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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategies in Private Higher Education Providers (HEPs) and Associated Stakeholder Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

In Australia, the increasing competition between higher education providers and changing regulations make corporate social responsibilities particularly important for higher education providers. However, there is a lack of systematic literature on corporate social responsibility practices in higher education providers. This thesis aims to fill the void in the literature and develop a complete understanding of key stakeholders' expectations about corporate social responsibility issues and their perceived effectiveness of corporate social responsibility practice in some higher education providers in Australia. Firstly, It is proposed that each stakeholder's expectations for corporate social responsibility are determined by his or her utility function, which is maximised by some financial and non-financial factors. Then, a set of hypotheses is developed based on these financial and non-financial factors. To test these hypotheses, interviews and surveys of three important groups of stakeholders (management, students, and staff members) in the private Australian Higher Education Industry were conducted. The results reveal many insights into managers' views about corporate social responsibility and their key considerations in corporate social responsibility practices. The surveys of students and staff members also reveal many insights. Staff members share similar views with students in general but have stronger views on some issues, such as accreditation by professional bodies and transparent and accountable management. This research enriches the literature on corporate social responsibility by examining how higher education providers can effectively satisfy their stakeholders' expectations through corporate social responsibility activities. It also extends the CSR literature with evidence for inconsistent expectations from different stakeholders. Furthermore, this research contributes to the literature on how higher education providers can manage their relationship with their important group of stakeholders (students, staff, and managers) in Australia. Using surveys and semi-structured interviews, detailed information regarding these stakeholders' expectations about corporate social responsibility is provided. This thesis may have practical implementation for higher education providers in Australia.

Key Words: Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR)，Higher Education Providers(HEPs)，Stakeholder Perspectives

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