



Hochschul
Rektoren
Konferenz

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Welcome to the Conference

***German – Australian Conference on Higher Education Financing
Berlin 24 – 25 October 2003***

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Your Excellency, dear Senators, Staatsekretaere, Presidents, Vice-Chancellors, and Conference participants

I am delighted that you have all come to this Conference, that you have all taken time out of your full schedules to come and discuss one of the important policy issues of the decade, namely the most appropriate models for funding university education.

I would particularly like to welcome all our Australian experts to this Conference and to Berlin! Your visit indicates both the importance and timeliness of the issues we will be discussing, as well as the strength of the Australian-German university relationship. I am particularly pleased that three organizations have come together to design and organize this event:

- The Hochschulrektorenkonferenz
- The Australian Embassy Berlin
- The Australia Centre Berlin.

I hope that at the end of the Conference our three organizations will not just congratulate ourselves and go our separate ways, but rather continue our collaboration into the future, so as to keep seeking solutions to the complex set of university funding issues in Australia and in Germany.

With globalization the overall costs of university education are becoming quite similar, whether the universities are in Europe, in Australia, in America or in Asia. Also, the proportion of the population engaged in university education is approaching similar levels, at around 30% or above. There is no doubt we are all operating in a climate of ***mass university education***, and expensive university education at that.

On average the cost per student per year would be of the order of Euro 10,000. For Germany's 2 million university students this comes to some **20 Billion Euros**, whereas in Australia the cost of university education adds up to around **12 Billion Australian Dollars**.

Moreover these figures will be increasing from year to year. Hence there is some considerable urgency in moving away from government-only funding to other models, which include the students themselves, their parents, and the private sector more broadly.

I would also like to touch on international education. At a recent Conference in Sydney, the bi-annual German-Australian Business Conference held a few weeks ago, Professor Max Huber, the Vice-President of DAAD, who is also a participant at our Conference, provided a statistic which I find quite extraordinary. Professor Huber has calculated that currently 2 Million university students annually are ***international students***, that is, they are studying at universities outside their countries of origin. This is a number much the same as the number of all university students in Germany. Hence again we are talking of an activity that costs around 20 Billion Euro.

Of course this large amount of money does not actually change hands, as in most cases of international education full fees are not charged or paid. But in Australia international education has become a major source of income for the universities, and at a national level it has become a major export earner, calculated at around **5 Billion dollars**.

I am pleased that we shall discuss international education in this Conference, and looking at its relevance to the university funding issue in general.

Let me again thank you all for participating at our Conference and wish you a most productive and pleasant two days of discussion and exchange. At this point I would like to hand over to Her Excellency, Ambassador Pamela Fayle, our host for this conference. The Australia Centre Berlin is extremely grateful for the support of the Australian Embassy, and particularly Ambassador Fayle, in hosting this important Conference.

Thank you.

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