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**Higher Education in Australia: If I
was going there, I wouldn't start
from here...**

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Overview

- Funding and Higher Education Policy
- Technological and pedagogical change
- Student demand and the Higher Education market
- How universities are responding
- Implications for jobs, industrial arrangements and structures



A brief history of Australian HE...

- 1970s - Abolition of Upfront Fees – Whitlam Government
- 1989 - Dawkins Reforms
 - Abolition of binary divide – Colleges of Advanced Education became universities
 - Introduction of HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) income contingent loans
- mid-90s - Cuts to funding under Howard government
- 2009 - Demand-Driven System signalled in 2009, came into effect in 2012
- 2014 - Government proposed full fee deregulation – and has been trying to find a way to back out since

Funding and Higher Education Policy

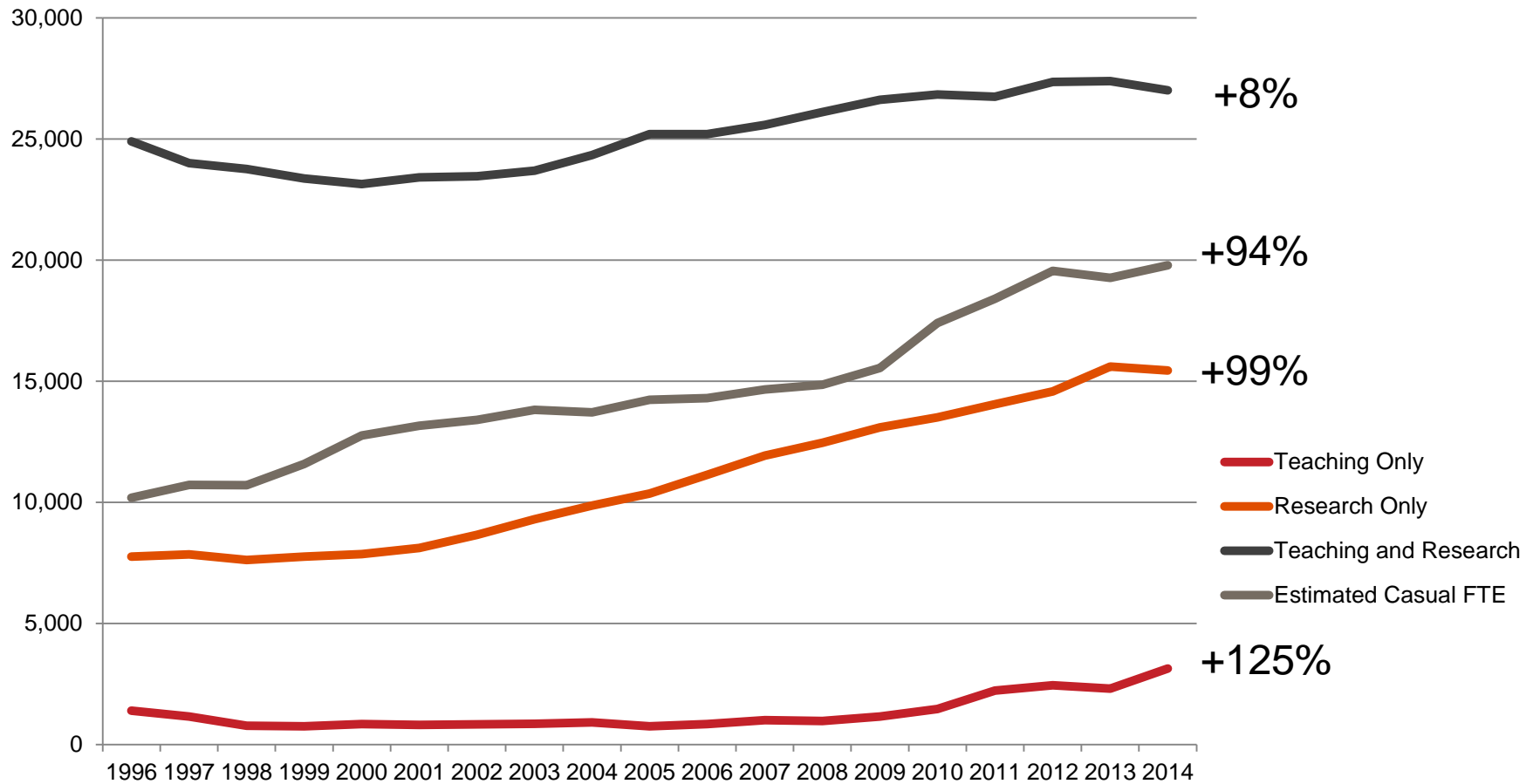
- Sector has grown enormously over last 20 years
- Outstanding student debt to Federal Government has become a political hot potato
- Usual global concerns about dumbing down, overexpansion etc. etc.
- Government looking for ways to reduce load on Federal Budget and address concerns on quality
- Generally, wages in HE have risen faster than funding, leading to pressure for greater productivity

Funding and Higher Education Policy

I expect this slide to say:

- Government will shift to roughly 50-50 split of student/government support
- Debt repayment thresholds reduced so graduates will pay back more quickly
- An efficiency dividend cut will be applied to university funding for the next 5 years
- There will be rewards for meeting performance targets on attrition, employment, Low SES students.

Staffing Trends



Technological and Pedagogical Change

Similar trends to elsewhere

– except that in Australia, there is much better acceptance of distance and online education as core part of system



Technological and Pedagogical Change

Basically, students want it all:

- School leavers want face-to-face teaching with a lot of support available
- But which they can choose to replace with online resources so they have flexibility to be able to work to support themselves
- Mature age students more likely to select online – again support and flexibility are key

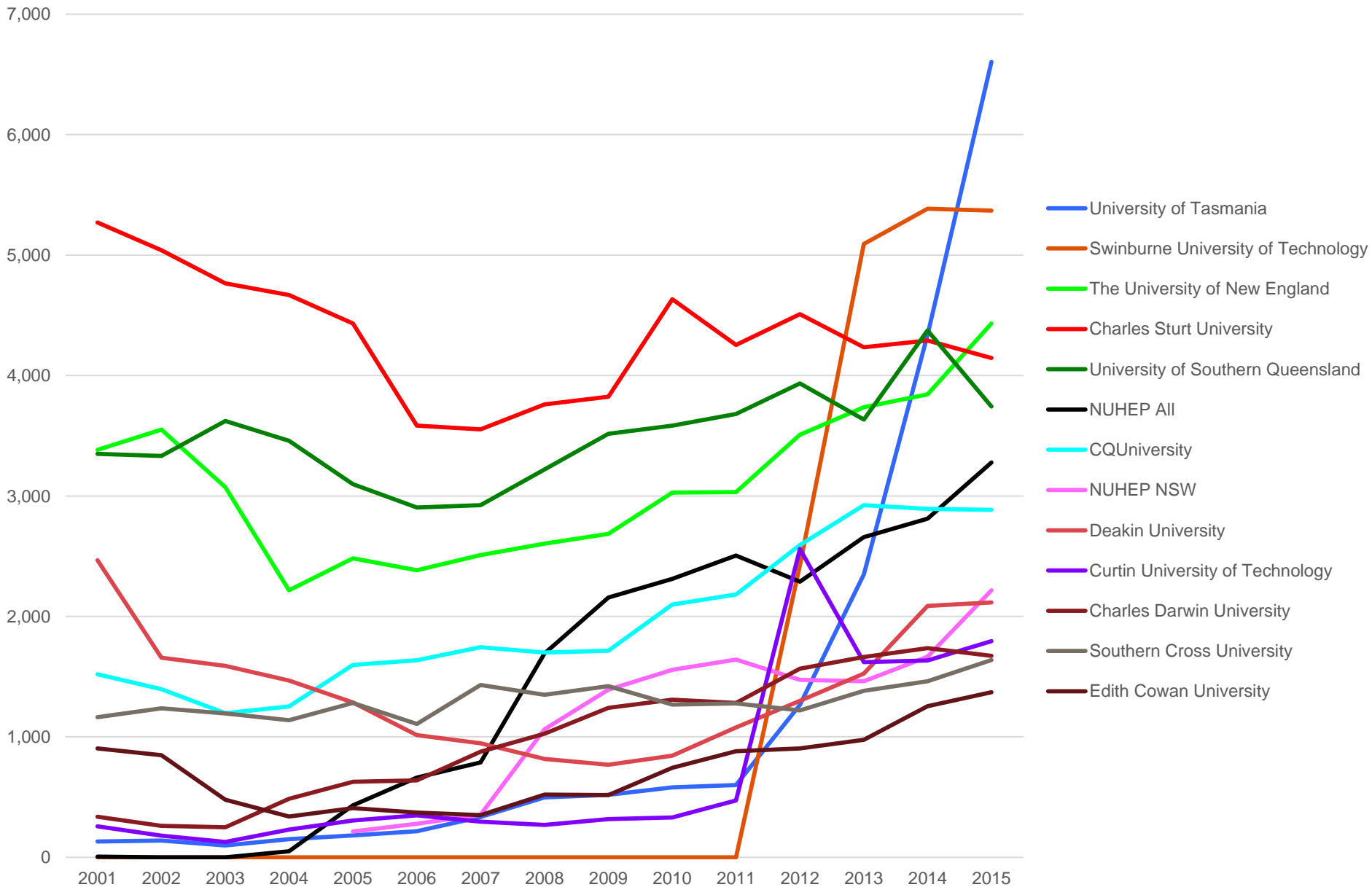
Technological and Pedagogical Change

- Changing pedagogy and regulatory expectations increasing need for more industrial approach to curriculum and materials development
 - This is not necessarily how we have developed our staff

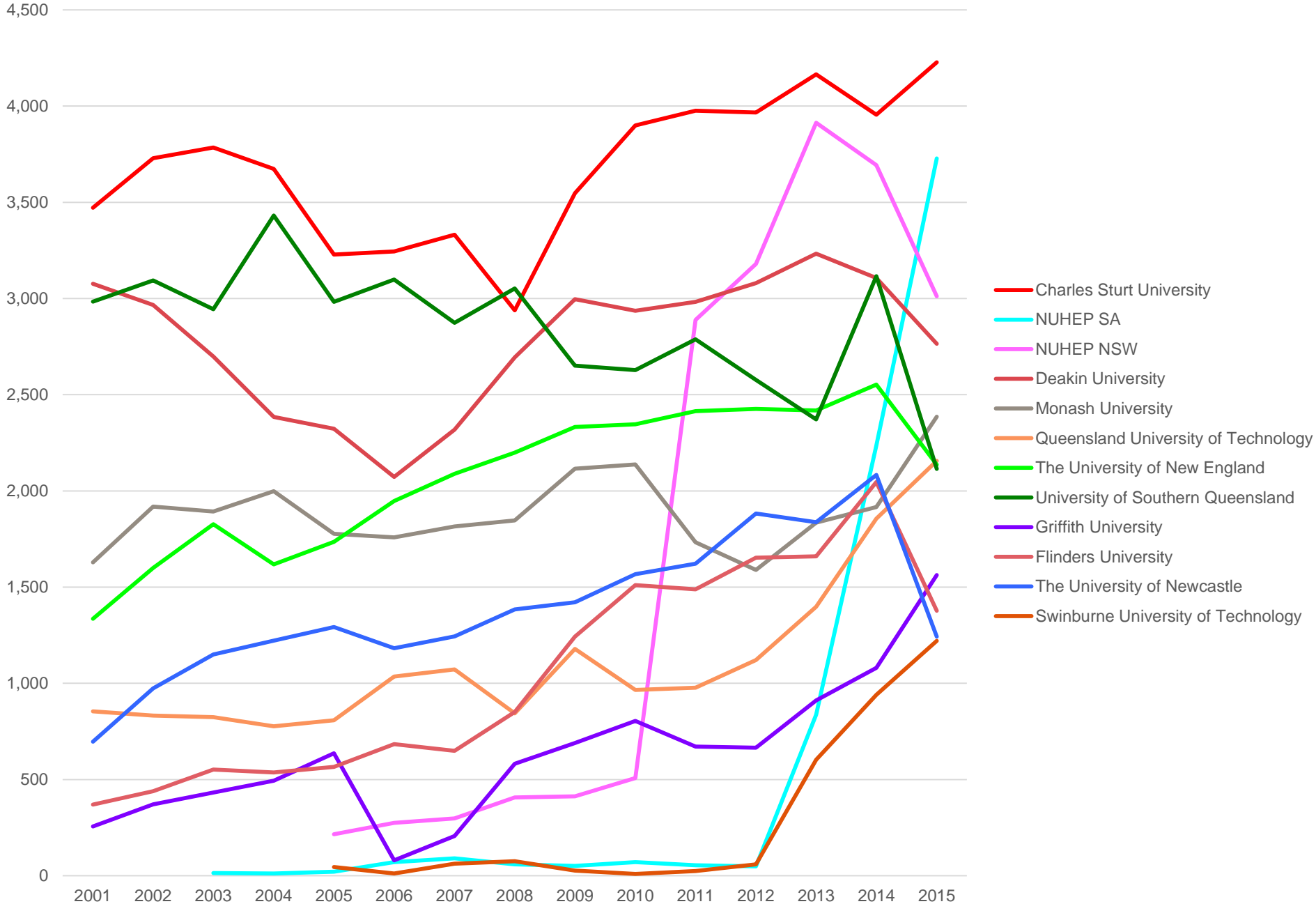
Student Demand and the HE Market

- Demand driven system has unleashed competitive spirit from universities
- Much more competition for students in all modes and geographies – most students now get their first or second preference
- Private providers now becoming key part of the system

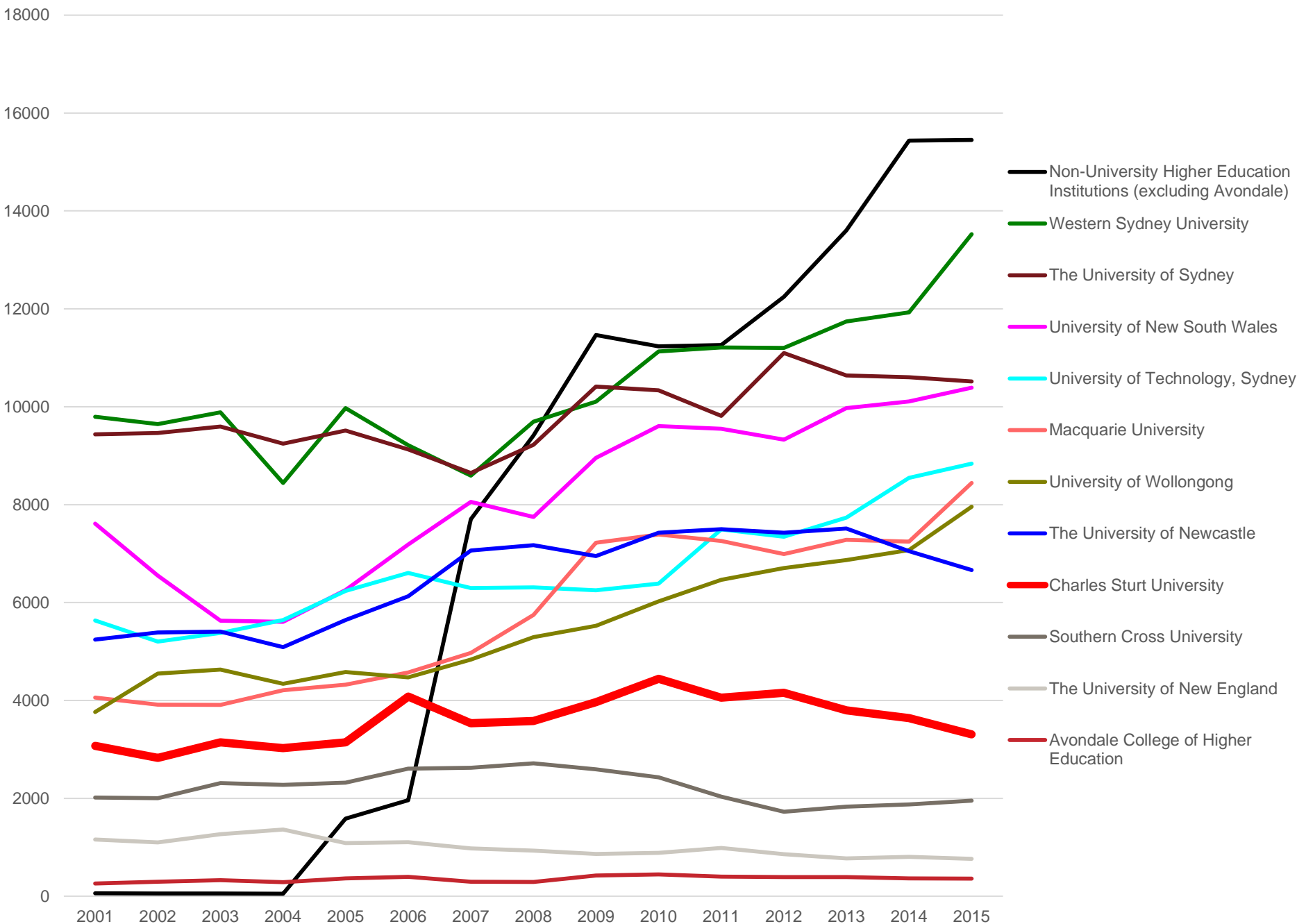
1 Commencing Enrols UG Online Bigger Players



1 PG Online Commencing Enrols Bigger Players



Commencing Enrolments - Internal Undergraduate NSW Institutions



Student Demand and the HE Market

Summary:

- Not only the volume, but the nature of competition has changed
- In particular, private and public-private partnerships, with high marketing spend and flexible staffing models are making significant headway in the online space
- Not clear yet whether MOOCs and micro-credentialling is having an impact or not.

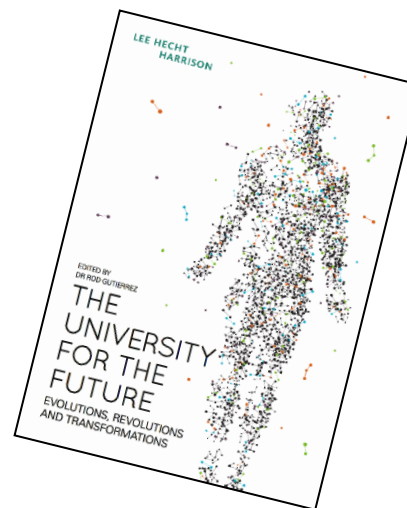
How Universities Are Responding

- Everyone's going online to some degree
- Universities are spending a LOT more money on marketing
 - In volume online space, recruitment spends of 20-30% appear typical – can this last?
 - At least in UG space with fixed fees, logically requires more cost-effective per-student teaching and assessment

Implications for HR, IR and structures

Major reports in this area:

- 2016 - Higher Education Workforce of the Future – PWC, commissioned by AHEIA
- 2017 – University for the Future – Lee Hecht Harrison



Implications for HR, IR and structures

Key points:

- Universities will need to be clear on how they are positioning and differentiating themselves
- Student-centredness needs to increase
- Working with industry will be a key issue
- More flexible and specialised ideas of academic roles are required
- Much increased focus needed from HR on capability and culture development
- Leadership skills at all levels will be tested

Implications for HR, IR and structures

Current round of Enterprise Bargaining will be interesting:

- The 4 Western Australian Universities, assisted by AHEIA, have been seeking to radically rewrite their Enterprise Agreements
- Murdoch University has applied to terminate its Enterprise Agreement, previously unheard of in sector
- Strong view from universities that we need wage restraint
- NTEU still making (IMHO) completely unrealistic wage and conditions demands

Summary

“The future is here, it’s just not very evenly distributed” –
William Gibson

- Australia already has a strong mix of private and public provision
- And *de facto* a far more casualised and flexible workforce
- Is the future a minority tenured academic workforce with an underclass of casual staff who can’t break in?
- Or a blended sector with a smoother and broader range of fulfilling roles which people might adopt as their career develops?
- The genie is out of the bottle – we will need broader and deeper thinking from university leaders and HR professionals.

Thank you!

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