

REF: DVC_RES/2010/Correspondance/Letters/L.2211

11 November 2010

RDC Enquiry
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003

ATTN: Yvette Goss

Dear Secretariat,

The Australian National University response to the Rural Research and Development Corporations Productivity Commission Draft Report

The ANU is pleased to provide a submission to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on RDCs.

As discussed in our previous submission, the ANU has a strong research base in regional and rural studies. Our researchers have expertise in topics varying from crop enhancement studies to natural resource management and social policy. The Fenner School of Environment and Society is strongly linked to this research area and is a key player in maintaining research capacity through multi-disciplinary research training related to rural and regional issues. The ANU is also host to The National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia (NIRRA) which links researchers from public and private institutes with industry bodies and government. The ANU's expertise in rural and regional issues is available for stakeholders in the RDCs to use in any proposed incremental evolution of the program.

We would like to offer strong support to the outlined principles for future operation of the RDC program. Care should be taken to ensure that innovative, cross-sectoral research is included within the RDC model through an enhanced 'public good' model. This does not exclude sector-specific, production-oriented research. Innovation can occur within basic or applied research, and indeed these are complementary steps within the R&D system. As such it is vital that both are recognized by the RDC model. A public-good model would include social and institutional aspects of rural and regional research, which with the demise of LWA are currently missing from the portfolio. We would also emphasize the need to consider future R&D capacity and allow for greater investment in human capital through PhD funding and post-doctoral positions. International collaboration could also be better facilitated through fellowship schemes.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this submission further or if ANU's expertise in this area can further assist the Productivity Commission in its inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Lawrence Cram

Professor Lawrence Cram
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Vice-President

T +61 2 6125 8487
F +61 2 6125 5955
E dvc@anu.edu.au

Canberra ACT 0200 Australia
www.anu.edu.au