



MACQUARIE  
UNIVERSITY



# It Takes a Village: Engaging the Community in International Education

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Australian Government

Australian Education International



[www.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.newcastle.edu.au)

# Engaging international students and local communities

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# Newcastle, Australia

- The city of Newcastle is approximately 190km north of Sydney
- The University of Newcastle serves Newcastle and surrounding areas; approximately 400,000 people
- Newcastle City has approximately 142,000 residents; only 11.35% from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (this figure includes international students)
- Newcastle residents have limited exposure to cultural difference (approximately half that of other large centres across Australia)

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2006*

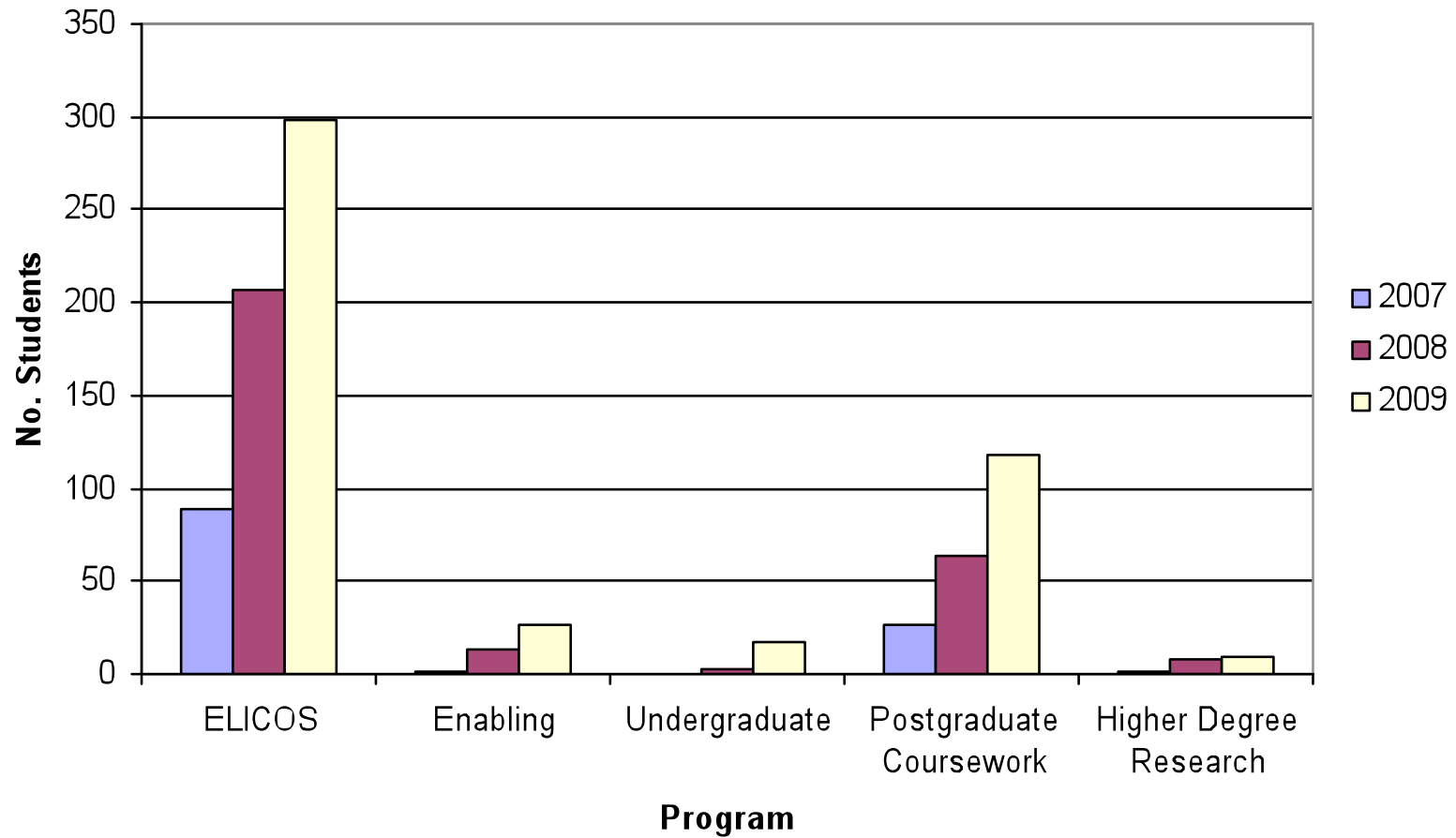


# The University of Newcastle

- The University of Newcastle's main campus is located in the Newcastle local government area
- This campus is culturally diverse with students from 100 countries represented
- Prior to 2007 most Muslim students at Newcastle came from Indonesia and Malaysia
- In 2007 there were increased enrolments of students from Saudi Arabia



# Saudi Student Enrolments –2007-2009



# Understanding Islam Resources

- Welcome to Newcastle: Information for Muslim Students and Families

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Equity%20and%20Diversity/Documents/Welcome-To-Newcastle-Muslim.pdf>

- Understanding Islam: brochure for the local community with information about Muslim beliefs and practices

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Equity%20and%20Diversity/Documents/Understanding%20Islam.pdf>

- Focusing on Islam: Answers to Frequently asked Questions': web based resource with more detailed information about Muslim beliefs and practices

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Equity%20and%20Diversity/Documents/Focusing%20on%20Islam.pdf>



# Understanding Islam Resources

- Teaching International Muslim Students in Health Areas

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Equity%20and%20Diversity/Documents/Teaching%20International%20Muslim%20Students%20Health.pdf>

- Challenges for International Muslim Students in Social and Academic Environments

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/students/current/islaminhealth/being-a-muslim-student.html>

- Bridging the Gap: a collaborative project with the Faculty of Health to support the work of clinical supervisors of international students who are undertaking placements



# Community Connections

- Volunteer program – international students build friendships and develop networks with members of the local community
- Volunteers receive training
- Operating for 13 years – students and families matched by coordinator
- Volunteers and students have weekly contact
- Recruited more than 1, 000 volunteers from the local community including staff and students of the University





# Cultural Connections

- Weekly program for the partners of international students
- Participants meet weekly over lunch to talk, share, interact and hear from guest speakers
- Creates a forum for participants to share aspects of their home culture with others
- Helps overcome issues of isolation and loneliness
- Builds stronger connections to the University and wider community
- Provides information and practical support
- Creates and enhances friendships

# Muslim Women's Group

- This program meets the needs of women who choose not to attend the Cultural Connections program because men are present
- Program provides English conversation and playgroup for young children
- Meets weekly for two hours. Participants are from Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia
- Program Coordinator is a member of the local Muslim community; four non-Muslim volunteers from the local community attend the program to practise English with the participants in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere



# The University of Newcastle Experience



- Education relates to more than the classroom
- Universities are part of the broader community
- Distinctive cultural aspects need to be recognised and celebrated in informed, not naïve, ways
- Need to work at and evaluate initiatives

# Student Engagement in Australia

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## Australian 10 Point Action Plan

- Promote Safety
- Work with Missions to Streamline Reporting
- Cooperate with Authorities
- Advocate with State Authorities re Travel
- Expand information provided
- Reinforce Strategies for Integration
- Cooperate with Authorities in Source Countries
- Enhance Campus Support
- Encourage Student Leadership
- Engage in ESOS Review

## U.S. Campuses and Integration

- Classes and Programs
- Campus Clubs and Activities
- Exchange (Different Population)
  - Orientation of US students
  - Recruitment to Sustain the Exchange
- Service Learning

## U.S. to Australia The Challenge of Preparing Students:

- Include Information in Publicity Materials
- Raise Issues at Orientation
- Expect Participation in Host University Activities
  - Study Abroad Fairs
  - Events
- Structure Integrated Academic Programs

## Diversity and International Exchange

- Initiatives Underway to Diversify the Student Body Going Abroad
- Host Country Diversity and the Study Abroad Experience
- Preparing Students and Preparing Partners to Send and Receive Diverse Student Bodies



# Questions

[www.calstate.edu](http://www.calstate.edu)