

Annual Report two thousand ten

While the Australian economy fared better than most other advanced economies during the global financial crisis and its aftermath, graduate recruitment in 2010 remained unchanged from the below-average outcomes seen in 2009.

An anticipated recovery in the graduate labour market did not take hold in 2010, with the proportion of new graduates securing full-time work after graduation remaining at a level comparable to that observed during the recession of the early 1990s. Indicators collected in the second half of 2010 painted a more optimistic picture for the graduate labour market, with many employers intending to increase the scope of their graduate recruitment activities in the coming year.

In March 2010, GCA commissioned a Strategic Review to address a range of issues facing the company. I was appointed GCA's Executive Director in October 2010 and began, with Bruce Guthrie (then Acting Executive Director) and the GCA Management Team, to address the Strategic Review findings. These findings, key challenges into 2011 for GCA, include improving financial management and control, restructuring Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) funding, addressing governance at board and management levels, and reviewing GCA's mission and business models.

I am indebted to Bruce, the Management Team and to GCA staff for a very successful year, some highlights of which included:

- In spite of ongoing uncertainty in the graduate labour market, we produced another highly successful set of *Graduate Opportunities (GO)* books, our suite of graduate and undergraduate employment directories. Our six *GO* publications cover a range of exciting opportunities across Australia in many different discipline areas. Our flagship directory, *GO 2010*, featured over 100 advertisers representing a broad cross-section of industries including government, banking & finance, mining, engineering and related professional associations. Bookings for the 2011 edition represent similar figures again, including a number of new advertisers.
- GCA staff delivered presentations at a number of conferences throughout the year, including the Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) and the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS) events amongst others; GCA's David Carroll was awarded Best Paper at the AAIR Forum.

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Mission statement

To be recognised as Australia's leading authority on graduate issues.

This mission will be achieved by:

- providing expert information on graduate outcomes and the student experience, obtained through the conduct of national surveys, high quality research projects and data analysis
- promoting and optimising career opportunities for graduates
- supplying high quality careers education products and services for graduates and those who recruit graduates
- creating and facilitating networks for all parties involved in graduate employment and training including government, employers, industry bodies, professional associations, universities and graduates.

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- GCA continued its support and involvement with various key organisations and events including substantial sponsorships of the AAIR, NAGCAS, Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) and Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) conferences.
- We presented the tenth annual *Virtual Careers Fair* (VCF), the largest online graduate employment event in Australia, on a dynamic new virtual platform that offered a highly interactive experience to over 10,400 attendees and exhibitors.
- We continued to work closely with university careers advisors to produce high quality career information resources.
- We maintained and developed our ongoing core business of conducting the AGS and reporting on graduate outcomes.
- GCA research staff once again travelled to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth to conduct Survey Manager Information Forums, which are one-day training sessions focusing on best practices for conducting the AGS. We plan to hold a national Survey Manager Forum in Melbourne in 2011.

Research Highlights

- Of bachelor degree graduates either in or seeking full-time employment at the time of the 2010 AGS:
 - 76.2 per cent were in full-time employment within four months of completing their degrees (79.2 per cent in 2009)
 - 15.1 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while seeking full-time employment (13.4 per cent in 2009)
 - 8.6 per cent were not working and seeking full-time employment (7.4 per cent in 2009).
- 19.0 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were undertaking further full-time study (18.3 per cent in 2009).
- The median starting salary for bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment in Australia was \$49,000 at the time of the 2010 AGS (\$48,000 in 2009).
- 93.2 per cent of graduates expressed broad satisfaction with their course experience, as measured by the 2010 Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).
- 86.8 per cent of bachelor degree graduates who responded to the 2010 Beyond Graduation Survey (BGS) identified that they considered themselves to be in employment related to their long-term career goals three years after the completion of their studies.
- According to the 2010 BGS, the median salaries of full-time employed bachelor degree graduates grew by a third (33.3 per cent) in the first three years after course completion.
- 'Interpersonal and communication skills' was identified by the majority of graduate employers completing the 2010 Graduate Outlook Survey (GOS) to be the most important selection criterion when recruiting new graduate employees.
- The 2010 GOS indicated that around one in ten graduates will not see out their first year with an employer and, by the end of the fifth year, this will be around four in ten.

Profit & Loss Statement		
<i>For the Year Ended 31 December 2010</i>	2010 (\$)	2009 (\$)
Revenue	2,790,984	2,920,121
Direct operational costs	(846,837)	(1,085,273)
Employee benefits expense	(1,126,257)	(1,097,056)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(72,502)	(65,104)
Occupancy expenses	(143,908)	(136,067)
Equipment hire	(15,257)	(14,433)
Special project expenses	(491,706)	-
Other expenses	(251,598)	(169,357)
Finance costs	(2)	(13)
(Loss)/profit before income tax	(157,083)	352,818
(Loss)/profit for the year	(157,083)	352,818
<i>Other comprehensive income:</i>		
Total comprehensive income (loss) for the year	(157,083)	352,818

Balance Sheet		
<i>For the Year Ended 31 December 2010</i>	2010 (\$)	2009 (\$)
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,917,468	2,922,682
Trade and other receivables	239,761	216,714
Other assets	6,866	14,279
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,164,095	3,153,675
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	112,401	94,231
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	112,401	94,231
TOTAL ASSETS	2,276,496	3,247,906
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	190,388	200,802
Short-term provisions	35,463	31,235
Income in advance	1,085,541	1,898,425
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,311,392	2,130,462
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Long-term provisions	34,191	29,448
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	34,191	29,448
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,345,583	2,159,910
NET ASSETS	930,913	1,087,996
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	930,913	1,087,996
TOTAL EQUITY	930,913	1,087,996

Research Portfolio

Australian Graduate Survey (AGS)

The AGS ran for its 38th year in 2010. Continuing to evolve as the new model is implemented, the 2010 AGS saw:

- the core AGS annual reports, *Graduate Destinations 2009*, *Graduate Salaries 2009*, *Graduate Course Experience 2009*, *Postgraduate Destinations 2009* and *Postgraduate Research Experience 2009* released mid-year
- five Survey Manager Information Forums run in capital cities across Australia
- nine demographic variables removed from the survey instrument and post-populated into the AGS datafile
- a centralised data collection service offered by GCA to private providers
- a centralised AGS telephone collection service offered by GCA to all institutions
- a new-look hardcopy survey form released
- hardcopy forms produced for over 40 institutions, in CEQ and PREQ format, for two rounds
- over 125,000 responses collected for the 2010 AGS
- over 25,000 survey responses processed at GCA
- the continuation of the Historical Data File project (see below)
- The release of *GradStats* and *GradFiles* in December 2010.

A new START website was also launched late in the year. The support hub for all things AGS, the revamped START website offers a variety of support mechanisms and documentation for all AGS stakeholders, including Survey Managers, graduates and the general public.

Finally, David Carroll, Senior Research Associate at GCA, was awarded Best Paper at the 2010 Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) Forum for his research into the relationship between regional unemployment rates and graduate starting salaries. David's paper, based primarily on AGS data, was subsequently published in the *Journal of Institutional Research* and he has been invited to present at the upcoming international Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Forum in Toronto in May 2011. This award carries with it a great deal of prestige in the Australian higher education sector, and we at GCA heartily congratulate David for this tremendous achievement.

Beyond Graduation Survey (BGS)

In order to investigate the question of what graduates do in the years immediately following the completion of their studies, GCA developed and administered the BGS pilot in mid-2009. The detailed research report containing outcomes from this pilot survey was released early in 2010 to considerable interest from both the Australian higher education sector and the news media.

Following the success of this pilot study, the inaugural BGS was administered in mid-2010, with 31 Australian higher education institutions participating. More than 10,000 graduates who completed the 2006 AGS went on to respond to 2010 BGS, updating us on where they currently are and what they are doing, and giving us a unique retrospective look at their higher education experience.

A three-year follow-up of graduates who completed the 2007 AGS is currently being planned for mid-2011, with a five-year follow-up of graduates who completed the 2005 AGS also under development. In its first two years the BGS has made a valuable addition to the Australian higher education research landscape and we expect that it will continue to do so for many years to come.

The report of the 2009 BGS pilot study is available from our website as a free download, with the report of the 2010 BGS expected to be released by mid-2011.

Graduate Outlook Survey (GOS)

The sixth annual GOS was well-placed in 2010 to investigate the state of graduate recruitment after the global financial crisis.

The 2010 survey drew on the responses of 365 graduate employers across a range of industries to investigate such topics as the cost of recruiting graduate employees, promotional methods used when recruiting graduates, key selection criteria used in recruitment, the most and least desirable characteristics when recruiting graduates, issues faced by organisations in the graduate recruitment process, retention of graduate employees, and many others.

In 2010, employers were asked for the first time how much their organisation spent on graduate recruitment for the calendar year 2010. Also new to the 2010 GOS was a question on perceived salary discrepancies based on gender. This question was included to further investigate a finding from the *Graduate Salaries 2009* report that female graduates were paid less on average than otherwise similar male graduates.

A summary snapshot report of the 2010 GOS is available from our website as a free download.

Historical Data File project (HDF)

In late 2009, funding was gratefully received from DEEWR to enable us to clean and formalise each of our annual data sets going back to 1974 with the objective of producing a single, harmonised data set spanning every year of collection. This will be the first time a longitudinal Graduate Destinations Survey data file has been available, and will have a significant impact on the use of AGS data. Work continues on the HDF.

two thousand ten Publications Portfolios

Graduate Opportunities

For over 40 years *Graduate Opportunities* (GO) has served as a crucial link between employers and graduates in pursuit of post-university employment.

2010 proved to be another exciting year for GO. While we bid farewell to our *GO! New Zealand* title after two years of publication, we launched the new *GO in Law & the Legal System* brochure to complement our two existing industry-specific titles, *GO in Engineering & IT* and *GO in Accounting-Business-Finance*.

The GO Team also overhauled the design and editorial content of the 2010 editions following extensive student focus group research and discussions with many employers and university careers staff, ensuring that the publications continue to meet the needs of an evolving recruitment market.

The effects of the global financial crisis did little to detract from the diverse range of employers advertising their programs in the 2010 editions; 121 employers recruiting across all fields of study were profiled in the new-look books.

In February 2010, our graduate-related directories were released:

- *Graduate Opportunities Australasia 2010* (our main directory covering all disciplines; circulation of 50,000)
- *GO in Accounting-Business-Finance 2010* (circulation of 20,000)
- *GO in Engineering & IT 2010* (circulation of 20,000)
- *GO for International Students 2010* (circulation of 20,000)
- *GO in Law & the Legal System 2010* (the debut of our new brochure; circulation of 8,000).

A CD-Rom version (20,000 in total) containing all five of these directories was also released at the same time and e-book versions of the publications appeared on the GO website.

We also saw the debut of our GO show bags in 2010. Eye-catching magenta recycled plastic tote bags were available at selected careers fairs around the country along with a copy of the *GO 2010* main directory and a highlighter from The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. The bags proved a big hit with students and a fantastic opportunity to further enhance brand awareness.

In July 2010 *Undergraduate Opportunities 2010* was released, marking the fourth year in which GCA offered students a mid-year directory of exciting work experience, internship and vacation work opportunities. This publication had a print run of 20,000 and was available as an e-book via the GO website.

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Online

Graduate Opportunities Website

The GO website (www.graduateopportunities.com) continues to work as a dynamic career tool for students, graduates and employers, and helps to supplement the information provided in the annual GO print directories. Every organisation booking print advertising receives a complimentary online profile and this helps to generate substantial web traffic to each employer's online graduate program links. A record 569,000-plus visitors viewed the site in 2010, and March 2010 marked the first time since the GO website launched in 2007 that we logged over 80,000 visitors in a single month – all reinforcing the site's importance as a source of graduate employment information.

Traffic measure	Average per month (2010)
Page Views	171,033
Site Visitors	47,441
Career Searches conducted	14,885

Graduate Careers Australia Website Redevelopment

GCA spent much of 2010 redeveloping its online face across its key websites, with the aim of improving our online resources and presence for the benefit of our many stakeholders. In late 2010 we launched new sites for both GCA (www.graduatecareers.com.au) and START (Survey Training And Research Tool; <http://start.graduatecareers.com.au>), designed for Survey Managers of the AGS.

The web project focused on implementing a fresh, dynamic look and engaging site features, along with a more functional, navigation-friendly interface to ensure site visitors continued access to GCA's wealth of careers information and research findings. Notable new features on the sites include a user forum, interactive search-for-work tool, an online bookstore and events calendar.

The annual *Guide to Campus Recruiting* (GCR) publication, previously available as a print directory, has also been moved to a new interactive online-only format, which will be launched in 2011 as part of the GCA website redevelopment.

As in previous years, the *GO 2010* directory was distributed via university careers fairs and careers services Australia-wide, while the industry-specific titles were distributed via relevant faculties, careers services and select professional association events. The GO Team attended 42 graduate careers fairs and industry events around Australia in March/April, along with 13 mid-year work experience fairs and expos, to hand-distribute our books to students and graduates.

Careers Resources and Newsletters

GCA added to its range of *Career Information Booklets*, releasing titles in Marketing, Science, and Information and Communications Technology. The titles support the extensive range of print and online resources available to students and careers advisory staff.

GCA publications were distributed to careers services in all subscribing universities throughout the country, once per semester, and resources were also sent to subscribing GCA Professional and Corporate members.

Production of GCA's various regular titles continued throughout the year:

- *Graduate Grapevine* newsletter (four print/online editions)
- *Survey News* (online newsletter for institutional survey managers)
- *Careers Services News* (online newsletter for university careers advisors).

Organisational Representation and Promotion

GCA staff represented GCA on committees within various organisations, including the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS), Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) and the Careers Industry Council of Australia (CICA). We also received regular media coverage of our research findings throughout the year.

GCA also continued to be an active participant at a range of industry-related events and professional development activities throughout the year.

GCA was a sponsor and exhibitor at the NAGCAS Conference and AAIR Forum, as well as attending Universities Australia (UA) and Australian Universities Quality Forum events. Staff also visited universities, a number of government departments, various professional organisations and graduate employers throughout the year. GCA also exhibited under the *Graduate Opportunities* brand at the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) National Convention and the Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) Conference.

Virtual Careers Fair

The tenth annual *Virtual Careers Fair (VCF)*, hosted by GCA, took place 22 – 31 March 2010. The 2010 VCF was run on a new virtual platform offering a highly interactive experience that gave attendees the opportunity to 'walk' through a virtual expo space and engage with graduate exhibitors in a truly 'hands-on' format. 51 exhibitors and 47 higher education institutions participated in the event, including 39 Australian institutions and eight from New Zealand.

10,472 participants registered to attend the event, and the Expo Hall received 9,471 booth visits by 5,340 unique visitors. The event and ongoing support from employers and institutions highlights the importance it continues to play in the annual graduate recruitment cycle.

GCA Board & Personnel

GCA Board

The GCA Board of Directors met on six occasions in 2010:

February – by teleconference

March – QUT, Brisbane

May – Annual General Meetings (by teleconference)

June – UA, Canberra

September – GCA, Melbourne

December – ALTC, Sydney

Resignations: Michelle Wijetunge (and alternate Andrew Millett); Bruce Guthrie.

Appointments: Professor Joan Cooper (UNSW - Convenor, SRG); Dr Alan McAlpine (QUT - NAGCAS); Tony Lyons (GU - NAGCAS); Dr Noel Edge (GCA Executive Director); Elizabeth Webb (ATO).

GCA Board Members as at December 2010:

Chair – Universities Australia Chair: Prof. Bill Lovegrove

Vice-Chancellor & President, *The University of Southern Queensland*

Universities Australia Nominee: Vacant

Corporate Member Nominee: Suzanne Curyer

Manager, *Career Services Education.au*

Corporate Member Nominee: Elizabeth Webb

Executive Director, *Australian Taxation Office Development Programs*

Professional Member Nominee: Julie Randall

Branch Manager, *Equity, Performance and Indigenous Branch, Higher Education Group, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)*

Professional Member Nominee: Ivan Neville

Branch Manager, *Labour Supply and Skills Branch, DEEWR*

Professional Member Nominee (NAGCAS): Dr Alan McAlpine

Head of Service, *Careers & Employment, Queensland University of Technology*

Professional Member Nominee (NAGCAS): Tony Lyons

Head of Service, *Careers & Employment Service, Griffith University*

Independent Director (Governance): John Hollamby

(ex-) Acting Head Property Finance, *Lloyds International*

Independent Director (Finance/Risk): Marc Nichols

General Manager Financial Operations, *Queensland Motorways Limited*

Graduate Careers Australia: Dr Noel Edge

Executive Director, *Graduate Careers Australia*

Survey Reference Group (SRG)

The SRG met on four occasions in 2010:

March – QUT, Brisbane

June – UA, Canberra

October – GCA, Melbourne

December – ALTC, Sydney

Resignations: Alex Maroya; Adrian Pawsey; Naomi Doncaster

Appointments: Tim Sealey (Universities Australia)

SRG Members as at December 2010:

Joan Cooper, (*Convenor SRG*), *University of New South Wales*

Yoni Ryan, *Australian Catholic University*

Leone Nurbasari, *Australian National University*

Helen Jacob, *Deakin University*

Phil Aungles, *DEEWR*

Janice Campbell, *DEEWR*

Christopher Sainsbury, *DEEWR*

David De Bellis, *Flinders University*

Bruce Guthrie, *Graduate Careers Australia*

Noel Edge, *Graduate Careers Australia*

Naomi Doncaster, *Southern Cross University*

Tim Sealey, *Universities Australia*

Philippa Pattison, *University of Melbourne*

Justine Fritsch, *University of Southern Queensland*

Tanya Tietze, *University of the Sunshine Coast*

Robert McCormack, *University of Western Australia*

Personnel, Resources and Administration as at December 2010:

The significant contribution of these staff members to the ongoing success of the organisation is acknowledged and appreciated.

Executive Director: Dr Noel Edge

Management Team:

Senior Research Associate/Business Operations Manager: Graeme Bryant

Publications & Communications Manager: Jesse Gerner

Research Manager: This role is a contracted service provided by Dainville Pty Ltd, managed by Bruce Guthrie.

Sales & Marketing Manager: Chris Munnery

Staff:

Executive Assistant: Colette Keech

Office Administrator: Joanne Oates

Senior Designer (Print/Online): Hina Khan

Sales & Marketing Executives: Ian Burke, Joanne Kilbourne

Sales & Marketing Administrator: Leena Amin

Senior Research Associate: David Carroll

Research Associates: Jessica Arnott, Darren Matthews

Research Assistant: Diana Kirkovska

Casual & contract staff:

We continue to utilise various contractors for short-term projects, and casual staff for GDS coding and bulk mail outs.

Legal and Accounting Resources:

Auditors: GMK Centric

Lawyer: Kligers

Acknowledgments: As in previous years, GCA would not have achieved the success it had without the support and assistance of many external individuals and organisations: our volunteer Board and committee members; the Federal Government; Universities Australia; university staff throughout the Australian and New Zealand higher education sector; our alliance partners; our key suppliers; and many others. We acknowledge their contribution, thank them for their support and look forward to our continued relationship with them as we move into the future.

Dr Noel Edge, Executive Director