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# Benefit from the alternative

Private tertiary institutions offer choice and diversity, writes **Keeli Cambourne**.

THE gap between public and private tertiary education has closed considerably during the past decade with a national accreditation scheme covering curriculum and the introduction of FEE-HELP.

With early specialisation in careers also now the norm rather than the exception, the range of programs and industry links offered by many private colleges and universities is attracting more students, the chief executive of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, Andrew Smith, says.

"Australia's private education and training sector offers quality, diversity and choice to students from Australia and around the world," Smith says.

"Many students choose private education and training because it offers the most diverse range of courses and study options available."

Smith says more than one in 10 higher-education qualifications in Australia is now awarded through a private institution. Last year ACPET estimated there were about 2 million students enrolled in private colleges in Australia.

"Students at private institutions come from all walks of life and include professionals looking to up-skill for better career opportunities, apprentices and school leavers looking for a career in a trade, tertiary students looking for an alternative to universities or international students looking

to enter the workforce with a set of job-ready skills," Smith says.

The University of Notre Dame, which has a campus in Sydney and two in Western Australia, offers bachelor degree courses in a range of areas including medicine, business, education and nursing.

As well as FEE-HELP for all its programs, courses such as nursing and education also have 100 per cent federally supported places, which are covered by HECS. Several units within the medical degree also have federal-level support.

The executive director at the University of Notre Dame, Mark Tannock, says for other courses at the institution – such as arts or business, for which fees are applicable – they are often equivalent to HECS and with access to FEE-HELP there is little difference in cost.

Tannock says, however, the biggest difference between a public university and a private tertiary institution such as Notre Dame is class sizes.

"Comparatively, class sizes at Notre Dame are reasonably small," he says. "Many people like the intimacy of a private university."

Industry experience is one of the key factors for students choosing to undertake further study through private institutions, Smith says.

"Many students say that private institutions deliver training that is more responsive to industry demands

and stands them in better stead for a career in their chosen industry," Smith says.

Since it started in 1982, the JMC Academy has had more than 10,000 graduates, who are now working globally in the entertainment technology industry on feature films, in recording studios, on music tours and in television production. It has campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The academy was the first private college in Australia to be accredited in the fields of audio engineering, digital television and digital multimedia and offers qualifications ranging from certificates to diplomas, advanced diplomas and degrees in association with the University of New England.

"We put a lot of effort into making sure our graduates have the business acumen they need as well as the creative skills," the chief executive of JMC Academy, George Markakis, says.

Smaller class sizes are also a drawcard for international students, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations says. It highlighted these benefits in relation to the International College of Management, Sydney, in its latest report, which praised the college's social integration and mentoring program involving Australian and international students.

*For a list of private tertiary institutions, see [acpet.edu.au](http://acpet.edu.au).*



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## Pye's star is just starting to rise

OBERON local, Mickey Pye has been selected as one of 20 finalists to compete in the 31st Star Maker final.

He will now prepare to battle it out for what is widely recognised as Australia's oldest and most prestigious music talent search, awarded in Tamworth on Sunday, January 17, 2010.

The 21-year-old's achievements include winning Aristocrat Entertainer of the Year 2009, the Maton Talent Search 2009 and graduating from the CMAA Australian College of Country Music in 2009. He has also recently released a video on the Country Music Channel to accompany his single, *Got the Feeling*.

Mickey spent his teenage years playing in bands and upon leaving school landed a job in radio. He was offered a scholarship to study popular music and performance at the JMC Academy in Sydney, where he has all but completed a Bachelor of Entertainment, majoring in guitar.

Mickey was raised on the music of Slim Dusty and Elvis Presley, but has developed his own style of country likened to the styles of Keith Urban, Brad Paisley and Toby Keith.

With past winners of Star Maker including country music legends and Golden Guitar Award recipients Lee Kernaghan, James Blundell, Beccy Cole, Keith Urban and Gina Jeffreys the star-making potential of the program is unquestioned.

Chairman of the 2010 Toyota Star Maker judging committee and Compass Brothers CEO, Graham Thompson, said that he is looking forward to the 2010 competition and has high hopes that another country music legend will materialise.

"Once again we have received numerous entries from a very talented group of emerging artists. Selecting a top 20 was a difficult task but we're confident that the finalists represent a great cross section of the country music industry."



**BRIGHT FUTURE:** Mickey Pye from Oberon has been selected as a finalist for the next Star Maker final.

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