

11.5 Queensland University of Technology

Overview

QUT, situated in Brisbane, was established as a university in 1989 and now has nearly 40,000 students spread across more than 300 programmes. Of these, 22 per cent of total enrolments are at postgraduate level and 13 per cent of students come from overseas.

Total onshore EFTSL in 2005 was 27,347 with 15,946 at the Gardens Point Campus, 9,611 at the Kelvin Grove Campus and 1,790 at the Carseldine Campus. It now has an annual budget of \$520 million.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ As at 18 February 2008 further background concerning Queensland University of Technology could be obtained from the QUT web site at:

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The QUT Student Guild is established under the *Queensland University of Technology Act 1998*. It is a body corporate with a common seal and it is owned and operated by and for students. Under its Constitution, which is approved by QUT Council, the Guild is required to provide an annual report on its activities and finances to the QUT Student Guild Council and to QUT Council.

The Guild Council, which is the Guild's governing body, has 33 elected members (down from 46 in 2005), and comprises:

- Executive Members - President, General Secretary, Directors *ex officio* in the areas of Academic Rights, Disability, Indigenous Students, International Students, Sports and Recreation, Welfare, Women's Services, an Environment Convenor and co directors Queer Services;
- Clubs and Societies Convenor;
- Faculty Representatives; and
- Specialist representatives for - mature age students, part-time and external students, and postgraduate students.

Over the years the Guild has had rather a chequered performance history, including an alleged period of insolvency, although the details could not be confirmed. It has contributed approximately \$8 million towards a planned development at the Gardens Point Campus. The Guild now has approximately \$11 million invested.¹⁹⁷

Total income from compulsory amenities and services fees (ASF) across all QUT Campuses in 2005 is believed to have been \$6.65 million. The Guild, which previously had a budget of \$12 million per annum, lost about \$6 million in ASF funding.

QUT is assisting with the shortfall by providing \$400,000 for each of the first three years, then \$300,000 and \$200,000 for the fourth and fifth years respectively. The Guild's reserves have reduced from around \$12 million to \$11 million in the last twelve months and it is budgeting for a small loss in 2007.

Since the introduction of VSU, the Guild continues to provide advice, assistance and advocacy to its members, as well as a range of commercial and non-commercial services including catering and sport.

<http://www.qut.edu.au>

¹⁹⁷ As at 18 February 2008 further background on the QUT Student Guild could be obtained from the Guild's web site at:

<http://www.guildonline.net/home/home.php>

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Summary of VSU Impact at QUT

In a summary, the impact of VSU at QUT on student services provided by the QUT Student Guild is assessed as moderate due to a reduction of some \$6m in revenue from the ASF.

Detailed Impact on QUT Student Guild

The Guild began its planning for the possible introduction of the VSU in 2004. Following the actual VSU introduction in 2006, it continued with a membership model which is free, but students are now required to register.

The Guild reviewed its operations, reduced staff and services, reduced or discontinued funding for various clubs and societies, cut back on social functions, increased prices in some areas and looked for other opportunities to generate income.

Membership provides access to special interest activities and to a special discount card costing \$33 with benefits at a number of commercial outlets on and off campus. Approximately 20 per cent of students have taken a membership.

The following table summarises some of the levels and types of engagement of students in sport and fitness activities.

Table 11.5.1

Engagement of QUT Students in Sport and Fitness Activities 2005 through 2007

Area	2005	2006	2007
GP Fitness Centre # members	598	582	637
GP Fitness Centre # casual visits	1,860	1,632	964
Aquatic Centre # members	677	1,258	1,318
Aquatic Centre # casual visits	14,253	13,392	13,798
Social sport # participants	~ 340	~ 780	~ 500 sem 1
NUG # participants	300 Cairns	385 Sunshine Coast	80 Gold Coast 10 Sydney
AUG # participants	375 Brisbane	160 Adelaide	Expect 300 Gold Coast

It can be seen from Table 11.5.1 above there are different changes in levels of student participation over the years concerned.

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Funding for various peak bodies has been reviewed. The current situation is:

- AUS is paid for by the University;
- NUS and ACUMA are paid for by the Guild; and
- CAPA has been cut.

The QUT Guild's main facilities/services include the following:

- Management of the Joint Sports Centre at Gardens Point Campus. The Centre was completed in 1988 and is owned and maintained by the University, with the Guild contributing 50 per cent of the construction costs. It contains:
 - 25 metre six lane heated indoor swimming pool; and
 - two squash courts

Income from Centre patrons is used to meet operating costs and any surplus is shared between the University and the Guild. Gross floor area is 1,796m², asset replacement value of approximately \$4.7 million and a written down depreciated value of approximately \$2.6 million;

- academic advocacy, support and advice;
- academic gown hire;
- bars (including new wine bar);
- café and other food outlets (Dusk licensed café/bar, lolly shop, Subway, teppanyaki);
- campus shop;
- child care centres;
- clubs and societies;
- elite sports scholarships (in conjunction with the University);
- food voucher scheme;
- indigenous, international, disabled, queer, women's, social justice - advice and representation;
- free legal service;
- merchandise central;
- newsagency and post office;
- orientation week activities;
- parents' room;
- phone bill assistance;
- photocopying;

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- safe sex kits;
- second hand bookshops;
- sport – social, clubs, tours, awards, scholarships;
- student development courses (e.g. responsible service of alcohol); and
- student magazines.

Space is leased from the University under favourable lease conditions. Its total area is approximately 3,616m² comprising:

- commercial space – 3,028m² of which:
 - 1,073m² is used for fitness centres; and
 - 1,955m² is used for travel agency, second hand bookshop, food outlets/bars, campus shops and a news agent;
- Guild Services – 588m²;

The main negative impacts of VSU appear to have been:

- loss of \$6 million per annum from the ASF;
- increases in the cost of some services (for example, a 12 month student gym/group fitness membership has risen from \$390 in 2005 to \$480 in 2007, a 24 per cent increase, while the charge for the same service to the general public has risen from \$490 to \$559, a 14 per cent increase);
- reduction of staff:
 - sport - approximately 28 per cent (from a total of 29 down to 21);
 - other services - one of only two in advocacy, the Queer and Women's support officers, the events officer, and two administrative personnel;
- reduction in funding for sporting clubs and societies (from \$97,280 in 2005 to a budget of \$78,630 in 2007);
- reduction in funding for inter-university sport/university games (from \$40,000 in 2005 to nil in 2007);
- cutback in the Legal Service to once a fortnight and funding reduced from \$25,000 to \$11,000;
- reduction in athletes participating in inter-university sport/university games (from 675 in 2005 to approximately 400 in 2007);
- no longer fund high cost events which were used to market the Guild;
- significant loss in the bar resulting from bands not being employed and attracting patrons;
- student magazines – publication cut back and circulation has dropped;

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- equity issues have arisen in allocating the available funds; and
- reduction in social engagements impacts on general socialisation and sense of community resulting in few volunteers for a range of activities from social to community support.

The main positive impacts of VSU appear to have been:

- It forced the organisation to conduct a critical review of its operations;
- The Guild's operations have moved to a user-pays system; and
- Staff are becoming more multi-skilled and work across multiple areas.

Some considerations for the future are:

- the University is supportive but looks to commercial providers for non-academic services (e.g. the Guild will have the opportunity to bid for the commercial spaces to be available in the new sports facility at Kelvin Grove);
- commercial receipts are similar to pre-VSU but there has been a dramatic drop in revenue from the ASF which is presently being ameliorated to a degree by funding from the University. It is not anticipated that this will be an on-going commitment;
- further commercial opportunities/tenancies are being sought;
- the Guild has lost some space and will have to negotiate for new space when the South-East Precinct development at Gardens Point is completed. The Guild has contributed about \$8 million towards this project which was originally estimated to cost \$32 million but is now of the order of \$150 million; and
- staff continue to operate under a good deal of stress and uncertainty.