areas. There may be a need to assist seniors in feeling more comfortable with accessing goods and services through the Internet. Younger generations happily use on-line environments such as YouTube, MySpace, Second Life, online games and e-commerce solutions. Most of these innovations have largely by-passed seniors and there is a risk that they might be further disadvantaged in accessing other innovations in on-line services that could provide them with benefits. There has been a recent surge of interest in providing 'mental gymnastics' by electronic game companies with an expected demand from seniors. The marketing of these services might increase awareness and interest from seniors in other electronic services.

High-speed broadband communication links are rapidly becoming an essential infrastructure for business and it will be increasingly difficult to operate in areas

without these services. This will be an issue in retirement regions as the provision of such services may be some years away if ever. Strategies of local, state and federal governments to provide better telecommunications links will need to be reviewed to ensure the roll-out to older-age communities is appropriate.

Healthcare services in most developed countries have strategies to better manage information. These usually include better access for consumers. In some areas such as Queensland there has been a significant investment in tele-health infrastructure that may have further potential benefits for seniors in regions.

Other innovations include 'smart homes' wired with sensors and intelligent systems that will care for their occupants. These include sensors linked to software that will know our care regimes, provide reminders and prompts, learn and understand our behaviours, and provide alerts of adverse events such as falls or wandering (Soar et al, in press). A requirement for smart homes is similarly broadband communication links that would also provide access for learning and innovation.

## **Research**

Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say there is little research that explores what older people themselves want and need to learn, and that most of the research is based on what others believe is necessary (p.273). The research we are beginning in the Wide Bay-Burnett and Sunshine Coast regions is very much along the lines of what older people say they need.

A series of focus groups and workshops with stakeholders concerned about these issues has been conducted over the past 18 months in the Wide Bay Burnett region. Participants were drawn from Divisions of General Practice, aged services providers, tertiary education providers, municipal government, and local offices of state and federal government agencies.

The workshops identified the following issues:

- harnessing the ideas, knowledge, and enterprising capabilities of the region's seniors;
- designing a learning and innovation incubation process for seniors at the regional scale, with links to universities, that will generate economic and social outcomes of practical benefit to the region, the individual, and the universities;
- dissemination of 'good practice' in relation to regional approaches to the productive ageing; and
- models of information management and technology assistance and the development of tools and methods to enhance the independence of the aged

Proposals for specific projects included:

1. Knowledge audit of seniors
2. Community information portal
3. Dissemination of good practice for productive ageing
4. Models for information management and technology
  - a. patient data systems that can be held by the client and shared (e-health and allied matters)
  - b. RFID tags for medication for aged and mental health
5. Technology demonstration centre
6. "Homemaker centre" for technology
7. Demonstration/information sessions with hands-on, self-service access, user-friendly, multicultural, specialty groups
8. Developing sustainable model for home monitoring
9. Falls prevention/management
10. Monitoring
11. Medication monitoring/management

This research is continuing with further workshops to scope and evaluate achievable projects that have a high chance of enhancing the productive participation of the region's seniors. This research will seek to explore the structural and behavioural aspects associated with increased senior participation in university education, research and innovation, including course design and delivery methods.

## **Conclusions**

Whilst ageing is a concern to governments around the world, including Australia's federal, state and local governments the impacts are likely to be felt much more strongly in regional communities that have much higher concentrations of this population cohort. Without innovative forward planning the economic outcomes for some regional communities will be bleak. An approach proposed in this paper is to view seniors as a potentially positive asset through providing means for enterprise. Essential infrastructure is access to education, high-speed internet access and creating a culture of innovation. Universities with campuses in regional areas have a key role to play and communities will look to them for leadership. Developing an approach in consultation with seniors and their community organisations will enhance the sustainability of the universities of the regions as a whole.

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## **9.Connecting scholarship to places: human capital, learning, enterprising and an ethical approach to communities**

**Steve Garlick and Victoria Palmer**  
**University of the Sunshine Coast**

### **Abstract:**

Universities have a responsibility to foster human capital, learning, and enterprising outcomes that impact positively on society and the environment within the regional communities in which they are located. In the past these were seen as essential aspects of how universities both contributed to and shaped the public good. This contribution and the ability of universities to be vehicles for critiquing and shaping the public good is currently constrained, however, by a neo-liberal paradigm that preferences rationalism, self-interest and competitiveness, and excludes processes of mutual dialogue and enterprising action by human capital that generates outcomes of meaningful worth for the community. To examine these issues, we discuss the importance of a relational ethic to underpin university engagement; an ethic that is based on Zygmunt Bauman's (1995) forms of togetherness. We propose that an ideal form of togetherness ought to underpin engagement processes and practices to move beyond the dilemmas of conditional funding. At the conclusion a proposed empirical exploration of these ethically-based engagement processes and objectives is outlined.

### **Introduction**

Writing in the Australian Financial Review in 2006, the Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University, Steven Schwartz, bemoaned the loss of moral purpose in the modern university saying the nature of public funding for universities caused them to scramble for private sources to remain competitive. This view, along with arguments that support a Higher Education Institution (HEI) 'third stream' funding agenda, triple-helix type Research and Development (R&D), and other 'partnership' arrangements of convenience suggests a conditional or consequential relationship between HEI funding, and the basis for an ethical approach by universities with their communities and approaches to their own viability.

This conditional and competitive view about universities and their ethical responsibilities is not the relational view of the public role of the university that Boyer (1996), Dewey (1956; 1961) and others had envisaged. In their views, education was about generating social benefits, developing ethical citizenry and ensuring communities had a moral character. Our argument is that a funding-

conditional approach to ethics by universities does not see the creation of human capital, research and innovation - the core business of the university – as powerful tools that can simultaneously generate ethical processes and community outcomes of substance, as well as enhance viability outcomes for the institution itself.

To examine the dilemma that conditional funding arrangements present for universities, we discuss the importance of a relational ethic to underpin university engagement. This is an ethic that is based on Zygmunt Bauman's (1995) forms of togetherness which he calls *being-with*, *being-aside* and *being-for*. It is the latter, *being-for*, that represents the ideal form of togetherness which ought to underpin the connection between universities, their scholarship, and place.

To move beyond the problem that funding presents for universities and how they engage with their student bodies and communities, we advocate for Bauman's *being-for* relation to take a centre place. This ideal is critically dependent on recognising the interrelationship between learning pedagogy, resulting human capital that has the skills to generate enterprising outcomes of meaningful value, and the importance of ethical values and principles which can incorporate different spatial dimensions of communities. To provide empirical support to these claims, this paper concludes with a brief outline of a proposed exploration of these ethically-based engagement processes and objectives in a number of diverse community settings.

### **Literature and themes**

According to Boyer (1996: 15), "...the university has an obligation to broaden the scope of scholarship", by integrating discovery horizontally across disciplines and vertically by mutually engaging in wider dialogue with consequent practical application in the community. For Boyer, such engagement calls for the university to have clarity in its purpose and mission and a responsiveness that focuses on "...the issues of our day", outside of the structural need to have additional funded specific-purpose programs in place (1996: 17-20).

According to Benson and Harkavy (2002: 4), universities can best do that by "...optimally aligning all their components and resources to radically improve the democratic quality of life in their community". This extends on Dewey's ideas that as education sites, universities too must transform according to changes in social life (in Bellah et al., 1992). Encouraging citizen education meant for Dewey that participation, '[was] to make the work of the chaotic [city] metropolis intelligible to its least favoured and most disadvantaged citizens' (Addams cited in Bellah et al., 1992: 152). This participation, according to Dewey and Addams, was essential to 'a good society' (Bellah et al., 1992). Thus, universities too were essential to developing a good society.

In this respect, one of the goals of education, indeed public education, is for it to be transformative and deliberative, to make life intelligible in this somewhat chaotic global age. In view of this, one of the primary principles that ought to underpin university and community engagement, then, is that community participation ought to be oriented toward the creation of a good society, or in other words, a public good. Such learning ought not to be exclusive and out of reach to those at the margins of society, which the decrease in government funding of universities increases the possibility of.

Unfortunately, the relationship between universities and conditional funding sources has increased and is reflected in their transformation. It is, however, a transformation that sadly does not seem to be responding to changes in social life, but rather it is one responding to changes in economic life. Steven Schwartz's claim that 'universities are not public goods that require government subsidies...[and that] higher education can be financed privately' (2006: 3) are worrying considerations. Those at the margins, those in the middle, find it harder and harder to engage with public education.

The more that a competitive, business logic underpins university funding the more that university engagement with its student and community populace begins to take on the appearance of a utilitarian agenda which disregards spatial uniqueness. Majoritarian considerations reign and in this climate universities become tied to accountability measures and project development that reflects the needs of funding bodies over the communities of which they are a part. The connectivity of scholarship to the places within which it takes part is being lost and we ask, "do universities know what the common, public or shared goods of their regions are"? Perhaps these are being imposed in top-down approaches whereby those in positions of power express and define these matters for them?

In this neo-liberal environment where the values of competition, efficiency and productivity dominate, universities fail the Boyer test. Forms of togetherness are fragmented in terms of the connection between scholarship, place and ethical outcomes. The question raised by Schwartz (2006: 3) about benefits universities offer to society and his idea that they can foster human liberty and freedom introduces a problematic convergence of values and principles. It sees a liberal philosophy that has been co-opted by neo-liberal economics used to guide the Australian public education system. In this context we might ask if Australians see these values and principles of liberty and freedom as being central to the public good, if this is so then we might further ask "where did our public good go"?

### **Where did our public good go?**

"Knowledge is no longer an immobile solid; it has been liquefied. It is actively moving in all the currents of society itself".

John Dewey. 1956. *The Child and Curriculum and The School and Society*.

University and regional community engagement is premised on certain values and principles that are said to foster dialogue, innovation, mutual participation and learning critical to the success of engagement. But more than this, Boyer (1996), and Benson and Harkavy's (2002) views embody an assumption that universities facilitate scholarship and learning whereby educators relate with people who are genuine seekers of knowledge. Indeed, although it seems an ironic position for him to present, Schwartz (2006: 4) too suggests that 'students learn by being a part of an ethical community'. Universities are not simply 'drive-through mobility factories,' they shape the currents within which knowledge moves in society in Dewey's sense of the term.

In these respects, universities reflect places where social practices ensue that can foster ethical communities (Isaacs 1998; Sunderland & Graham 1998). Communities are not value-free places where social institutions such as universities can locate themselves and assume students are part of ethical communities. Ethical communities must be fostered, worked at, critically engaged with and they are certainly not places of conditionality. Palmer's (2001; 2006a; 2006b) previous use of the term ethical communities has highlighted the importance of shared values and principles developed through conversations, deliberation and participation by community members. Her work also illustrates the problematic of value convergence on maintaining a commitment to a public or common good.

Contrary to Schwartz's vision of ethical communities, Terry Cooper (1997:11) articulates that ethical communities are 'multi-logical (in that they can incorporate more than just an economic logic), dialogical (conversation and relational formed), heterogenous, they do not have an all encompassing tradition, they are reflective, analytic, involved and open'. This is contrasted for Cooper (1997: 10) with moral communities where 'norms are imposed, codes for behaviour are given based on pre-existing traditions, law and order is imposed to deal with chaos, homogeneity is favoured, they are authoritative, devolved, closed and bounded'. For us, Schwartz's vision is a moral community one where the opportunity for universities to contribute to the public good is closed off.

Universities were once considered places where the contribution to a common and public good was integral to scholarship, and so the idea of a social practice pursued over time with a goal and purpose in mind is fitting to understanding Boyer's (1996) scholarship of engagement, and Benson & Harkavy's (2002) goals of university-community engagement. Indeed, Schwartz (2006: 4) too, in spite of claiming support for private funding of universities, supports the notion that education ought to have purpose and that the purpose is to develop ethical behaviour. To provide a 'basic sense of ethics,' as Schwartz (2006: 4) contends, requires more than simply involvement and participation that generates economics. Universities need to be places that encourage enterprising learning

that fosters a broad-based human capital with not only a conscience for 'being', but a purpose for 'doing'.

According to Garlick et al., (2007: 33), 'the *process* of enterprising is one of working together in groups with complementary and reinforcing skills and knowledge with the objective of achieving a better result in the community with the attributes at hand'. Being enterprising in this sense is not about a profit-driven logic guiding practices, but rather a sense of moral and ethical purpose that is related to the needs of the spatial localities within which universities are situated.

All four ideas (Boyer 1996, Issacs 1998, Benson and Harkavy 2002 and Garlick et al 2007) hold that higher education institutions are central to a particular vision of a public good, but it is a vision that Sunderland & Graham (2006) assert has been eroded by economic rationalism. Because economic rationalism is dependent on Bauman's (1995) ideas about relations which are *aside* or *with*, universities that incorporate conditional funding arrangements into their agendas will not be able to articulate 'a vision of what they are trying to achieve for society, and to live up to it' (Schwartz 2006: 4).

### **Ethics beyond profits**

Being ethical is not simply about ensuring that our consequences provide a good outcome, the processes by which outcomes are achieved also count and this is why we have made criticisms of conditional funding being connected to university engagement approaches. Certainly, one must advocate for any ethics that works toward benefits that develop a public good, however, a critical and ethical stance also means that universities have a role to play in evaluating and shaping how that public good comes about. Schwartz (2006) for example presents a vision of a public good shaped by human liberty and freedom, but such values appear to be more applicable to the United States more than Australia. Scholarship ought to advocate for the kinds of togetherness that can foster ethical engagements and not merely become as Schwartz (2006) rightly points out a production factory of corporate sponsored research.

Ethical communities and ethical engagement are thus premised on Bauman's (1995) form of togetherness called, *being-for*. He describes the distinction between *being-aside* and *being-with* as one where *being-aside* others merely take on the qualities of person-like entities which are mostly seen as 'just on the side'. Funding partners simply interested in products reflect this kind of relation. This might also be called simple 'involvement,' a type of togetherness that is characteristic of top-down engagement approaches where the goal of engagement is predefined, often tied to consultative purposes or funding conditional arrangements.

From this state of *being-aside*:

Certain entities are picked up by shifting attention and made into persons. From *being-aside* the selected others move into a modality of *being-with*...[however] *being-with* is still a kind of mis-meeting of incomplete beings, of deficient selves where no more of the self tends to be deployed in the encounter than the topic at hand demands; and no more of the other is highlighted than the topic-at-hand permits (Bauman 1995: 49-50).

In a neo-liberal context, universities engage in mis-meetings of people in their communities, certain entities are picked up and they are made into persons but nothing more is demanded of them than the topic at hand permits. Again, this is often shaped by the conditions of funding arrangements where accountability requirements demand people are involved, but it is as Bauman notes, 'nothing more than the topic at hand permits'. Do we call this mutual engagement? This is contrasted by Bauman with *being-for*, which is

[a] leap from isolation to unity; yet not towards a fusion that mystics dream of shedding the burden of identity, but to an alloy whose precious qualities depend fully on the preservation of its ingredients alterity and identity (Bauman 1995: 51).

Although it is critical to acknowledge here that Bauman (1995) does not apply his ideas of togetherness to situations that he foresees as probable, he advocates rather that the leap and transcendence to this kind of beingness is coincidental, perhaps even serendipitous. Our proposition remains that certain social settings do in fact foster *being-for* relations and this social setting can be universities (Palmer 2006a).

Regional communities are a good milieu for universities to achieve ethical engagements that foster a sense of ethical communities or togetherness objectives because they readily enable the horizontal and vertical connections that Boyer spoke about. However, much of the spatial location of university campuses that has occurred in Australia over the past decade (Garlick, 2000), and their attempts at retrofitting principles of engagement have not achieved what they might because of an unwillingness to preference public objectives ahead of institutional, or entity-based, objectives. The tension is between institutional objectives which are oriented toward a commonly shared public good and funding-conditional objectives oriented toward private interest.

At this end of the engagement spectrum, institutions simply seek local support for their global aspirations and income generation from local student enrolments, local research and consultancy partnerships. They emphasise structural determinants such as 'partnerships', 'joined-up government', 'bottom-up-regionalism', and the introduction of new programs (Bishop et al., 2006). Such relationships simply emphasise 'involvement' based on institutional processes and governance that are top-down, ignore community knowledge, capacities and diversity, compromise intended outcomes, and emphasise 'paid activity' (Skara,

2003). They do not preference an enterprising human capital approach to education that shares in Dewey's original ideas and intentions about learning at the community level (Garlick et. al., 2007).

The connection between taking an ethical and an entity-free human capital approach to community engagement that emphasises enterprising outcomes of purposeful worth rather than a structural approach, and university viability has not yet been made clear. There is still a fixation with competitiveness being the only paradigm for institutional success in engagement relationships (see OECD, 2007). This leaves the 'big questions' in communities – global warming, environmental sustainability, security, health and well-being, immigration, affordable housing, poverty, cultural diversity and so on to one side in HEI engagement relations simply because they are not seen as adding to institutional viability.

### **Conclusions: A study of community diversity**

If there is one thing that current neo-liberal free-market arrangements have fostered it is choice, and in this context universities do continue to face choices about the sort of public good that they wish to contribute to. The connection of scholarship (learning, research and innovation) to places is critical in this process and by this it means that engagement must be a *relational practice* that concentrates on the needs and aspirations of community members and their environment. Engagement must have relevance to the regions of which the university is a part and not simply become a top-down process of 'involvement' implemented by institutions to create third-streams of funding.

A relational ethic that can incorporate the knowledge needs of individuals, community social needs and provide for human capital outcomes that enable real and meaningful outcomes of worth is the foundation on which regional and community engagement programs in universities ought to develop. This does not mean simply providing a statement of values and principles that are statically represented in university policy documents, but it requires ethical evaluation of whether those values and principles are shared, in a mutual way, by the communities and regions of which universities are a part. On the question posed by Schwartz about what public good universities seek to shape, we concur. We do not, however, believe that private funding will foster the kind of public good that is premised on Bauman's ethical relation of *being-for*.

Universities are at a crossroads of opportunity whereby they can be critical incubators that facilitate ethical processes and outcomes and generate human capital that has a capacity to be enterprising in community engagement and regional development in these ethical ways. They cannot allow standard entities (business firms and institutions) to take precedence over their responsibility to

build 'creative associations in special places' (Garlick 1998). The cannot allow an economic logic to dominate that holds at the centre of itself a dualism between economic and societal issues, including the environment (Sunderland & Graham 2006).

Values and principles are central to ethical communities of which students ought to indeed be a part. These are only committed to when a *being-for* ethic, rather than a utilitarian agenda is employed. This means seeing localities, and people within them, as they are and not attempt to impose certain visions and norms on them that are not likely to be sustained in the future. Some places where our research is seeing the bottom-up approach to ethical communities taking place includes:

- Community activism in response to top-down government infrastructure decisions;
- Planned residential arena such as gated communities, retirement villages and master planned suburbs;
- Indigenous community;
- Innovative business networks
- Virtual communities and activism through internet usage; and
- International communities.

In this work a research team is concerned to explore the relationship between values, ethics and learning processes in various contexts, and how intended outcomes are shaped by knowledge and the role of higher education in processes of engagement. In this way it is possible to map how a *being-for* ethical relation can underpin a vision of universities and their commitments to contributing to a public good.

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