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TW:jm

14 October, 2016

Review of Local Government Rating System  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box K35  
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

To Whom It May Concern,

Southern Cross University would like to make a submission to the Review of Local Government Rating Systems.

Southern Cross University makes a significant social contribution to the regions it serves. The on-campus student accommodation provides an opportunity for rural and regional students to be able to access discounted accommodation to support their on-campus studies. Often these student are coming from remote areas and disadvantaged backgrounds and would be unable to do so if the accommodation was not available or was not affordable.

The University's NSW campuses are located at Lismore and Coffs Harbour. At Coffs Harbour, 67.4% of our Australian students are the first in their family to go to University; 38.4% are low SES and 4.4% are of Indigenous heritage. In Lismore, 59% are first in their family to go to University; 18.3% are low SES and 4.5% are of Indigenous heritage. The participation rates of these student groups are some of the highest in the country.

Upon graduation these students often return to their home communities and bring with them the economic multiplier effects of tertiary qualified individuals.

If the University no longer has the benefit of rate exemption in respect of its on-campus student accommodation facilities, the University would have little option but to pass on any increase in costs, via rates imposition, to the students which will have a direct impact on their ability to study at a tertiary level. Any imposition of additional base cost (such as rates), as mentioned above, would likely lead to an immediate reduction in demand for tertiary education in regional NSW and an overall weakening of the University's contribution to the region in both financial and social terms. This may also have flow-on implications to the opportunities currently available to low SES students in regional NSW.

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We do hope that the status of our on-campus student accommodation remains exempt from rates other than water and sewerage charges to enable us to continue to fulfil our responsibility defined by the ~~Southern Cross University Act~~ to provide education opportunities to the northern New South Wales community.

Yours sincerely,

**Travis Walker**  
Executive Director, Financial and Human Resources

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