The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
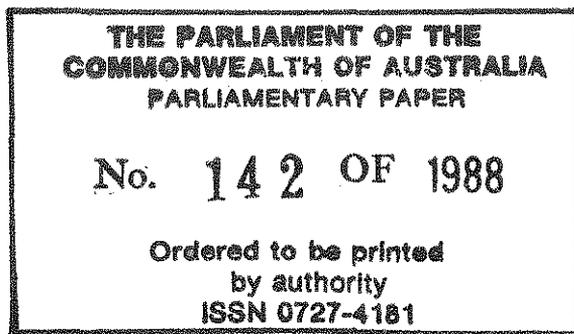
SETTING THE COURSE

Report on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Institutional Practices in the Higher Education Sector

Report of the House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Employment,
Education and Training

May 1988

Membership of the Committee in the 35th Parliament

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training was established by sessional order on 24 September 1987.

Chairman	*	Mr John Brumby, MP
Deputy Chairman		Mrs Kathy Sullivan, MP
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	*	Hon. Ian Robinson, MP
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Secretary to the Committee   Ms Lindy Smith
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* Members of the Sub-committee on Higher Education
+ Mr Cowan replaced the Hon. Tom McVeigh from 18 February 1988
‡ Mr Johns replaced Mr Mildren from 10 December 1987

Preface

Operating as efficiently and effectively as possible is no accident: it requires planning. But there is little incentive to plan when there is limited discretion to determine the strategy, few choices about how it can be implemented, and no certainty that sufficient resources will be provided to allow it to be followed at all.

A major conclusion of this Inquiry is that, while higher education institutions have operated more efficiently, they have not necessarily operated more effectively during recent years of financial restraint. They will be able to improve their performance significantly if they are able to plan in accordance with broad national priorities and are given the capacity to determine and follow their management strategies.

The Committee found that Commonwealth and State Governments have been involved in administrative matters which more properly should have been handled by individual higher education institutions. Institutions have been slow to respond to changing community needs because they have been unable and unwilling to redirect their resources any sooner. In this report, the Committee proposes new arrangements for allocating funds to higher education institutions; a more flexible and less regulated higher education structure; and increased opportunities for greater institutional autonomy.

A central issue of the report is the capacity of higher education institutions to improve their performance in times of considerable economic and social change. How successful they are in any particular case depends upon the institution and the Commonwealth Government agreeing on what the institution should be aiming to achieve, and the institution being allowed the means and the power to work to that end.

The Committee is grateful for the co-operation shown by individuals, institutions and other organisations in the higher education sector during the Inquiry, especially as it has taken place at a time when the Commonwealth and State Governments were also undertaking major reviews in this area. The Committee also appreciates the assistance of the specialist advisers and the Committee secretariat.

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW

Background to the Inquiry

1.1 On 4 November 1987, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training was asked by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, the Hon. J S Dawkins, MP, to undertake an Inquiry:

> to identify current institutional practices in the higher education sector which could contribute to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness for the sector as a whole, by seeking comparative information from a number of institutions representative of the sector.

1.2 The Chairman of the Committee wrote to State Premiers, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and all higher education institutions, to advise them of the Inquiry, on 17 November 1987. The Inquiry was also advertised nationally on 14 and 18 November 1987.

1.3 On the basis of the 62 submissions it received, the Committee sought further information from a number of institutions, organisations and individuals. Public hearings were held over the period 9 February - 14 March 1988. Sixty-five witnesses appeared and more than 900 pages of evidence were taken.

1.4 The witnesses are listed at Appendix A. Lists of submissions and exhibits received appear at Appendix B and Appendix C respectively.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

1.5 The Committee accepts the broad definitions of efficiency and effectiveness used in the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education*, which was conducted in 1986 by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

> An efficient system is one which enables given outputs to be met at the lowest possible level of inputs or cost. However a system which is efficient in this sense will not be worth much if what is achieved is only of limited value. Hence, the effectiveness of a system - the extent to which the output achieves specified objectives - is also important. The phrase "efficient and effective" is thus used to mean the achievement of the best, or most desired, outcome as economically as possible.[1]

The Committee also recognises that in some instances the dual objectives of efficiency and effectiveness will conflict.

1.6 Evidence available to the Committee confirms that, over the past decade, the higher education sector, by which is meant the Commonwealth-funded universities and colleges of advanced education, has made significant gains in both efficiency and effectiveness. The Committee strongly concurs with the view expressed in the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education*, that:

> ...the Australian higher education system is larger, more readily accessible, and in a better position to respond to the range of needs of students and the community generally than it was ten years earlier.[2]

1.7 Despite these gains, the Committee is of the view that Australia's higher education system remains too protected and over-regulated. Further changes in the structure of the system, funding arrangements and institutional practices, are necessary to ensure an expanded and more cost-effective delivery of quality higher education.

Summary of Report

1.8 During the course of the Inquiry, one view put to the Committee was that higher education institutions are among the few surviving remnants of feudalism. This need not necessarily be a condemnation: there are features of higher education institutions which should be preserved. Neither is this view completely correct: higher education institutions have made changes to accommodate community expectations and needs. However, the observation does reflect their tendency to be guided by past practices rather than by plans for the future. Knowledge of what they need to achieve, and of the steps required to get there, will enable both the Commonwealth Government and the higher education sector to go beyond stock responses determined by traditional approaches. *Fato prudentia major*.[3]

1.9 The Committee considers that the higher education sector is unlikely to direct its resources towards providing services that are more aligned to community requirements unless the Commonwealth Government, as the major source of funds for higher education, has a comprehensive and coherent policy on what institutions are to achieve; and institutions are given maximum flexibility in how they implement their mandate.

1.10 Until recently, the Commonwealth Government has tended to focus on how much higher education costs rather than on what is being achieved. Although higher education funding has increased in real terms since 1983, the funding per student has been declining for more than a decade. In this sense, the higher education sector has improved its level of efficiency because it has been asked to achieve more with less. However, in many cases this has meant more of the same.

1.11 In December 1987, the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training released a Green Paper on higher education, entitled *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*. The Green Paper identifies a need to raise the level of education of the Australian workforce in order to foster future economic growth. To achieve this, the paper proposes further growth in the higher education sector "in a manner consistent with our economic, social and cultural needs" to achieve an annual graduation figure of about 125,000 by the year 2001.[4]

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1.12 The Commonwealth Government would provide to each institution sufficient funds to implement an agreed educational profile, which essentially is a strategic plan that accords with national priorities. However, the growth in the sector would not be accompanied by an easing of the financial restraint which has pervaded the public sector for more than a decade.

1.13 The Inquiry has convinced the Committee that strategic planning is an essential means of ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively. In reporting on the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional practices in the higher education sector, the Committee stresses that these practices can be followed to best effect only if they are part of an institution's wider strategy for attaining its goals.

1.14 Nonetheless, the Committee does not see strategic planning as a panacea for the difficulties being encountered by institutions in responding to current circumstances and future requirements. There is also a need to overcome structural features of the higher education sector which have inhibited innovation and flexibility.

1.15 The clearest structural barrier has been the existence of the binary system, which has prevented colleges of advanced education from operating with the autonomy of universities and covering the range of academic activities that universities can offer. The Committee would welcome the replacement of this system with one which allows all institutions to respond to community needs on equal terms and, accordingly, it endorses the concept of a "unified national system" of higher education as proposed in the Green Paper.

1.16 Although supporting a unified system, the Committee does not advocate uniformity. Indeed, the essence of the concept of educational profiles is that institutions will have different goals, strategies and capabilities. The Committee considers it inappropriate that institutions be assessed individually against standard performance measures.

1.17 The Committee also considers it inappropriate for the range of research activities that an institution can undertake to be determined by standard formulae based on student numbers. The Commonwealth Government has proposed that the minimum acceptable size of an institution in the new unified national system of higher education would be 2,000 equivalent full time student units (EFTSU); the appropriate size for an institution with a broad teaching profile and some specialised research would be 5,000 EFTSU, and an institution of 8,000 EFTSU would undertake research across a significant proportion of its profile. On the basis of evidence received, the Committee cannot support the determination of an institution's activities by the size of its student load. The primary determinants of the size and profile of institutions should be the educational requirements of the communities they serve.

1.18 Another major structural barrier to change is the terms and conditions of academic staff. Because of inflexible salary structures and obstacles to staff mobility, institutions have experienced difficulty in recruiting staff and reallocating resources to priority areas. The Committee would support the introduction of more contract appointments and consultancy opportunities; better staff assessment procedures; flexible hierarchies; and the same basic salary scales for all academic staff in universities and colleges of advanced education, but with the capacity for management to pay over award salaries in certain circumstances to attract staff in high demand areas. There is also a need for better incentives for, and fewer impediments to, academic

staff in other superannuation schemes joining the Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities.

1.19 The level of growth proposed by the Commonwealth Government can be met only by an injection of funds, particularly for capital and equipment items. The Committee notes that investigating the possible source of these funds is the subject of another report. Institutions will need to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in any case if the target of about 125,000 graduates annually is to be reached. Such a target can be achieved by:

- creating new student places;
- broadening opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups; and
- improving graduation rates through the elimination of unnecessary wastage.

1.20   More flexibility in allocating resources would allow higher education institutions to identify savings which could be directed to creating additional student places. This would involve not only overcoming the staffing rigidities mentioned above, but devolving within institutions the responsibility for making expenditure decisions and the capacity and incentive to economise in achieving institutional goals. Accordingly, the Committee sees merit in the wider introduction of program budgeting.

1.21 The Committee also welcomes the efforts of institutions in developing equipment management plans and seeking assistance from other institutions, government agencies and the private sector in purchasing major equipment items and undertaking capital works. Better use of existing buildings through centralised timetabling, extended operating hours and energy conservation measures, has also occurred.

1.22 Broadening opportunities for underrepresented groups - particularly Aborigines and people from rural areas or financially disadvantaged backgrounds - as well as encouraging women to diversify the range of disciplines they tend to enter, are important educational goals in terms of improving the level of education in the community generally, but they are also part of a broader strategy to achieve economic and social change. For this reason, the Committee is of the view that institutions will need guidance from governments in identifying realistic equity goals, and that regional targets should be developed for this purpose by joint Commonwealth/State planning committees.

1.23 In working towards equity goals, institutions need to develop strategies that encompass a range of complementary measures to facilitate access by, and improve the success rate of, people from the underrepresented groups. These measures should include: special entry schemes; recognition of previous studies; bridging and remedial courses; personal and academic counselling; child care; and the ability to attend classes and use the institution's facilities after normal working hours.

1.24 It is the Committee's view that many of these practices - and particularly improved credit transfer arrangements, the provision of remedial and bridging courses and the availability of counselling services - will help to improve the graduation rate generally. The Committee would also expect the introduction of better staff assessment and development procedures to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching, thereby improving the success rate of students.

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1.25 As a result of the Commonwealth Government's Green Paper, the earlier *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* and State Government initiatives, many of the practices supported in this report are being implemented. The Committee welcomes action by the Commonwealth Government to develop its role in identifying national priorities, ensuring that they are reflected in institutional goals, and allowing institutions the discretion and the resources to be able to meet these goals as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Educational Profiles

The Committee:

> **welcomes** the wider recognition that all institutions should be allocated resources on the basis of what they can and should be achieving as well as what they currently do.
>
> *(Paragraph 2.6)*

> **considers** that a national, comprehensive and coherent approach to higher education must be fostered, and this can best be achieved by the development of educational profiles as a basis for Commonwealth funding, and more co-ordinated consultation between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories.
>
> *(Paragraph 2.8)*

Management Structures and Processes

The Committee:

> **would welcome** decisions by institutions, which have not already done so, to review their management practices in order to improve their ability to implement strategic plans.
>
> *(Paragraph 2.17)*

Performance Measurement

The Committee:

> **strongly supports** the further development of performance indicators by institutions, recognising that these are reflecting institutional goals and therefore should not be used by governments and institutions as standard measures against which all institutions would be judged.
>
> *(Paragraph 2.24)*

> **recommends** that as a priority, the proposed Joint Planning Committees agree on those other indicators that the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments expect they will require in order to assess the

performance of the higher education sector as a whole; the statistical data which institutions would consequently need to provide; and when they would need to provide it.
Recommendation No. 1.

(Paragraph 2.25)

The Need for Growth

The Committee:

strongly endorses the need for growth in the higher education system. Increased participation in higher education is crucial to the nation's ability to meet the challenges of economic, technological and social change. Moreover, growth is fundamental to increased access to higher education amongst Aborigines, people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, and people from rural and isolated areas.

(Paragraph 3.1)

Increasing Participation

The Committee:

supports the incorporation of equity goals, and the strategies by which they are to be met, into educational profiles.

(Paragraph 3.12)

recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees develop indicative regional access and graduation targets for disadvantaged groups, against which institutions' equity goals and strategies would be assessed.
Recommendation No. 2

(Paragraph 3.13)

recommends that in allocating funds from its Higher Education Equity Projects Program for particular proposals, the Commonwealth Government should satisfy itself that sufficient resources will be provided to support an appropriate range of measures, and not just piecemeal practices.
Recommendation No. 3

(Paragraph 3.14)

People from Rural and Isolated Areas

The Committee:

recommends that the scope for providing higher education courses in co-operation with TAFE colleges be negotiated with institutions in developing their educational profiles and that appropriate funds be made available for this purpose.
Recommendation No. 4

(Paragraph 3.32)

Women

The Committee:

commends the initiative and commitment of the institutions which have actively sought to encourage women to take up non-traditional courses of study.

Paragraph 3.36)

welcomes the introduction of special postgraduate scholarships for women.

(Paragraph 3.37)

welcomes the development by the Commonwealth of a National Policy and Plan of Action for Women, encompassing a documented national plan for women in tertiary education.

(Paragraph 3.38)

Special Entry Schemes

The Committee:

supports the extension of special entry schemes.

(Paragraph 3.40)

Credit Transfer

The Committee:

recommends that funding through educational profiles be on the assumption that granting full credit for Commonwealth-funded courses undertaken elsewhere in the higher education sector would be the normal decision, subject to the student passing the next component of the new course.
Recommendation No. 5 .

(Paragraph 3.45)

recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees establish mechanisms whereby students who have not been granted credit can appeal against the decision.
Recommendation No. 6.

(Paragraph 3.45)

supports the extension of complementary course agreements between institutions, but would prefer to see them made less necessary because of the introduction of more liberalised credit transfer arrangements.

(Paragraph 3.46)

recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees be required to pursue the establishment of comprehensive articulation arrangements and guidelines which will improve credit transfer between the TAFE and higher education sectors.
Recommendation No. 7.

(Paragraph 3.47)

7

Bridging Courses

The Committee:

> **recommends** that the Commonwealth Government encourage, through funding of educational profiles, the development of bridging courses that will help students move to the higher education sector, including students transferring from the TAFE sector.
> *Recommendation No. 8.*
>
> *(Paragraph 3.50)*

Child Care

The Committee:

> **considers** that, if in developing their educational profiles institutions identify a need for child care facilities to be provided or upgraded in order for equity and access goals to be achieved, negotiations for funding for this purpose should be conducted as part of the general negotiations for funding the implementation of the profile.
>
> *(Paragraph 3.57)*

External Studies

The Committee:

> **recommends** that residential components of external courses be retained and that, in allocating funds to major providers, the Commonwealth Government recognise the desirability of providers being able to present residential schools outside the immediate regions.
> *Recommendation No. 9.*
>
> *(Paragraph 3.61)*

> **recommends** that the scope for the use of new technology in distance education be investigated in view of the proposed reduction in the number of providers, the extension of the courses overseas, and the need to improve student progress rates.
> *Recommendation No. 10.*
>
> *(Paragraph 3.66)*

Continuing Education

The Committee:

> **considers** that there remains considerable scope for the further provision of courses for professional upgrading or extension and that a fee paying market exists.
>
> *(Paragraph 3.67)*

Overseas Students

The Committee:

> **encourages** institutions to continue to develop the potential for full fee courses for overseas students.
>
> *(Paragraph 3.71)*

Postgraduate Studies

The Committee:

> **recommends** that institutions proposing to offer higher degree courses include in their educational profiles measures to improve the management of postgraduate studies.
> *Recommendation No. 11.*
>
> *(Paragraph 3.75)*

Research

The Committee:

> **encourages and supports** efforts to improve links between higher education and industry through increased business investment in higher education research and the entrepreneurial marketing of research results.
>
> *(Paragraph 3.81)*

> **recommends** that research funding focus not on size but on research performance and potential. It should be allocated not against inputs such as staff and student numbers but according to research management strategies and proposed objectives.
> *Recommendation No. 12.*
>
> *(Paragraph 3.89)*

Size of Institutions

The Committee:

> **recommends** that proposals for institutional growth and for consolidations be based on the educational goals to be gained and not on considerations of size alone. Consolidations should also consider the geographical proximity of the institutions concerned.
> *Recommendation No. 13.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.4)*

Duplication of Courses

The Committee:

> **recommends** that the Commonwealth continue the systematic process of major discipline reviews with a view to eliminating unnecessary course duplication.
> *Recommendation No. 14.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.8)*

Buildings

The Committee:

> **recommends** that minor works funds be included in the general operating grant.
> *Recommendation No. 15.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.10)*

> **welcomes** the initiatives taken by institutions to explore alternative sources for capital funds.
>
> *(Paragraph 4.11)*

> **recommends** that the need for capital funding to enhance opportunities for growth be addressed in each institution's educational profile.
> *Recommendation No. 16.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.12)*

> **recommends** that capital funds be provided for the essential rehabilitation and replacement of existing facilities.
> *Recommendation No. 17.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.13)*

Equipment

The Committee:

> **recommends** that increased government funding for equipment be negotiated with institutions as part of their educational profiles.
> *Recommendation No. 18.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.16)*

> **recommends** that all institutions be encouraged to adopt equipment management plans.
> *Recommendation No. 19.*
>
> *(Paragraph 4.17)*

recommends that institutions, as part of their equipment management strategies, be encouraged to seek outside funding for equipment acquisition and develop plans for equipment sharing.
Recommendation No. 20.

(Paragraph 4.19)

Teaching Periods

The Committee:

recommends that the Commonwealth Government fund trial programs to explore the possibilities and problems of offering summer courses.
Recommendation No. 21.

(Paragraph 4.26)

recommends that institutions be encouraged to use centralised timetabling to improve the use of facilities and to provide students with the best options.
Recommendation No. 22.

(Paragraph 4.2)

Energy Management

The Committee:

encourages forums such as the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's conferences on maintenance and energy management and suggests that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education investigate ways of regularly circulating information about resource management.

(Paragraph 4.31)

recommends that the Commonwealth Government consider providing funds for establishing energy management programs. Such funds could be in the form of an advance, to be repaid from energy savings achieved.
Recommendation No. 23.

(Paragraph 4.32)

Libraries

The Committee:

recommends that higher education library services be investigated.
Recommendation No. 24.

(Paragraph 4.35)

Tenure

The Committee:

sees significant advantages in an increase in contract-based positions at all levels.

(Paragraph 4.39)

recommends that the Commonwealth Government provide funds for redundancy packages but only on the condition that the institutions concerned has established, in consultation with staff associations, adequate procedures for all types of dismissals.
Recommendation No. 25.

(Paragraph 4.42)

Limited Term Appointments

The Committee:

recommends that the Commonwealth Government support the introduction of salary loadings for non-tenured staff.
Recommendation No. 26.

(Paragraph 4.45)

Flexible Hierarchies

The Committee:

supports flexible hierarchies as a means of achieving more dynamic staffing structures.

(Paragraph 4.52)

Consultancies

The Committee:

considers it appropriate that full-time academic staff be entitled to pursue outside work for up to 13 days per quarter, provided that this does not adversely affect teaching and research responsibilities and that it has been approved by the institution.

(Paragraph 4.56)

considers it appropriate that institutions claim for costs associated with the use of their facilities by staff undertaking consultancy work, and that the amount charged and method of payment be negotiated among the parties concerned.

(Paragraph 4.57)

Superannuation

The Committee:

recommends that the Commonwealth and State Governments negotiate agreements whereby academic staff who are not members of the SSAU are given more incentives to join, and institutions are encouraged to extend coverage to staff who are presently excluded.
Recommendation No. 27.

(Paragraph 4.61)

recommends that Commonwealth Government financial support be provided for early retirement schemes for the next triennium, after which time it should be reviewed in the light of anticipated retirement trends and options offered by the SSAU.
Recommendation No. 28.

(Paragraph 4.63)

Salaries

The Committee:

supports the abolition of the differences between academic staff salary scales which reflect the binary system.

(Paragraph 4.65)

recommends that institutions continue to receive funding for academic salaries in accordance with salary scales determined by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission but that they be given discretion to pay above the award rates and/or provide non-salary benefits if they can find the necessary funds from within their own resources.
Recommendation No. 29.

(Paragraph 4.73)

Improving Staff Performance

The Committee:

recommends that the Commonwealth Government encourage the introduction of staff assessment procedures, linked with developmental opportunities, in all higher education institutions for all staff.
Recommendation No. 30.

(Paragraph 4.77)

Notes

1. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education*, AGPS, Canberra, 1986, p 1.
2. *ibid*, p 4.
3. Wisdom is stronger than fate.
4. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, circulated by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, December 1987, p 4.

Chapter 2

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

National Strategies

2.1 If higher education institutions are to be efficient and effective - if they are to achieve "the best, or most desired, outcome as economically as possible" - they need to be clear about what it is that they should be working towards. While there is no shortage of views within the community about their role and how they should fulfil it, the mix of ideas, and the vehemence with which each is propounded, is constantly changing. Extensive consultation occurs within and among government agencies and higher education institutions in trying to reach agreement, but this has often frustrated the participants and excessively prolonged the lead times required before changes are made.

2.2 The Committee has been told of a number of instances of institutions successfully negotiating with one government agency, only to have their efforts thwarted by another; of developing a new course after extensive preparatory work and then finding a neighbouring institution offering a similar course in competition; and of duplication of reporting requirements.[1]

2.3 It is clear to the Committee that government agencies have been monitoring and directly influencing at too great a level of detail the management and academic decisions of higher education institutions. This has led to excessive controls on budgetary allocations, repetitive demands for statistics, and sometimes conflicting legislative obligations, while the longer term goals of the sector remained undefined. It has also been characterised by a tendency of the Commonwealth Government to focus on inputs rather than outcomes in making resource allocation decisions. Without government guidance as to the broad directions to be followed, it was difficult for the higher education sector to operate cohesively and for individual institutions to undertake long term planning. The situation was explained to the Committee in the following way:

> ...successive governments did not at any stage develop a vision for where they wanted the universities to go and establish a contract with the higher education sector as to what that future would look like. What they did was to make quite frequent cuts in the amount of funding available ...What we are coming to now is a period in which the Government is foreshadowing a different system of policy management in which clear guidelines are laid down for the higher education sector ...That will permit a longer time horizon for planning for an institution like this and it will enable ...us to move beyond the discussion about simply contracting across the base, or the radical surgery option. We should then be able to get into some kind of coherent long term planning with some sense of what it is that we need to co-ordinate with.[2]

Educational Profiles

2.4 As a means of overcoming these planning and co-ordination problems, the Committee sees considerable merit in the Commonwealth Government's proposal, espoused in the Green Paper, that educational profiles become the "principal mechanism for defining institutional roles" and the basis for making funding decisions. This proposal involves each institution in developing a statement or "profile", identifying its mission, goals, and present and future directions in teaching and research. The Commonwealth would guarantee, by contract, to provide sufficient funds to implement agreed profiles, while the institutions would have wider discretion in determining how those funds would be used in achieving their goals.[3]

2.5 Several members of the Committee expressed reservations about the impact that linking Commonwealth funding decisions to educational profiles would have on institutional autonomy. The need to balance autonomy and accountability is an essential component of ensuring that institutions are best able to improve their performance in times of considerable economic and social change. The Committee considers that educational profiles must be developed in the first instance by institutions, and that there must be full consultation between the Government and institutions in reaching funding decisions.

2.6 Associated with the development of the system of educational profiles would be the effective abolition of the binary system, whereby colleges are more limited than universities in terms of the amount of government funding they receive and the discretion they have in spending it. While the present system has improved access to higher education, few supporters of the continued division between universities and colleges of advanced education were identified during the course of the Inquiry.

> **The Committee welcomes the wider recognition that all institutions should be allocated resources on the basis of what they can and should be achieving as well as what they currently do.**

2.7 State/Territory Government support for educational profiles is essential if there is to be better co-ordination among all levels of education, a reduction in duplication, and a withdrawal of government interference in the operational matters of institutions. Under the new system, State/Territory Governments would advise the Commonwealth both individually, by participating on Joint Planning Committees, and collectively, through membership of a Commonwealth/State Consultative Committee associated with the National Board of Employment, Education and Training.

2.8 It is proposed in the Green Paper that a Joint Planning Committee be established for each State or Territory to advise the relevant Government Ministers generally about higher education, and specifically about:

- the higher education needs of the State/Territory;

- the source and distribution of higher education resources among the institutions in the State/Territory;

- other matters that either Commonwealth or State Ministers may require: for example, on possible mergers and rationalisation of institutions or campuses, the place of two-year higher education awards, arrangements for credit transfer and institutional management structures; and

- co-operation with the technical and further education (TAFE) sector in the provision of higher education, including the level of growth of higher education activities in TAFE.[4]

The Commonwealth/State Consultative Committee would provide a forum for the collective views of the States.

The Committee considers that a national, comprehensive and coherent approach to higher education must be fostered, and this can best be achieved by the development of educational profiles as a basis for Commonwealth funding, and more co-ordinated consultation between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories.

Institutional Strategies

Planning

2.9 Since the mid 1970s, higher education institutions have trained an increasing number of students, even though per capita funding has been reduced and only limited resources have been available for capital expenditure. This has been interpreted as evidence of increased efficiency, but, as indicated above, it has not in all cases led to better long-term planning and structural changes which would allow sustained growth in response to community needs.

2.10 Apart from the lack of clear incentive from the Commonwealth Government to do so, it appears that there has been some unwillingness on the part of institutions to plan for change. The Australian National University, for example, has identified "a reluctance to recognise that some activities should be run down or terminated, a tendency to be unresponsive to the external forces acting on the institution and a lack of clarity in defining the goals of individual areas".[5]

2.11 This is not to say that there has been no planning by institutions. Some institutions, including the Australian National University, are developing and beginning to implement strategic plans. However, the usefulness of these plans will be limited unless they are linked to the resource allocation decisions of the Commonwealth Government. The Committee therefore would expect that institutional strategic plans should be an extension of, and at least should complement, educational profiles.

Management Structures and Processes

2.12 Strategic planning is usually associated with the devolution of responsibility to make decisions, provided that those decisions accord with the strategy and thereby the agreed goals.

2.13 On a national scale this would be shown by an increase in the discretion and flexibility given to institutions in managing their resources. At the institutional level it is characterised by program budgeting, whereby program managers are each provided an allocation of resources to use in meeting the full cost of program activities, which in turn are expected to contribute to meeting program objectives.

2.14 Even without strategic plans in place, institutions have responded to the funding limitations of recent years by delegating responsibility for expenditure decisions to the faculty or school level. The budgets which are devolved to deans and school heads in this way usually cover salaries and direct operating costs, but not indirect costs such as those associated with common services and overheads. Incentives are given to find savings in low priority areas and to redirect them to areas of need.

2.15 The Committee sees merit in an extension of this practice to cover indirect costs, thereby increasing the financial burden at the faculty or school level but also adding to the capacity of deans to achieve savings. Such a scheme has been developed at the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, for example, and has proven to be a significant incentive to improve expenditure control as well as a means of increasing flexibility.[6]

2.16 Upon the introduction of strategic plans/educational profiles, institutions which have taken steps towards decentralised decision-making should be well prepared to adopt full program budgeting. When this occurs, further efficiencies will be possible: the devolved budgets would reflect the goals of the institution rather than its history; deans and heads of school would have a clearer idea of the objectives they are to achieve; and senior management would be better placed to review the effect of expenditure decisions.

2.17 As a general observation, strategic planning allows, and should be supported by, management structures which feature flexibility, accountability, streamlined decision-making and a clear distinction between policy and administrative responsibilities. However, reforms in this direction should not be at the expense of genuine consultation with the community, employers, employees and students on policy matters.

> The Committee would welcome decisions by institutions, which have not already done so, to review their management practices in order to improve their ability to implement strategic plans.

Governing Councils

2.18 Considerable variation exists in both the size and the composition of the governing bodies of higher education institutions. For example, among the institutions from which the Committee took evidence, one had a council comprising 21 members while another had one of 44. Most had about 30. Composition varied greatly according to State Government requirements.[7]

2.19 While the Committee accepts that governing councils should be representative of, and responsive to, community and government perceptions about higher education, it is also concerned that excessively large councils may hinder the capacity of institutions to respond effectively to changing educational, economic and social needs.

2.20 Evidence received by the Committee indicates that the quality of community consultation in institutions does not necessarily depend on involving as many individuals as possible. The view was expressed that the composition of councils is more important than the size, but the Committee was also told that those which are large tend to be unwieldy and slow to reach decisions.[8]

2.21 Although the Committee is wary of being too prescriptive in this matter, it sees no reason why any governing council should need to exceed 30 persons.

Performance Measurement

2.22 Performance measurement is an important feature of strategic planning, at both the national and the institutional level, as it provides valuable feedback about the appropriateness of the strategies chosen as well as the ability of the institution to implement them. The development of performance indicators will be essential in view of the Commonwealth's intention to provide funding on the basis of output and performance.

2.23 Many institutions are trying to develop meaningful measures and, while the task is difficult, the Committee believes that institutions are best placed to resolve the problems by working through the requirements of their own strategic plans.

2.24 The Committee is concerned, however, about how governments might use performance indicators. As indicators often reflect the achievement of particular goals, rather than the overall performance of an organisation, governments should be wary of making comparisons between institutions except where the goals are similar. The Committee also sees some risk that institutions might focus on improving performance indicators which can be quantified and standardised, and which can therefore easily be compared with those of other institutions. Subjective indicators, such as the results of staff development initiatives, which are harder to collect and analyse but often are the best measure of quality of performance, could be overlooked.

> The Committee strongly supports the further development of performance indicators by institutions, recognising that these are reflecting institutional goals and therefore should not be used by governments and institutions as standard measures against which all institutions would be judged.

2.25 With regard to measures currently used, the Committee has received evidence that State and Commonwealth agencies are placing significant and often overlapping demands on institutions for statistical data. Not only do institutions find this time-consuming, they are often sceptical about the purposes for which the information is collected.[9]

(1) The Committee recommends that as a priority, Joint Planning Committees agree on those other indicators that the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments expect they will require in order to assess the performance of the higher education sector as a whole; the statistical data which institutions would consequently need to provide; and when they would need to provide it.

Notes

1. *Evidence*, p 188 (University of New South Wales); p 261 (Nepean College of Advanced Education); p 332 (University of Technology, Sydney); pp 415-417 (La Trobe University); and p 465 (Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education).

2. *Evidence*, p 837-838 (University of Adelaide).

3. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 29.

4. *ibid*, p 49.

5. Australian National University, *Commitment to Change*, p 4.

6. Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 4.

7. Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, *Constitutions of the Governing Bodies of Australian Universities*, October 1986.

8. *Evidence*, p 217 (University of New South Wales); p 296 (Nepean College of Advanced Education); p 404 (La Trobe University); p 674 (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee); p847 (University of Adelaide).

9. *Evidence*, p 185 (University of New South Wales); p 332 (University of Technology, Sydney): pp416-417 (La Trobe University); p 467 (Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education); and p 674 (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee).

Chapter 3

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Need for Growth

3.1 The Commonwealth Government has argued that to educate the workforce to a level that will sustain Australia's future economic growth there must be a substantial increase in the number of graduates of higher education. The Government has proposed increasing the annual number of graduates to an indicative target of 125,000 by 2001 (compared to the 1986 figure of about 88,000). To achieve growth of this magnitude, institutions would need to implement three associated strategies: meeting unmet demand for places; improving graduation rates; and expanding opportunities to improve the participation rates among traditionally underrepresented groups.

> **The Committee strongly endorses the need for growth in the higher education system. Increased participation in higher education is crucial to the nation's ability to meet the challenges of economic, technological and social change. Moreover, growth is fundamental to increased access to higher education amongst Aborigines, people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, and people from rural and isolated areas.**

Meeting Unmet Demand

3.2 Estimates by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education put at between 13,000 and 20,000 the number of eligible applicants for higher education in 1987 who were not offered a place but would have accepted one. There is no indication that the level of unmet demand has decreased in 1988. Despite an almost 50% increase in the number of higher education enrolments since the mid 1970s[1], there is significant demand from suitably qualified candidates for further growth in the sector.

3.3 It is likely that the current unmet demand for places could be lower if institutions' productivity levels were higher, and practices which can improve resource management are discussed in the next Chapter. The Committee recognises that the sector cannot significantly increase the number of available places without the injection of additional funds, but the terms of reference of the Inquiry do not extend to examining the possible sources of these funds. As part of its policy review process, the Commonwealth Government referred the issue to a special task force which reported on 5 May 1988.

3.4 The growth in demand has been caused largely by demographic factors and increased high school retention rates. After adjustment to take account of the relative importance of higher education to the different age-groups, projected annual increases in the population of potential higher education students over the next few years are

1987 - 1988	2.0%
1988 - 1989	1.5%
1989 - 1990	1.0%
1990 - 1991	0.5% [2]

3.5 The figures suggest that the increase in demand as a result of demographic factors alone will taper off over the next few years. It is expected, however, that the tapering off will be offset initially to some extent by continuing increases in rates of retention to Year 12. Growth in demand for higher education because of this factor is projected to be 6% in 1989, between 2% and 5% in 1990 and between 1% and 3% in 1991.[3] As the rates of growth both in population and retention to Year 12 will decline, the higher education sector must also look to increasing the annual number of graduates by means other than simply adding to the number of places which are available under current entry conditions.

Improving the Graduation Rate

3.6 Improving graduation rates is the most cost-effective way of using available resources to move towards the graduation target.

3.7 It appears that, while institutions tend to keep data about aggregate student progress, the information has not been collected in such a way that further useful details such as average completion time and reasons for non-completion can be identified. Institutions have not been encouraged to keep such information while government funding has been based on student enrolments rather than achievement.[4] More information about student progress will be needed if institutions are to substantiate claims to have met performance goals.

3.8 The Committee found widespread support for improving graduation rates, but not if this meant lowering standards: we need education up to a standard, not down to a quota. Similar sentiments were expressed by a number of institutions, including the Sydney College of Advanced Education, which observed:

> if an institution's funding were to be based solely on the proportion of entrants it graduates there could be a significant temptation to subvert academic standards especially if the future of a course or a department was at stake.[5]

3.9 The Committee certainly endorses the view that management practices and academic policies should not be allowed to undermine the achievement of excellence. As this view is so widely shared throughout the sector, the Committee is confident that institutions will not allow the quality of their academic activities to fall. The Committee's position on this matter is also reflected in its comments in Chapter 2 about the need for the Commonwealth Government to assess the performance of institutions individually, taking into account qualitative as well as quantitative indicators.

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3.10 To improve graduation rates, credit transfer arrangements between institutions and between the higher education sector and the technical and further education (TAFE) sector should be liberalised. There is also a need to extend the counselling and other support services which have often been successful in special programs to assist people from underrepresented groups. These measures are discussed later in this Chapter. In addition, the Committee would expect increases in the graduation rate to occur as a result of improvements in staff assessment and development, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Increasing Participation

3.11 Improving access to higher education by members of disadvantaged groups has been encouraged as a social policy for a number of years, and the Commonwealth Government has provided special funding to allow institutions to introduce programs to improve the educational opportunities available to these groups. Nevertheless, the Committee was told that the Commonwealth's $1.2 million contribution this year for equity assistance - less than 0.05% of its total outlay to institutions - in addition to the funds it provides for bridging courses and Aboriginal places, "ultimately is a token one".[6]

3.12 Additional funding from the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of increasing participation is desirable. However, the Committee considers it equally important that the commitment to improving higher education opportunities is demonstrated, and followed through, at the institutional level. Activities by each institution to improve access and equity must be as consistent as possible with the other programs of the institution as well as complementing the efforts of other institutions. Accordingly,

> the Committee supports the incorporation of equity goals, and the strategies by which they are to be met, into educational profiles.

3.13 The ability or motivation of institutions to pursue equity programs is affected by their educational profiles and regional variations in the population. The Committee is concerned that, without external guidance or inducement, some institutions will not give priority to achieving equity goals. Therefore, the introduction of profile-based funding should not be seen by the Commonwealth Government as a means by which it can otherwise reduce its vigilance in ensuring that its social policies are implemented.

(2) The Committee recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees develop indicative regional access and graduation targets for disadvantaged groups, against which institutions' equity goals and strategies would be assessed.

3.14 Because the success rate of measures to improve access and equity varies, the Committee welcomes the Commonwealth Government's continuing commitment to the Higher Education Equity Projects Program. This program encourages institutions to attempt new approaches to the problem by reducing the financial risk associated with such activities. However, evidence given to the Committee indicates that a combination of measures is required to increase both the enrolment and the success rate of disadvantaged groups.

(3)   The Committee recommends that, in allocating funds from its Higher Education Equity Projects Program for particular proposals, the Commonwealth Government should satisfy itself that sufficient resources will be provided to support an appropriate range of measures, and not just piecemeal practices.

3.15   The Committee found that successful access and equity programs commonly feature: special admission provisions; bridging courses; and academic and personal counselling. These are discussed later in this Chapter. It is also important for institutions to take into account the other responsibilities in students' lives which could affect their decisions to participate and their academic performance. For example, parents could require child care facilities (see paragraphs 3.55-3.57) and part-time students require classes to be held, libraries to be open, and academic staff to be available for consultation, outside working hours (see Chapter 4).

3.16   The groups which are most clearly underrepresented and which receive the attention of special access programs are Aborigines, people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, and people from rural and isolated areas. Whereas women as a group do not have the general access problems of the other groups, they still are underrepresented in "hard" science and technology-oriented disciplines and require special support and incentives to enter these areas.

Aborigines

3.17   For some time, the Commonwealth Government has recognised that special entry and support arrangements for Aboriginal students are desirable and has provided financial assistance to institutions offering appropriate programs. The success of these programs varies considerably from institution to institution. From evidence received by the Committee, it appears that the quality of the informal and direct support given by the Aboriginal staff, either a single liaison officer or a small Aboriginal Educational Unit, is perhaps as crucial as the availability of preparatory or remedial courses.

3.18   While the number of Aboriginal students in higher education has doubled nationally over the last five years, they constituted only about 0.5% of the total student population in 1987.[7] Aborigines are also underrepresented in professional disciplines such as pharmacy, dentistry, law, medicine and engineering.[8]

3.19   It is appropriate that institutions' requests for Commonwealth Government funding for Aboriginal participation programs be assessed on the basis of their achievements as measured against regional equity targets and the equity goals in their profiles. They should also be assessed against the following criteria identified by the National Aboriginal Education Committee:

- a level of Aboriginal intake in award courses which is at or above the funded target;

- use of funds provided by the Commonwealth Aboriginal participation programs to benefit Aborigines;

- availability of programs to assist access;

- a special admission policy in place to assist Aboriginal entry;

- special programs provided to suit the needs of Aborigines, including those who live in remote areas;

- employment of Aboriginal staff;

- Aboriginal representation on the governing body of the institution;

- an Aboriginal advisory committee established within the institution; and

- other evidence of institutional commitment to assisting Aborigines, including provision of amenities, child care, and resources for Aboriginal students.[9]

3.20 Because of the size and importance of the challenge, the Committee considers that special funding programs sponsored by the Commonwealth Government for Aboriginal participation initiatives should continue alongside financial support for the strategies which institutions identify in their educational profiles to achieve equity goals.

People from Financially Disadvantaged Backgrounds

3.21 A recent study of participation of different socio-economic groups in higher education has led to the conclusion that ten times as many students in the highest socio-economic quartile as those in the lowest enrol in high demand courses such as medicine, law, computing and electrical engineering.[10]

3.22 The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission has observed that:

If the level of participation in higher education of young people from the lower socio-economic groups ...were to be brought up to the existing level of participation of the higher socio-economic group, something like another 80,000 places would have to be provided in higher education.[11]

3.23 In providing incentives to improve opportunities for access and success among people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, institutions have needed to develop the will and the ability to identify in potential entrants those qualities, other than good academic results at post primary school, which contribute to the likelihood of succeeding in higher education.

3.24 This responsibility has fallen particularly on institutions which are located in outer metropolitan areas, where most people in the lower socio-economic group live. Evidence provided to the Committee by the Nepean College of Advanced Education was that the demand among this group for entry to higher education through special assistance programs exceeds the supply of places in those programs by a factor of more than five.[12]

3.25 Clearly, the proposed growth in the sector is an essential component in expanding the educational opportunities available to this group. The Committee was also told that, for the Nepean College: "Access is one question, but sustaining them in the course is in some ways our major focus of endeavour at the moment."[13] It is

necessary to provide a framework of support measures for this group, as for other underrepresented groups, encompassing academic assistance and personal guidance and counselling.

3.26 The Committee considers that growth in the sector, special entry and bridging programs, and liberalised credit transfer arrangements, should allow better access for members of disadvantaged groups to higher education generally, and to a wider range of institutions. This is particularly important if the representation of this group is to increase in the professions, which tend to be taught in the more exclusive institutions. However, to maintain their graduation rates institutions need to ensure that they are able to provide the necessary support programs.

People from Rural and Isolated Areas

3.27 People from rural and isolated areas are less likely to qualify for or seek access to higher education than their counterparts in metropolitan areas. In many cases, acceptance into a higher education institution is possible only through special entry schemes. The availability and cost of residential accommodation and child care facilities also significantly influence decisions by people in this group about whether to enrol in higher education.

3.28 Regional colleges play a crucial role in increasing participation rates in non-metropolitan areas. It has been found that participation in higher education depends partly on, and diminishes with, distance between home and campus.[14] However, proximity alone, important as it is, cannot account for the achievements of regional colleges in providing education to people from rural and isolated areas. Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, for example, told the Committee that it has a practice of

> going out into those regions and convincing those young people and, in most cases, their parents as well, of the value of higher education to them and their communities.[15]

3.29 Regional colleges in particular have developed the capacity to provide courses off-campus. Studying externally provides an important means of access when the distance between home and campus is too great to contemplate regular travel. For many young people, however, and especially those who are used to classroom teaching, the chance to have face to face contact with staff and other students can be a key element in deciding to enter, and successfully completing, higher education.

3.30 The Committee received evidence from several regional institutions about innovative ways of encouraging participation in areas where there is no higher education institution. In its submission to the Committee, for example, Bendigo College of Advanced Education referred to its involvement in offering higher education courses through the facilities of TAFE colleges in northern Victoria. The first year of Bendigo's Bachelor of Business course has been conducted through the Goulburn Valley College of TAFE for 13 years. More recently, similar arrangements have been made with the Wangaratta College of TAFE and the Sunraysia College of TAFE at Mildura.[16] The Committee understands that similar co-operative arrangements exist elsewhere in Victoria as well as in most other States.

3.31 By making use of the extensive Commonwealth and State investment in TAFE facilities and infrastructure, these arrangements provide a cost-efficient means of bridging the gap between rural post-primary education and entry to a regional or metropolitan higher education institution.

3.32 The Committee strongly endorses the extension of such practices but is aware that the establishment costs involved, including the cost of providing additional computing and library facilities and the continuing costs of communication and travel between the institutions, can be significant.

(4)   The Committee recommends that the scope for providing higher education courses in co-operation with TAFE colleges be negotiated with institutions in developing their educational profiles and that appropriate funds be made available for this purpose.

Women

3.33 Participation by women in higher education has increased considerably in recent years, but they cluster in undergraduate arts/humanities courses while the priority areas for growth are the male-dominated engineering and technology fields.

3.34 The clear need to encourage women and girls to develop their interest and skills in science and mathematics has been recognised for some time. Institutions which have introduced practices in response to this need have met with some success; however, the progress is slow.

3.35 The Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, for example, has had a disappointing response to the program of school visits and workshops it has been conducting to attract women to its engineering course, apparently because of peer pressure and a lack of role models. While these factors are present elsewhere, they are particularly strong in country regions[17].

3.36 The University of Technology, Sydney, is having somewhat greater success with its *Women in Engineering* program, which has increased the number of female students in engineering courses from 7 in 1981 to 88 in 1987, yet this figure represents less than 4% of the total engineering enrolments. The University also offers a *Women in Business* program, and is planning to undertake similar activities in other disciplines.[18]

    The Committee commends the initiative and the commitment of the institutions which have actively sought to encourage women to take up non-traditional courses of study.

3.37 A practice being tested in a number of institutions to increase the proportion of women undertaking postgraduate studies is providing scholarships for women to study for honours and higher degrees. While the number of women undertaking honours and higher awards has increased significantly in recent years, even before these financial incentives were introduced, the Committee was advised that reluctance to prolong the demands on their families is often a major reason for women not continuing their studies beyond a pass degree.

The Committee welcomes the introduction of special postgraduate scholarships for women.

3.38 More generally, the Committee would look to the wider introduction of bridging and remedial courses, child care and credit transfer as means of encouraging women to move into fields of study in which they traditionally are underrepresented.

The Committee also welcomes the development by the Commonwealth of a National Policy and Plan of Action for Women, encompassing a documented national plan for women in tertiary education.

Special Entry Schemes

3.39 It is common practice among higher education institutions to allow people who do not qualify under the usual admission requirements to enrol if they meet certain criteria. The selection procedures vary, although they tend to include an interview with the applicant, a test, and perhaps consultation with the applicant's employer, teacher or principal. This process is time-consuming but effective in terms of identifying people who are likely to succeed.

3.40 One of the most successful special entry schemes is the *early leavers* program pioneered by La Trobe University in 1972 and adopted widely in some form in many other institutions. This program facilitates entry by mature age students, who more closely reflect the socio-economic mix of the community than does the student population generally.[19] A number of institutions advised the Committee that mature age students are more motivated than high school leavers and usually perform well.[20] Mature age entry schemes have also been an important means of access by women to higher education.

The Committee supports the extension of special entry schemes.

Credit Transfer

3.41 Institutions which grant credit for course work that their students have completed elsewhere can reduce costs, improve graduation rates, and facilitate access by disadvantaged groups to higher education. The Commonwealth Government has proposed that, under normal circumstances and as a condition of financial support, institutions be prepared to grant full credit for Commonwealth-funded post-secondary courses.[21]

3.42 Most institutions currently are prepared to consider applications from students for credit transfer on a case by case basis. The decision is usually made within the relevant faculty or school at the sub-dean or assistant registrar level after a comparison of course content and objectives. In some institutions, students can challenge a negative decision by sitting the next major exam in the subjects for which credit was sought.

3.43 Nevertheless, the Government's observation in the Green Paper that "more often than not, students transferring from one higher education institution to another are given insufficient credit for their academic attainments"[22] was supported by evidence given to the Committee. The Committee was told there has been a fair amount of possessiveness by institutions about their own qualifications and ignorance of what is really the content of other qualifications.[23]

3.44 Certainly there is a need for better information sharing and co-ordination on a national basis. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education together are working towards building data bases containing details of credit transfer arrangements. While this should help institutions make decisions more easily, it will not in itself overcome the reluctance of some institutions to recognise the quality and relevance of courses offered elsewhere. It also will not remove from students the onus of convincing individuals in the relevant faculties and schools to grant credit.

3.45 The Committee is aware of concern within the academic community that automatic granting of credit would be a threat to standards and considers it appropriate and desirable for institutions to retain discretion about whether or not to grant credit in any particular case. However, institutions should decide to grant credit where possible as a result of an appraisal of the academic abilities of the transfer student, as demonstrated in the new course, rather than on the basis of an appraisal of the courses already taken.

(5) The Committee recommends that funding through educational profiles be on the assumption that granting full credit for Commonwealth-funded courses undertaken elsewhere in the higher education sector would be the normal decision, subject to the student passing the next component of the new course.

(6) The Committee also recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees establish mechanisms whereby students who have not been granted credit can appeal against the decision.

3.46 At present, students who wish to transfer from one higher education institution to another can be certain of being granted credit in certain courses if the two institutions have entered a transfer agreement. The Committee was advised of a number of such complementary course agreements, and received evidence that they provide an important means for people in rural areas and those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds to gain access to higher education and to enrol in a wider range of courses. For example, the University of Technology, Sydney, will accept into the second year of its engineering course students who have completed a one year transfer course at Nepean College of Advanced Education, but who otherwise would not have qualified for entry into the University.[24]

The Committee supports the extension of complementary course agreements between institutions, but would prefer to see them made less necessary because of the introduction of more liberalised credit transfer arrangements.

3.47 With regard to the Commonwealth Government's proposal that full credit normally be granted for all Commonwealth-funded post-secondary study at TAFE

colleges, the Committee considers that there are differences between the sectors that should be preserved, even though credit transfer arrangements should be improved. Evidence received by the Committee indicates that there also is a need for articulation arrangements to be developed, whereby qualifications obtained in the TAFE sector are recognised as partial completion of higher degree courses.[25]

(7)   The Committee recommends that the proposed Joint Planning Committees be required to pursue the establishment of comprehensive articulation arrangements and guidelines which will improve credit transfer between the TAFE and higher education sectors.

Bridging Courses

3.48 Short orientation and remedial courses have proved to be crucial to the success of special entry programs. The Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, for example, has found that mature age students who have completed the College's *Skills for Tertiary Entrance Preparatory Studies* program are better equipped than school leavers for tertiary studies.[26]

Similarly, the Nepean College of Advanced Education has been offering an intensive one-semester preparatory program for students who otherwise would not meet the entry criteria and who could demonstrate some significant disadvantage in their circumstances. Students who have completed the program, called *New Start*, have then enrolled in the normal way and have performed marginally better than average.[27]

3.49 Bridging courses have also proven to be beneficial for school leavers who enter through general admission schemes. After it introduced the *Uni-prep* program, a week-long course conducted by student counsellors and academic staff to introduce students to university life, the University of New South Wales noted a clear reduction in the attrition rate among first-year students.[28]

3.50 The Committee sees considerable merit in the expansion of bridging courses as a measure to improve graduation rates among all students. They could also prove to be an effective way of facilitating the transition of students from the TAFE sector to the higher education sector.

(8)   The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government encourage, through funding of educational profiles, the development of bridging courses that will help students move to the higher education sector, including students transferring from the TAFE sector.

3.51 Institutions have welcomed the Government's recent decision to allow these courses to be counted as part of their funded student load and evidence received by the Committee indicates that many more now will be offered.

Counselling and other Student Support Services

3.52 Students who do not complete their course of study often leave for reasons other than a lack of academic ability. Among these reasons are emotional, health and financial problems. Counselling services are available on many campuses to help students handle personal difficulties and they also often provide short courses and tutorials on academic skills. Assistance of this sort is particularly important for people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, non-English speaking backgrounds, and rural areas because they generally do not have a family tradition of participation in higher education. However, demand is increasing among students generally.

3.53 The Committee was informed that counselling services tend to be an early casualty of cut-backs in resources because priority is given to teaching and research activities. In terms of cost-effectiveness, it appears better to allow the services to continue: evidence suggests that where these services have been provided, the attrition rate has fallen.[29]

3.54 Disenchantment and failure among students can also be avoided by recognising problems at an early stage and, apart from the students themselves, academic staff are the only members of the institution who are in a position to do so. It is an ongoing responsibility of teaching staff to be attentive to student welfare, even when professional counsellors and study skills units are available on campus.

Child Care

3.55 For many women, decisions about whether to enter and continue higher education studies have been affected by the availability of child care facilities on or near campus. Adequate child care is also a major influence on Aboriginal participation.[30]

3.56 The Committee was told, however, that access to child care is inadequate. Many female students find themselves allocating a large proportion of their time travelling between campus and a distant community child care centre which is open only during business hours.

3.57 Institutions have reported different levels of success in ensuring that child care facilities are available. The Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education, for example, has none on campus because it has been unable to attract a capital grant from government; the Nepean College of Advanced Education has contributed to the establishment of a child care centre at Westmead hospital; and the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education built a self-supporting centre from its own resources and funds provided by the student body.

> The Committee considers that, if in developing their educational profiles institutions identify a need for child care facilities to be provided or upgraded in order for equity and access goals to be achieved, negotiations for funding for this purpose should be conducted as part of the general negotiations for funding the implementation of the profile.

External Studies

3.58 External studies programs provide a valuable means of access to higher education by people in rural or isolated areas, and by those whose personal circumstances prevent their attending courses on campus. These programs, which have grown significantly in recent years, are expected to become increasingly popular within the Australian community and overseas.

3.59 In order to achieve economies of scale and improvements in quality, the Commonwealth Government has proposed that the number of external providers be reduced to less than ten[31]. Evidence and submissions received by the Committee support this proposal. The Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, for example, which is a major provider, offers under contract a complete production service for external courses on behalf of other institutions, and has enrolled 900 fee-paying overseas students in its external programs this year. These practices have increased the utilisation of the Institute's facilities as well as generating income.

3.60 The Committee concurs with the proposed reduction in providers of external studies. Concern has been expressed that if there were fewer providers there would be a greater risk that compulsory attendance at residential schools would place some students at a disadvantage. However, evidence received by the Committee indicates that students clearly look forward to attending residential schools and that reducing the residential component of external courses would lead to a decrease in the graduation rate.[32]

3.61 An alternative way of overcoming the difficulties of attending distant residential courses is to move the courses to the students. This practice has been successfully followed by Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, which has been running residential schools at the University of New England for some time and is now intending to do likewise at an institution in Sydney.

(9) **The Committee recommends that residential components of external courses be retained and that, in allocating funds to major providers, the Commonwealth Government recognise the desirability of providers being able to present residential schools outside the immediate regions.**

3.62 Evidence given to the Committee indicates that major challenges to the external studies providers include overcoming a high attrition rate and attracting younger students. It is possible that the efficiency and effectiveness of this form of teaching could be improved by new communication and information management technology. The Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education advised the Committee that communication with students is usually by telephone, by which means tutorials are conducted at study centres. Computer links have been established with other centres. This year, supplementary materials will be televised and the use of satellite communication is being considered, but the Institute considers that external students are more likely to require pre-recorded material that they can digest when convenient.[33]

3.63 Because of the continuing reliance on printed materials, new technology has been applied primarily to improve production in this area. Nonetheless, the materials are described in the Green Paper as being "often mediocre".[34]

3.64 The Committee is aware that the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* concluded in 1986 that,

> while technology can be, and has been, used extensively in distance education, it will not, in the foreseeable future, provide a cheap, effective and efficient alternative to more traditional forms of education.[35]

3.65 The Western Australian College of Advanced Education, however, has advised the Committee that it considers the Review "off the mark on this matter" because,

> unless higher education institutions embrace technology and apply it, within five-ten years we will be so far behind other sectors of the community, higher education will be seen to be remote, inefficient and essentially moribund in its educational delivery functions.[36]

The College has a strong record in distance education and was the first to attempt live satellite broadcasts of lectures between two of its campuses.

3.66 On balance, in view of the proposed reduction in numbers of providers and the expansion of external courses to students overseas, the Committee considers that there might be scope for the use of new technology which previously was not cost-effective.

(10) The Committee recommends that the scope for the use of new technology in distance education be investigated in view of the proposed reduction in the number of providers, the extension of the courses overseas, and the need to improve student progress rates.

Extending Academic Activities

Continuing Education

3.67 In their submissions and evidence to the Committee, a number of institutions referred to growth in the provision of short, vocational non-award courses. The University of Technology, Sydney, for example, which offers a variety of short courses for professional practitioners, particularly in areas of new technology, advised the Committee that, while demand fluctuates, the courses "have brought in a lot of money and are very good for our relationships with the professional community. They help us a lot in developing subjects for formal award courses".[37]

> **The Committee considers that there remains considerable scope for the further provision of courses for professional upgrading or extension and that a fee paying market exists.**

Institutions should be encouraged to enter this market, particularly where the provision of short courses for fees would improve the institution's offering of award courses. The Committee believes that full cost fees should be charged for such courses.

Overseas Students

3.68 Until 1986, overseas students participated in higher education either as part of a controlled quota of private subsidised students or as fully sponsored students under foreign aid programs. Since then, full fee paying overseas students also have been able to enter the system.

3.69 The Committee received evidence that a number of institutions have taken advantage of the change in policy, and others are contemplating doing so. While the number of overseas students studying on campus is still small the enrolment of students studying offshore has grown quickly.

3.70 Although the University of Adelaide expressed some reservations about the strength of the overseas students market[38], most of the evidence received supported the view that there is still considerable potential in this market. Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education gave evidence that the demand for higher education in Hong Kong far exceeds the supply, and that Australian higher education institutions tend to be trusted because of the awareness that they are under strict government control.[39] The Committee believes that the maintenance of guidelines on the provision of courses to overseas students will assist Australian institutions to succeed in this highly competitive market.

3.71 The current guidelines require institutions to charge fees that cover the full recurrent costs, including overheads, the equipment costs, and the capital costs involved in offering courses to overseas students. In this way, fee paying students do not displace either Australian students or the sponsored or subsidised overseas students in Australia. The Committee endorses this requirement, noting the scope for returning a profit that institutions can use to support activities for Australian students. While recognising the role of the existing sponsored and subsidised overseas students programs,

> **the Committee encourages institutions to continue to develop the potential for full fee courses for overseas students.**

3.72 Concern has been expressed to the Committee about institutions "bagging" and "undercutting" one another,[40] when promoting their courses overseas. It has been proposed that, to prevent exploitation of students and a decline in standards, there should be more government control of transactions[41]. The Committee welcomes the current review by the Commonwealth Government into this matter.

Postgraduate Studies

3.73 Postgraduate studies are an essential means of developing advanced knowledge and skills that can be used in specialised areas of the workforce and training the next generation of Australia's researchers. Postgraduate students are a significant resource for higher education institutions in that they contribute substantially to research programs and often also to the teaching effort. However, several submissions received by the Committee suggest that such factors as inadequate supervision, the isolation of postgraduate students within the academic structure,

and the low level of financial assistance available, influence both the decision as to whether to proceed with postgraduate studies and the length of time taken to complete them.

3.74 The Committee was interested to learn of proposals from the Australian National University for the establishment of a graduate school, which will integrate the two parts of the University currently involved in graduate education, the Institute of Advanced Studies and The Faculties. The graduate school will provide a meeting point for postgraduate students and staff, with the ensuing benefits of being a part of a larger community.[42]

3.75 The Committee would expect the establishment of the graduate school to assist the institution in developing management strategies to ensure the effective use of its postgraduate studies programs. Clearly, the proposal suits the University's present structure and aims to overcome an unnecessary distance between the research schools and the teaching faculties. The Committee also is aware of opposition to the creation of postgraduate research centres.[43] Different measures may be appropriate in different institutions. Management of postgraduate studies is, nevertheless, a matter to which institutions should direct attention.

(11) The Committee recommends that institutions proposing to offer higher degree courses include in their educational profiles measures to improve the management of postgraduate studies.

3.76 The Committee also endorses the Green Paper's proposal to review the operation of the Commonwealth Postgraduate Award Scheme and the level of stipend available.[44]

Research

3.77 Most higher education research in Australia is carried out in the universities, which receive research funds from the Commonwealth as part of their general recurrent grants.[45] However, an increasing proportion of research and development is undertaken in colleges of advanced education and institutes of technology which have relied chiefly on business investment and direct grants from government agencies for funds. Direct grants are provided on a competitive basis through a number of schemes, including those operated by the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

3.78 According to *Measures of Science and Innovation*, the Australian Science and Technology Indicators Report for 1987, "only Japan surpasses Australia in terms of the proportion of the labour force employed as researchers in the higher education sector."[46] The study shows that relative to the size of its economy, Australia's higher education research and development expenditure is "clearly reasonable."

3.79 Where Australia is not in line with the medium Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) research performers is in the level of business enterprise sector investment, which "appears low even when the differences in the industrial structures of the various nations are taken into account."[47] It is this "low level of Australian industrial research and development, and the need to

generate export-oriented industries, (that) make it important that higher education institutions conduct a significant amount of research with potential to directly benefit Australian industry".[48]

3.80 The Committee received evidence from a number of sources that higher education institutions are increasingly seeking links with and support from industry to assist in the development and marketing of research. The practice of establishing technology parks and commercial companies to promote the institution's output will continue to draw higher education research and business sector needs more closely together.

3.81 While recognising that business investment in research and development remains low in Australia compared with other countries, the Committee believes that market-oriented initiatives will attract business to making a greater direct investment in higher education research.

> The Committee encourages and supports efforts to improve links between higher education and industry through increased business investment in higher education research and the entrepreneurial marketing of research results.

3.82 To attract funds, the higher education sector will need to be able to show that it uses research resources to the best effect. The issue is not the quality of higher education research but management of available resources. As research funding is increasingly competitive and selective, institutions need to demonstrate that they manage both their funds and their research projects efficiently. They need to address a number of research management issues, including: the balance between applied and basic research; the rights of all staff to research funding; and the need to seek alternative sources of research funding.

3.83 It is not this Committee's role to prescribe an effective balance between pure and applied research. Nor does the Committee believe it appropriate for non-academic bodies to determine what the balance should be. The nation's best interests in research are advanced by having the best researchers proposing what they think should be studied and competing against other outstanding researchers for funds. Ways can be found for ensuring that there is adequate access for new entrants, so that resources are not captured by self-perpetuating cliques. In research, as in many areas of human activity, wisdom resides in the sum total of thousands of individual decisions rather than in a government appointed council.

3.84 The Committee read with interest the views of Professor David Penington, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and an eminent medical research scientist:

> ...we are told now that research should increasingly be targetted to fields designated as in the national interest. We are told that some sections of our universities should receive no funding for research and be committed solely to teaching ... that no university will receive funding for research in all of its disciplines. (However) there is a profound danger that if these views were to dictate the imminent re-shaping of Australian science and technology, we would find ourselves committed to applied research only. Such a process could destroy Australia's data base, cripple its universities

and set back even further our potential as an industrial nation to address *the imperatives which will be before us by the year 2000. The next round* of R & D comes out of the basic research of today. The answer to AIDS will come from molecular virology and basic cellular immunology, not from applied studies on individuals presently suffering, worthy though such studies may be in their own right.[49]

3.85 The Committee does not believe that the appropriate balance between pure and applied research will be found by tipping all financial support in favour of projects with a clear, marketable outcome. Research projects should be judged for their quality, *not only for the likely short term profits. Evidence received by the* Committee indicates a recognition among institutions of both the need for balance and the importance of applied research in relation to Australia's current economic situation. In the Committee's view, the incentive for institutions to find the appropriate balance will lie in the increasingly competitive nature of research funding and in the linking of direct grants to the achievement of particular project goals.

3.86 Under current funding arrangements, general recurrent grants for universities reflect the assumption that all *staff are active in research. That assumption is* problematic.

- A number of staff, for part or all of their career, choose to concentrate on higher education's primary function: teaching undergraduate students.

- Because staff numbers are linked to student load, allocating research funds to all staff may direct scarce resources to areas of high student demand at the expense of areas with the greatest potential to achieve the institution's research objectives. As has been noted by the Australian Science and Technology Council, linking funding and staffing to student load "makes it difficult for individual institutions to develop centres of research concentration in areas other than those with high undergraduate enrolments. It also tends to make the activities of various institutions rather similar".[50]

- The ageing of higher education staff, the inflexible staff structures and reduced opportunities for promotion make it difficult for younger researchers to receive a share of indirect research funds.

3.87 Evidence available to the Committee suggests that indirect research grants based on staff numbers is not the most effective way to use limited resources. The Committee has some support for the view put to it that, while in some fields "critical mass" may be necessary before productive research is possible, "in other areas there is no particular reason why a large concentration of researchers in one place ... would necessarily be more productive".[51]

3.88 The Committee would not welcome the automatic extension of indirect grants to all institutions that reach a certain size in the proposed unified national system. An institution with 8,000 effective full-time student units (EFTSU) and eight faculties is not necessarily better equipped to undertake research than an institution with only 4,000 EFTSU and four faculties.[52] More important than institutional size is the *promotion of sound research management strategies and success in producing* results. The location of institutions is also a key factor in their ability to profit from

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the opportunities provided by outside sources. Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, for example, has undertaken numerous research projects related to the local coal industry[53], while Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education has been involved in a number of projects related to the bulk handling needs of local industries.[54]

3.89 Most institutions appear to have prepared, or be preparing, research management strategies. The Committee considers that such strategies should form an integral part of the educational profiles of all institutions undertaking research. Only institutions that establish solid research management strategies will succeed in attracting significant research funds.

(12)   The Committee recommends that research funding focus not on size but on research performance and potential. It should be allocated not against inputs such as staff and student numbers but according to research management strategies and proposed objectives.

Notes

1.   *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 6.
2.   Information supplied by the Department of Employment, Education and Training.
3.   *ibid.*
4.   Dr E Brooks, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 6.
5.   Sydney College of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 23.
6.   *Evidence*, p 451 (Federated Council of Academics).
7.   *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, pp 96, 102.
8.   Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Higher Education: Recommendations for 1988*, p35.
9.   *ibid*, p31.
10. Study by Dr R Linke, discussed in Safaris V, Stevenson A, and Redgrove E, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 3. Dr Linke has advised that socio-economic quartiles are measured in terms of parental income, educational level and occupational status.
11. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for the 1988-90 Triennium*, Volume 1, Part 1, April 1987, p 60.
12. *Evidence*, p 266.
13. *ibid*, p 264.
14. Victoria College, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 3.
15. *Evidence*, p 93.
16. Bendigo College of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 14.
17. *Evidence*, p 94.
18. *Evidence*, p 312. Information supplied by the Department of Employment, Education and Training.
19. Victorian Building and Construction Industry Training Council Limited, *Submission to Inquiry* p2.
20. *Evidence*, p 150 (Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education); p 376 (La Trobe University); p 631 (Federation of Australian University Staff;Associations); p 792 (University of Adelaide).
21. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 39.
22. *ibid.*
23. *Evidence*, p 635 (Federation of Australian University Staff Associations).
24. *ibid*, p 284 (Nepean College of Advanced Education).

25. *ibid*, p 449 (Federated Council of Academics).

26. *ibid*, p 150.

27. *ibid*, p 263.

28. *ibid*, p 221.

29. *ibid*, p 264 (Nepean College of Advanced Education).

30. *ibid*, p 575 (New South Wales Teachers' Federation).

31. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 37.

32. *Evidence*, p 763 (Australian Regional Colleges' Association)

33. *Evidence*, p 87.

34. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 37.

35. *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education*, p 226.

36. Western Australian College of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 2.

37. *Evidence*, p 338.

38. *ibid*, p 828.

39. *ibid*, pp 72-73.

40. *ibid*, p 438 (Federated Council of Academics).

41. *ibid*, p 609 (Federation of Australian University Staff Associations).

42. *ibid* pp 877-879.

43. Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association Incorporated, *Submission to Inquiry*, p6.

44. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 70.

45. A recent report by the Australian Science and Technology Council (ASTEC), states that in 1984, universities accounted for over 96% of higher education research and development expenditure, with the Commonwealth providing about 94% of higher education research funds. *Improving the Research Performance of Australia's Universities and other Higher Education Institutions*, Canberra, Government Printer, 1987 p 19.

46. Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce, *Measures of Science and Innovation*, Canberra, 1987, p 119.

47. *ibid*, p 15.

48. *op.cit* ASTEC, p 16.

49. Professor D Penington, 1987 Wellcome Australian Medal and Award Address

50. *ibid*, p 4.

51. *Evidence*, pp 618-619 (Federation of Australian University Staff Associations).

52. *ibid*, p 880.

53. *Submission to Inquiry*, p 1 and Attachment 1.

54. *Submission to Inquiry*, p 11.

Chapter 4

MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

Size of Institutions

4.1 The *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* found that institutions generate economies of scale once they reach a student load of about 2,000 equivalent full-time student units (EFTSU). The Commonwealth Government has endorsed this view and has proposed in the Green Paper that 2,000 EFTSU be the minimum acceptable student load for an institution that wishes to belong to the unified national system of higher education. Where appropriate, the Government would assist smaller specialised institutions to reach the target. In other cases, "other available options" would need to be considered. To have a broad teaching profile and some specialised research activity, an institution in the unified national system would require a student load of 5,000 EFTSU. For a relatively comprehensive involvement in teaching, and the resources to undertake research across a significant proportion of its profile, an institution would require 8,000 EFTSU.[1]

4.2 These figures have provoked considerable debate throughout the higher education sector. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has argued that cost differentials between institutions relate more to discipline mix than to institutional size; and that, while the overheads of institutions below 2,000 EFTSU form a higher proportion of institutional running costs, there is no good reason to grade other institutions according to the 5,000 and 8,000 EFTSU figures. The Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education has maintained that institutions with between 4,000 and 6,000 students appear to be as cost-effective as larger institutions, if not more so; and that the benchmark figures for membership of the unified national system do not fully reflect an appreciation of the efficiency and achievements of specialised institutions. The Australian Regional Colleges Association gave evidence that regional colleges provide a focus for many community activities and receive a degree of local support that a campus of a larger, centralised institution would not receive.[2]

4.3 The Committee accepts the need to scrutinise institutional efficiency. It notes the evidence that, below 2,000 EFTSU, institutions may incur a cost penalty related to their size. However, preoccupation with institutional size and cost per student is problematic because it directs attention to inputs rather than outcomes. The Committee agrees with the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee that if an institution "has good plans, produces quality graduates, and generally performs well within the limits of the mission it has adopted, it should be supported."[3] The Committee believes the debate should focus on the educational requirements of the communities that the institutions serve.

4.4 Associated with the question of size is the issue of amalgamations. Evidence received by the Committee supports the view that to have fewer, larger institutions does not necessarily lead to better educational outcomes. Educational advantage, and not size alone, should be the criterion for deciding where consolidation should be proposed. The Committee also believes that consolidations should be limited to cases where the distance between the institutions would not undermine the educational advantages consolidation seeks to promote.

(13) **The Committee recommends that proposals for institutional growth and for consolidations be based on the educational goals to be gained and not on considerations of size alone. Consolidations should also consider the geographical proximity of the institutions concerned.**

4.5 The Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education has argued that, in any consolidation of institutions, a change of name should occur to indicate that a new institution has been formed and that the strength and reputation of the partners have been recognised. While recognising the concern of smaller institutions not to be absorbed without trace, the Committee believes that it would not always be appropriate to create a new name, particularly where the existing name has already established a national and international reputation.

Duplication of Courses

4.6 The Committee received some evidence that unnecessary duplication of courses between institutions had arisen as each institution tried to be self-sufficient across a range of core subject fields, or as a number of institutions moved quickly into areas of new demand. While recognising that some duplication of courses is required to facilitate student access, the Committee is concerned about the waste of resources implied by course duplication where there is insufficient real demand.

4.7 The Committee's report contains a number of recommendations on issues such as liberalised credit transfer and articulation arrangements that will promote greater co-operation between institutions and improve educational provision while eliminating waste. The key element of developing educational profiles will also allow duplication to be controlled at the both the state and national levels.

4.8 However, the Committee remains concerned about the slow pace of change in this matter. It believes that course duplication should be a target for the existing succesful practice of major discipline reviews.

(14) **The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth continue the systematic process of major discipline reviews with a view to eliminating unnecessary course duplication.**

Use of Facilities

Buildings

4.9 In 1986, the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* reported that urgent needs for renovation or replacement of buildings had not been met. According to the submissions and public evidence presented to the Committee, little relief has been given. The "heavy backlog" in this area as a result of limited funds over the last decade is acknowledged in the Green Paper, but additional funds for a catch up do not form part of the calculations of future funding requirements.[4] Apart from planning to relax restrictions on the ability of institutions to borrow money, the Commonwealth Government has not proposed any changes to the current system whereby major capital grants are directed to individual institutions for specific projects.

4.10 Currently, minor works grants are allocated separately to institutions, but the Green Paper proposes that they be subsumed by the general operating grant, which also includes funds for recurrent costs and equipment.[5] On the evidence it has received, the Committee believes that such a move will give more management responsibility and initiative to institutions in developing their strategies. Accordingly,

(15) **the Committee recommends that minor works funds be included in the general operating grant.**

4.11 Some institutions have accumulated minor works funds over a number of years for major capital works purposes. At least one has received capital funds from a State Government and others have attracted assistance from non-government sources, particularly for research facilities and student accommodation. Interest on investments, and fees from the hire of facilities to conferences and community groups, have also been used for capital works.

> **The Committee welcomes the initiatives taken by institutions to explore alternative sources for capital funds.**

4.12 However, the Committee is firmly of the view that a substantial injection of Commonwealth capital funds is both necessary and overdue. The Committee is concerned about the inefficiencies that flow from the continued run-down of higher education capital facilities which, according to an estimate of the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education*, had an estimated replacement value in 1986 of over $4 billion.

(16) **The Committee recommends that the need for capital funding to enhance opportunities for growth be addressed in each institution's educational profile.**

4.13 While not in a position to identify how much additional funding would be required for rehabilitation and replacement, the Committee notes as indicative the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission's recommendation that $80 million be provided over a three-year period.[6]

(17) **The Committee also recommends that capital funds be provided for the essential rehabilitation and replacement of existing facilities.**

Equipment

4.14 The Committee heard evidence that higher education institutions have serious difficulties in maintaining adequate levels of teaching and research equipment. Limited government equipment funding, the decline in the value of the Australian dollar and rapid technological change have meant that institutions are increasingly unable to provide the "state-of-the-art" equipment necessary for teaching and research.[7]

4.15 Evidence gathered by the Committee lends support to the Department of Science's 1986 findings that:

- 15% of equipment was in a poor or inoperable working condition;

- 18% of items were no longer technically adequate;

- of the items requiring replacement, 77% required replacement immediately or within the next five years;

- 30% of all items of equipment were perceived as "state-of-the-art".[8]

In some areas, the situation may be far worse. A 1985 study for the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education found that more than half the equipment of the technologically oriented colleges, and over 40% of all equipment in colleges of advanced education, was obsolete. About 10% was or would soon be unserviceable.[9] The Committee believes that the poor state of the equipment stock seriously hampers the ability of the higher education sector to contribute as much as it could to Australia's economic and social development.

4.16 The Committee found widespread support for the Green Paper's proposal that the current equipment grants be subsumed in a general "operating grant" which would also include existing recurrent, minor works and special research grants.[10] The Committee strongly endorses the proposal, which would give institutions greater flexibility and increase their responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of their equipment stock.

(18) **The Committee recommends that increased Government funding for equipment be negotiated with institutions as part of their educational profiles.**

4.17 The Committee also believes that institutions must be encouraged to apply sound management principles to the allocation of equipment funds. The Committee received evidence that computerised equipment management systems are being developed and that some institutions are including equipment acquisition and replacement in their strategic plans. It strongly endorses this practice.

(19) The Committee recommends that all institutions be encouraged to adopt equipment management plans.

4.18 Evidence was received from numerous sources that funds have been obtained from business for purchasing equipment. The Committee was also told about innovative approaches to equipment acquisition and use, involving sharing of equipment between institutions and between institutions and industry. For example, as it had insufficient resources to acquire a major item of equipment for its geology department, La Trobe University entered a joint venture with the University of Melbourne and a private company to purchase it. Each shares the equipment according to the proportion of the total cost contributed.[11] The University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney, share a modern electron microscope, purchased with funds from both institutions.[12] According to one source, it is quite common for institutions to be able to "scratch around and get contributions to buy equipment".[13]

4.19 The Committee is aware that such arrangements may be limited to "high tech" equipment and not include the large volume of more basic equipment needed for undergraduate teaching.[14] However, any reduction in an institution's outlays for expensive high tech equipment will free resources for purchases in other areas.

(20) The Committee recommends that institutions, as part of their equipment management strategies, be encouraged to seek outside funding for equipment acquisition and develop plans for equipment sharing.

Teaching Periods

4.20 The Committee is aware of the view that increased use of buildings and equipment could provide greater public returns on the Commonwealth Government's substantial investment in higher education facilities. Lengthening the academic year, and extending operating hours during the day and over the weekend, have been suggested as ways to promote greater flexibility in responding to the needs of students as well as reduce the need for new capital facilities to meet the planned growth in student numbers.

4.21 The current pattern of the academic teaching year varies widely between institutions. While most institutions have adopted the two semester system, some have retained three terms and year-long courses. The Committee notes that the universities and the advanced education institutions are moving towards a common academic year. It encourages such moves, particularly in the context of the proposed unified national system of higher education.

4.22 While there is some variation between institutions, the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* found that most teach for 30 to 35 weeks a year. Advocates of year-round teaching propose either introducing an additional teaching period of about 15 weeks or reorganising the academic calendar to comprise four

teaching periods of 10 to 12 weeks each. However, the scope for year-round teaching may be more apparent than real. The Committee received evidence that the current length of the teaching year does not mean that institutions simply go on holidays for four to five months a year. Offices, laboratories, libraries and computing facilities are used continually by staff and postgraduate students for research. Increasing the teaching year may in fact have the unintended effect of hindering research. The University of Technology, Sydney, gave evidence that the unusual length of its semesters - 20 weeks each - is becoming a heavy burden, with "no vacation period in which people can be encouraged to get on with research or take the next big step".[15]

4.23 Non-teaching periods are also used for revising and developing courses, supervising postgraduates and attending conferences. External studies providers use laboratories and other specialised space, as well as student accommodation, to conduct residential schools. Non-academic staff use the periods to repair and set-up laboratory equipment, for important maintenance projects, for stocktaking and reorganisation in the library and for the general administration associated with examinations, enrolments and the provision of institutional services. Some staff development courses are run at this time. Facilities are also used during non-teaching periods for some continuing education courses and for conferences - potential sources of income that should be encouraged.

4.24 Proponents of year-round teaching claim it would provide more options for students and allow them to complete courses in a shorter time. However, the Committee is aware of some overseas evidence to the contrary. The Committee was told that at one Canadian university with year-round teaching, students took longer to complete their degrees than did students following the standard two semester year.[16] Furthermore, several witnesses argued that year-round teaching could be detrimental to many students, who use the summer break to consolidate what they learn and to undertake full-time employment.[17]

4.25 There would be considerable merit in year-round teaching if institutions could enrol substantially more students at limited extra cost, but many witnesses said that additional costs are likely to outweigh benefits. Several institutions referred to the need for additional academic staff; the University of Technology, Sydney, highlighted the need for more office space; Griffith University said that the costs of increasing the use of existing facilities would not be less than the cost of providing new facilities; and Nepean College of Advanced Education raised the need for expensive air-conditioning if buildings were to be used over summer.[18]

4.26 For these reasons, the Committee sees little scope for the general introduction of year-round teaching. Nevertheless, the Committee firmly believes that the summer period should be used to provide bridging and remedial courses as well as specialised short courses for Australian and overseas students. Many institutions already offer such programs; others will be encouraged to do so by the Commonwealth Government's decision to include bridging courses in the assessment of student load. The Committee encourages institutions to review the scope for offering selected programs during a summer term as a means of facilitating student progress.

(21) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government fund trial programs to explore the possibilities and problems of offering summer courses.

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4.27 The Committee also believes that institutions could intensify the use of existing facilities during the current academic year. It was put to the Committee that in some cases, teaching hours reflect staff preferences more than student needs. More flexible timetabling would allow better use of facilities and would help meet the needs of a variety of users, including part-time students. The most efficient use of facilities may require centralised timetabling, which is already practised in a number of institutions.[20] The Committee notes that, in assessing major capital works proposals, the Commonwealth takes into account the use of existing facilities.

(22) **The Committee recommends that institutions be encouraged to use centralised timetabling to improve the use of facilities and to provide students with the best options.**

Energy Management

4.28 Many institutions have investigated how to improve energy management. The Committee was impressed by the variety of innovative ways in which institutions have approached the problem, and by the extent of the savings achieved. The University of New South Wales, for example, reported savings of $600,000 since 1986 by renegotiating its electricity tariffs and the University of Melbourne put at $1 million the actual cumulative savings against budget from 1978 to 1986 following the introduction of its "killerwatt" savings program.[21] Several other institutions reported similar success through careful monitoring of demand during peak and base load tariff periods.

4.29 An interesting innovation, the results of which have been significant and sometimes surprising, is the installation of computer-controlled energy management systems to turn off lighting and air conditioning in unoccupied areas when not needed: "The problem is that, if the lecturer is not moving about much and the students are sitting still, the lights go off in the middle, and the attendant has told me that you can get into a panic situation then".[22]

4.30 In 1985, Griffith University won the National Energy Management Award in the "Institutions" category. Major energy saving measures adopted by Griffith University include: reduced night time air-conditioning and effective but more economical lighting in the library; computer-based load shedding; more efficient hot water provision, refrigeration and water distillation; and an energy saving competition, the winning idea for which promotes energy management in student residences. Following the competition the University expects to save $2,000 a month for an outlay of $400 in prizes.

4.31 Many of the above practices are applied widely. As noted in information received from Griffith University, "none of the ...ideas or actions are in themselves particularly difficult. The difficulty is in the resolve to implement the programme".[23] The Committee adds: "and in the circulation of information about what measures are successful." It seems that there are only limited formal opportunities for information about energy management to be exchanged.

The Committee encourages forums such as the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's conferences on maintenance and energy management and suggests that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education investigate ways of regularly circulating information about resource management.

4.32 Several institutions referred to the initial costs of setting up energy management systems, particularly those involving computerised control. The University of Technology, Sydney, for example, put at $110,000 the cost of installing a computer to program energy use.[24] While costs are often recuperated at an early date, the initial funding problem remains.

(23) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government consider providing funds for establishing energy management programs. Such funds could be in the form of an advance, to be repaid from energy savings achieved.

Cleaning

4.33 A number of institutions from which the Committee received evidence were in the process of reviewing their cleaning costs. Costs per square metre range from about $6 to $15. No practice appears to be the most efficient: while some institutions have moved to contract cleaning to reduce costs, one saved 40% by ceasing to use contract cleaners and establishing its own cleaning company instead. In addition, there may be industrial problems involved in moving to contract employment from a situation where cleaners are employed by the institutions, often on favourable terms. The Committee does not wish to recommend one approach to cleaning as the most efficient. It does, however, encourage institutions to continue to review cleaning and other costs, such as security, with a view to making the most effective use of available resources.

Libraries

4.34 The Committee is aware that funding restraints and the fall in the value of the Australian dollar have placed severe restraints on library facilities and on the ability of libraries to acquire new publications and maintain subscriptions. The Committee heard that a wider use of technology could alleviate problems by facilitating the shared use of resources. In particular, the computerisation of records of library holdings seems to be an important step in opening the way to greater sharing. Evidence was given that, while computerisation of library records appears to be a widely followed practice, it is often poorly co-ordinated. Different systems have been used, but the absence of an Australia-wide library network means that existing local networks are not as efficient as originally expected.

4.35 The Committee is aware of the Commonwealth Government's support for an investigation of:

* ways in which co-operation between higher educationlibraries can be improved, especially in relation to the purchasing of materials and the provision of services to users;

- the role of new information technologies in the provision of library services; and

- the problem of storage of material in libraries.

(24) **The Committee recommends that higher education library services be investigated.**

Staff

Mobility

4.36 The need for institutions to have greater latitude in making resource allocation decisions also applies to their staffing decisions. Currently, the academic staffing system does not allow institutions sufficient scope to respond quickly and effectively to changes in community expectations and demands. The Committee is of the view that the system should be changed to allow greater staff mobility, through increased diversity and flexibility of employment terms and conditions, and incentives to excel. Therefore, it agrees with the Commonwealth Government that there should be a comprehensive review of the terms and conditions of employment of academic staff. It would also see merit in the development of significant exchanges of staff between academic institutions and the public and private sectors.

Tenure

4.37 Academic staff at the lecturer level and above usually are tenured; those below usually are not. As it is difficult to redeploy permanently appointed staff, institutions have shifted their staffing resources by relocating their untenured, junior positions. Consequently, staff in these positions have been called upon to undertake tasks which more senior staff normally would be expected to do.

4.38 Funds for creating new positions, often non-tenured lecturer posts, have been found by limiting the promotion opportunities of tenured staff. These staff, many of whom are in the 35-45 year old age group, have had their prospects for advancement curtailed at an earlier stage of their academic careers than they had expected, and suffer a decline in morale. Furthermore, unwilling or unable to dismiss or redeploy the staff involved, some institutions continue to offer courses which reflect the expertise of the relevant staff rather than the demand among students to undertake those areas of study.

4.39 The Committee recognises the benefits of tenure as a means of attracting applicants for vacant positions in high demand areas, encouraging long-term research, and maintaining the continuity and quality of academic activities. Institutions have different policies and practices concerning the optimum ratio of tenured to untenured staff, depending on factors such as discipline mix, location, and willingness and ability to encourage regular transfers of staff between the institution and the private sector. It has been suggested that the ratio should be regulated

nationally, but the Committee is of the view that this should remain a matter for the discretion of individual institutions as part of their strategies for implementing their profiles. However, in view of the inflexibility that tenure imposes on resource allocation decisions,

> the Committee sees significant advantages in an increase in contract-based positions at all levels.

4.40 A tenured appointment can be terminated due to misconduct, inadequate performance, or, in some cases, redundancy or financial exigency. As should be the case, dismissals usually are negotiated separately with the staff member concerned in view of the individual's attributes and circumstances. Nonetheless, clear procedures and guidelines establishing the parameters of the negotiation and the rights of the participants should be followed in each instance.

4.41 Evidence received by the Committee supports the findings of the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* that such provisions often do not exist; or, if they do, they are not necessarily implemented. As observed by the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations: "Most of the disputes that we have had with universities over dismissals have been because they refuse to follow their own procedures - the procedures that they have established ..."[25]

4.42 Noting that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to provide special funds for redundancy packages, the Committee is concerned that institutions might find it simpler to declare staff redundant than convey and justify to them unfavourable assessments of their conduct. However, not to have access to additional funds could be a disincentive to negotiate fair separation agreements.

(25) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government provide funds for redundancy packages but only on the condition that the institution concerned has established, in consultation with staff associations, adequate procedures for all types of dismissals.

4.43 The procedures would be expected to encompass provisions for notice and appeal and, particularly in redundancy cases, the examination of alternatives such as redeployment at the same or lower classification, and retraining. Redundancy action would also need to contribute to the institution's capacity to implement its educational profile.

Limited Term Appointments

4.44 As noted above, the Committee favours the wider distribution of term appointments as a means of improving the capacity of institutions to respond to change. By the nature of their employment, non-tenured staff are at a disadvantage compared to their tenured counterparts because of their limited security and reduced opportunities to undertake long-term projects. However, in some cases the uncertainties encountered by non-tenured staff have been exacerbated by institutional practices, such as employing contract staff for only 12 weeks at a time so that they are not paid during semester breaks or for course preparation.

4.45 The Committee considers that the provision of loadings for non-tenured staff is appropriate in view not only of their relative disadvantages but of the advantages to institutions of the increased flexibility which contract employment allows.

(26) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government support the introduction of salary loadings for non-tenured staff.

4.46 The amount and coverage of the loadings should be negotiated as part of a national award, but, as an indication of the likely cost of the proposal, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has ascertained that "if all current term appointees were paid an allowance of 20% of salary, the total additional cost would be in the order of $11.7m."[26] The capacity of the higher education sector to grow would be set back if institutions were required to absorb such an increase in the cost of employing their current staff.

Part-time Employment and Joint Appointments

4.47 Employing academic staff to undertake less than a full-time load allows institutions to fine tune their staffing decisions, especially where the tasks are specialised or limited or where demand for a course of study is changing.

4.48 Part-time appointments can also be a means of forging links between academia and the private sector. Part-time staff who work for the remainder of their time in industry or business bring to the institution current information about their profession, and to their profession an awareness of the institution's activities.

4.49 Recognising the desirability of such interaction, some institutions have established joint appointments, whereby the staff member's employment is shared between the institution and a private employer. The University of Technology, Sydney, is taking the idea further by aiming to have the private employers contribute more than the institution to the salary package, increasing the total remuneration. It is hoped that this practice will attract people whose expertise is in high demand, and who can therefore command from private enterprise a greater salary than that normally available to academics.

4.50 While part-time and joint appointments help institutions to allocate their resources more efficiently and effectively, institutions nevertheless should be wary of attempting to utilise these appointments in ways which adversely affect the quality of teaching and research. The Committee was advised, for example, that part-time staff have been required to take on the course co-ordination responsibilities of full-time, more highly qualified staff.[27] The Committee would hope that institutions would not consider such unfair practices necessary as the higher education sector expands during the projected period of growth.

Flexible Hierarchies

4.51 Several institutions referred in submissions and at public hearings to their adoption of a "flexible hierarchy", to increase their ability to vary their staffing arrangements in response to changing circumstances. Bendigo College of Advanced Education explained the system in this way:

Some nine years ago the College adopted a policy whereby all academic positions of responsibility were to be held on a limited-term basis, with an allowance where required to bridge the gap between the appointee's substantive salary and the approved salary for the position. The positions subject to this procedure, namely deans, course controllers, course co-ordinators and heads of department, are held for a period of up to five years. Prior to the end of the period of tenure of each position, the position is readvertised and the incumbent is eligible to apply. In virtually all cases the positions have been filled following internal advertisement, but, subject to the staffing profile of the faculty or department concerned, external advertisement may be approved. In such a case the position is advertised with tenure at a level below the approved level of the position with a limited-term allowance to that level. For example, a dean's position would be advertised substantively at principal lecturer level with an allowance to head of school III.[28]

4.52 This practice, which is relatively common for appointments to positions such as dean, allows institutions to attract capable candidates to positions and to maintain the incentive to perform well. It also allows a sharing of responsibility and for staff to alternate between predominantly academic and more administrative positions.

The Committee supports flexible hierarchies as a means of achieving more dynamic staffing structures.

Consultancies

4.53 Consultancy work clearly is an important means by which the community can have direct access to the expertise of academic staff, and the staff can receive recognition for their services. Consultancies have also become sources of significant supplementary income for academics, as well as for institutions.

4.54 The conditions according to which staff can undertake consultancies are in many cases still being developed by institutions. Among the institutions from which the Committee received evidence, the prior approval of the dean or head of school is required, and some assessment is made of the likely impact of the consultancy on the staff member's other duties.

4.55 Indeed, in establishing guidelines for consultancy work, the primary concern should be to ensure that the institution's teaching and research activities are disrupted as little as possible. The Committee therefore considers it appropriate that limits on the time involved, rather than the income received, be imposed.

4.56 Evidence received by the Committee indicates a consensus that each full-time academic staff member should be able to allocate up to 13 days per quarter, whether weekdays or weekends, for consultancy work.

The Committee considers it appropriate that full-time academic staff be entitled to pursue outside work for up to 13 days per quarter, provided that this does not adversely affect teaching and research responsibilities and that it has been approved by the institution.

Staff who wish to exceed this limit regularly would be expected to convert to fractional appointments.

4.57 Where one has been established, the separate research company of an institution usually negotiates the terms and conditions of consultancies which use the institution's facilities. In cases where staff enter consultancies individually, and do not use the institution's facilities, they tend not to be required to apportion any of their earnings to the institution. The Committee was advised that a proportion of these earnings usually is donated, but no one could identify what percentage of the total this represents. There is a marked reluctance among institutions to enforce a contribution of the fees earned in this way.

> The Committee considers it appropriate that institutions claim for costs associated with the use of their facilities by staff undertaking consultancy work, and that the amount charged and method of payment be negotiated among the parties concerned.

Superannuation

4.58 Even though the Commonwealth Government has for some time encouraged all higher education institutions to introduce the Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities (SSAU), the lack of portability of superannuation continues to be a significant barrier to staff mobility.

4.59 Wider coverage by the SSAU is likely to occur over time as the proportion of staff employed after it began to be supported as the common major scheme increases. The growth in number of newer appointees is expected to be hastened during the 1990s, when an increase in retirements of current staff is anticipated.

4.60 Compared to some State schemes, however, the SSAU is not always more attractive, so the incentive for existing members of State superannuation funds to transfer is not strong.[29] The Committee was also told, for example, that the SSAU does not offer attractive early retirement provisions. The number of staff covered by the scheme is also limited by legislation in New South Wales and Queensland, and by the fact that institutions determine which categories of staff will have SSAU coverage.

4.61 As a result, many junior, part-time, and contract academic staff are not covered by the scheme.[30]

(27) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth and State Governments negotiate agreements whereby academic staff who are not members of the SSAU are given more incentives to join, and institutions are encouraged to extend coverage to staff who are presently excluded.

4.62 It is possible that government funds will need to be allocated to finance the transition to the SSAU of all contributors to other schemes and the full vesting of employer contributions; however, the Committee has heard evidence that resources for adjusting the benefit profile might be available from within the scheme.[31]

4.63 A related issue is one of early retirement. Given the ageing staff profile and the anticipated growth in the sector, the need for early retirement schemes to be offered as a means of improving mobility should not be as great as it was in the past. Early retirement schemes can also lead to substantial savings, as illustrated by the achievement of $852,000 in savings since 1983 through an early retirement scheme at the South Australian College of Advanced Education.[32] The Committee notes that the Commonwealth Government has agreed to provide financial assistance to institutions which have such schemes.

(28) **The Committee recommends that Commonwealth Government financial support be provided for early retirement schemes for the next triennium, after which time it should be reviewed in the light of anticipated retirement trends and options offered by the SSAU.**

Salaries

4.64 Although it did not receive much evidence on the issue, the Committee welcomes the progress being made in introducing standard salary scales across the higher education sector. Currently, there are similar but separate scales for academic staff in universities and those in colleges of advanced education. The main difference is that university staff have less salary increments and promotion barriers between the top and bottom of the scale.

4.65 As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Committee supports the abolition of the binary system of higher education. To continue the separate salary scales is to perpetuate the division between universities and colleges and to inhibit the mobility of academic staff from one category to the other.

The Committee supports the abolition of the differences between academic staff salary scales which reflect the binary system.

4.66 The Committee received evidence that the existing salaries and associated conditions for academic staff are not attracting applicants in the high demand areas of computing, engineering and economics/accounting. This has impeded the efforts of institutions to produce teaching and research of sufficient quality and quantity in these areas.

4.67 A solution supported by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education is to increase the flexibility of salary scales in order to be able to offer more when competition is strong. Professor John Scott, Chairman of the Vice-Chancellors' Committee, explained the idea in this way:

> If we are going to actually compete in a field like computer science, and appoint a lecturer, say, at 26 or 27 with a doctor's degree, we would be paying them, at mid-range, $30,000 to $35,000 at the moment. I guess such a person in the open market is probably in the $70,000 to $80,000 range in computer science. There is no way I am suggesting we should do that. I think that would produce such inequities and jealousies among other staff that we would do ourselves more harm than good. So, probably the maximum extra could be 50 or 60 percent above salary; that would be the absolute maximum ... I do not see that that would be a loading for all

computer science people for all their careers. It would have to be reviewed in terms of competition, although it is very difficult to reduce salaries.[33]

4.68 The staff associations, however, have argued that academic salaries should reflect the work undertaken, rather than the income of employees in the private sector. In giving evidence to the Committee, the President of the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations said:

> As you are aware, we have problems with differential salaries, salaries differing according to discipline. This is because of our perception that all academics are essentially doing the same thing. We are all teachers and researchers together. The similarities between an academic physicist and an academic historian are far greater than between an academic physicist and a professional physicist. So we are quite committed to a uniform salary scale across disciplines.[34]

4.69 Higher education institutions have been prevented from paying salaries outside the standard scales by the terms under which they receive funds from the Commonwealth. The States Grants legislation which provides financial assistance to tertiary education has made general recurrent grants available on the condition that salaries are paid according to scales set by the Academic Salaries Tribunal and the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Earlier legislation specified that institutions would be required to repay the Commonwealth an amount of money up to the equivalent of that which they overpaid their academic staff[35], but the relevant clauses do not appear in the most recent legislation, the *States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Act 1987*.[36] Nevertheless, the Committee has been given to understand that the Commonwealth retains the power, under other parts of the 1987 Act, to continue to enforce the condition if it wished to do so.

4.70 Academic staff who have expertise which is in high demand are likely to have no shortage of opportunities to undertake consultancy work for a lucrative level of remuneration. In the Committee's view, the most cost-effective solution is for institutions to be as flexible as possible in allowing these staff to supplement their income through consultancy work, perhaps by being employed only on a fractional basis, as well as allowing them to enjoy the security and many of the freedoms normally associated with academic life.

4.71 The Committee is aware that this approach may not be a sufficient concession to market forces and that institutions might wish to be able to offer more. However, market forces are always changing, and they certainly are not stable enough to justify introducing long term inequities to the academic salary system. The Committee is not convinced that temporary salary loadings can be negotiated successfully as a general practice. It is reasonable for employees to expect that their salary will increase over time, either through incremental advancement or promotion, and will at least be maintained; the likelihood that it will decrease militates against the incentive provided by short term gain.

4.72 Whether or not consultancy opportunities or additional salary can be offered as inducements to apply for academic posts, a significant factor in attracting staff is the package of non-salary benefits that institutions can offer. The Committee was advised, for example, that: "there are some parts of the university where it is just not possible to offer non-tenured positions and expect people to apply";[37] "if we want to

attract high calibre people we will need packages that include payments providing travel to overseas conferences;"[38] and "negotiations ... have not only related to the question of salary but also to a whole range of items associated with that".[39]

4.73 On balance, the Committee considers that, as a major objective is to attract the staff who have the expertise required, institutions should be given as much discretion as possible in recruiting them, but not at the expense of the credibility of national salary scales and nor at additional cost to the taxpayer.

> **(29) The Committee recommends that institutions continue to receive funding for academic salaries in accordance with salary scales determined by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission but that they be given discretion to pay above the award rates and/or provide non-salary benefits if they can find the necessary funds from within their own resources.**

Improving Staff Performance

4.74 A survey last year of all institutions revealed that 11 had formally introduced or were establishing staff assessment procedures. Most of the remainder were "actively considering" them.[40] In many cases, it is considered adequate that the performance of academic staff is assessed while on probation pending permanent appointment, or when seeking promotion. Staff are also indirectly assessed during course accreditation procedures and internal reviews. The Committee was advised that, where reports on performance are required for incremental salary advancement within a range, the opportunity is rarely taken to counsel the staff member concerned. However, peer assessment is often cited as a primary influence on staff performance.

4.75 It is the Committee's view that improving the quality of teaching and research provided by institutions depends on the introduction of assessment procedures that can *trigger developmental opportunities. Evidence presented to the Committee* indicated that the institutional response to poor performance by a staff member is as likely to be a reduction in resources or an increase in teaching responsibilities as the provision of counselling or training.[41]

4.76 As well as encompassing the development of teaching and research skills, staff development activities should encompass management training for senior academic and executive staff, and provide opportunities for general staff.

4.77 A number of institutions have established staff development centres which assess teaching performance and provide guidance and instruction; others have minimal facilities. The Committee was also advised that contract staff often do not have access to developmental opportunities.

(30) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government encourage the introduction of staff assessment procedures, linked with developmental opportunities, in all higher education institutions for all staff.

4.78 The Committee recognises the desirability of institutions developing their own procedures and range of opportunities, but would support the use of studente evaluation of teaching. While it appears that the quality of the information which students provide varies, the Committee considers that such feedback is a valid and useful component of the range of indicators which can be used.

Student / Staff Ratio

4.79 Across the higher education sector the student/staff ratio has increased since 1975. The ratio often featured in submissions and evidence as a sign of improved efficiency, or decreased effectiveness, but the Committee concluded that it was not a useful indicator of either.

4.80 The ratio highlights the fact that class sizes are increasing. The impact on the quality of teaching and research is not clear. It was suggested to the Committee, for example, that "small classes ... do not lead to effective teaching though they seem to provide greater staff and student satisfaction."[42] Increased satisfaction, however, could reduce attrition rates.

4.81 The Commonwealth Government has indicated in the Green Paper that institutions should establish guidelines as to the minimum class size. A figure of 20 students has been suggested. It was pointed out to the Committee that if this minimum class size were enforced, institutions such as the Nepean College of Advanced Education would be required to cancel a number of courses which have not yet reached maturity and cost-effectiveness. In addition, as courses take several years to develop, institutions are reluctant to cancel them without a review over perhaps several years. An alternative put forward is the practice of offering the courses which are in low demand less often.

4.82 Clearly, calculations of minimum size for efficiency need to be assessed in view of maximum size for effectiveness. The committee would not support the imposition of rigid guidelines, but can see merit in institutions developing the capacity to make the calculations.

JOHN BRUMBY
Chairman
10 May 1988

Notes

1. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, pp 33-34.
2. *Evidence*, pp 458, 464, 658, 745, 748.
3. Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, *Excellence and Efficiency: The Vice-Chancellors' Response to the Green Paper*, April 1988, p 8.
4. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 79.
5. *ibid*, p 44.
6. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, *Report for the 1988-90 Triennium*, Volume 1, Part 1, p 168.
7. Dr D Herbison-Evans, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 1;University of Technology, Sydney, Submission toInquiry, p 3.
8. Department of Science, *A Pilot Study of Research Equipment in Higher Education*, pp 1-2.
9. Exhibit 7, *Report on Equipment Funding in Colleges of Advanced Education*, pp 4, 6.
10. *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*, p 44.
11. *Evidence*, p 396 (La Trobe University).
12. University of Technology, Sydney, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 3.
13. *Evidence*, p 396 (La Trobe University).
14. *ibid*, p 340 (University of Technology, Sydney).
15. *ibid*, p 329 (University of Technology, Sydney).
16. *ibid*, p 646 (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee). See also a survey by the Conference of Directors and Principals of Quebec Universities, *Year-Round Operation of the University: An Analysis of its Rationale, a Description of a Recent Study and a Proposal for Synthesis*, Montreal, 1973.
17. *Evidence*, p 435 (Federated Council of Academics); p 646 (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee);   p 893 (The Australian National University).
18. *ibid*, pp 9, 258, 329.
19. The University of Technology, Sydney, gave evidence that its accommodation generally, and the teaching space in particular, is used most heavily during the evenings. *ibid*, p 307.
20. *ibid*, p 10 (Griffith University).
21. The University of Melbourne, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 6.
22. *Evidence*, p 842 (University of Adelaide).
23. Exhibit 27, *Energy Management - Medal Winning Techniques*, p S8.73.
24. *Evidence*, p 326 (University of Technology, Sydney).
25. *ibid*, p 638.
26. *Excellence and Efficiency*, p 17.
27. *Submission to Inquiry*, p 25. See also GippslandInstitution of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 2 and *Evidence*, p 148. (Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education).
28. *Evidence*, p 593 (New South Wales Teachers' Federation).
29. *ibid*, p 186 (University of New South Wales); p 432 (Federated Council of Academics).
30. *ibid*, p 603 (Federation of Australian University Staff Associations).
31. *ibid*, p 433 (Federated Council of Academics).
32. South Australian College of Advanced Education, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 6.
33. *Evidence*, pp 665-666.
34. *ibid*, p 612.
35. *States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Act 1984,46(2), 46(3)*.
36. *States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Act 1987*.
37. *Evidence*, p 835.
38. *ibid*, p 200.
39. *ibid*, p 285.
40. Dr A Lonsdale, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 5.
41. *Evidence*, p 386 (La Trobe University).
42. Mr I Plowman, *Submission to Inquiry*, p 9.

Appendix A: Witnesses Who Appeared at Public Hearings

Abbey, Mr B R
: Senior Lecturer in Politics,
Executive Member for Academic (Educational) Matters,
University of Adelaide

Allmond, Mr P
: Associate Registrar,
University of Technology, Sydney

Appleton, Dr A S
: Director,
Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education

Bachelard, Prof E P
: Chairman, Board of the Faculties,
Australian National University

Barham, Associate Prof I H
: Acting Vice-Chancellor,
Griffith University

Barlow, Ms K
: President, Macquarie University
Branch, Lecturers' Association,
New South Wales Teachers' Federation

Barrow, Mrs M
: Member of the University Council,
University of New South Wales

Barton, Prof A D
: Treasurer,
Australian National University

Blake, Dr C D
: Chairman, Australian Regional
Colleges' Association; Principal,
Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education

Bowie, Prof J H
: Professor of Chemistry and
Chairman, Executive Committee,
University of Adelaide

Burgess, Mr C
: Business Manager,
Griffith University

Cameron, Mr B J
: Registrar,
Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education

Chaikin, Prof M
: Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
University of New South Wales

Cicchinelli, Dr A L
: Deputy Principal (Planning and Information),
University of New South Wales

Clark, Dr P
: Dean, School of Science,
Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education

Dale, Mr A J	Planning Officer, University of Technology, Sydney
Davey, Dr I E	Senior Lecturer in Education and Executive Member for Research and Scholarships, University of Adelaide
de Audney, Dr A J	Estates Manager, Nepean College of Advanced Education
Dickson, Mrs A W	Deputy Chairman, Council of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education
Eder, Mr E E	Business Manager, University of Technology, Sydney
Etherington, Dr N A	Reader in History and Executive Member for Library, Grounds, Buildings and Accommodation, University of Adelaide
Fox, Dr J R	President, Federation of Australian University Staff Associations
Gale, Prof G F	Professor of Geography and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Adelaide
Gallagher, Mr R M	Director, Information Management, La Trobe University
Gallagher, Dr J	State President, Lecturers' Association, New South Wales Teachers' Federation
Govett, Prof G J S	Dean, Faculty of Applied Science, University of New South Wales
Hambly, Mr F S	Secretary, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
Hukins, Prof A A	Dean, Faculty of Professional Studies, University of New South Wales
Junor, Ms A M	Research Officer, New South Wales Teachers' Federation
Kennedy Dr T	Deputy Chairman, Australian Regional Colleges' Association; Director, Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education
Lardner, Mr L J	Manager (Property Administration), University of New South Wales

Leahy, Mr M W	Researcher-Organiser, Postgraduate Students Association, University of Adelaide
Maling, Dr J M	Principal, Nepean College of Advanced Education
Marjoribanks, Prof K M	Vice-Chancellor, University of Adelaide
Massaro Dr V	Director, Planning and Development, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
Masters, Prof C	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Griffith University
McCulloch Mr G	Federal Secretary, Federated Council of Academics
McMillan, Mr J W	Registrar and Secretary, University of Technology, Sydney
McNally, Mr P T	Deputy Director and Acting Director, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education
Miller, Dr J O	Chairman, Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education; Principal, Cumberland College of Health Sciences
Mond, Prof B	Acting Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University
Moses, Dr I	Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Technology, Sydney
Nevile, Prof J W	Dean, Faculty of Commerce, University of New South Wales
Nicholls, Ms J E	Research Officer, Federated Council of Academics
O'Donnell, Mr B R	Head, Planning and Audit Unit, Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education
O'Neill, Mr F J	Registrar, University of Adelaide
Owens, Mr J	Manager, Personnel Services, University of New South Wales
Parker, Dr D A S	Senior Lecturer in Dentistry and Executive Member for Staffing, University of Adelaide

Parr, Dr P J	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Technology, Sydney
Picard, Ms M C	Research Officer, Federation of Australian University Staff Associations
Quirk, Prof J P	Director, Waite Agricultural Research Institute, University of Adelaide
Ragusa, Mr S	Site and Buildings Manager, Griffith University
Ramsey, Dr G A	Interim Chairman, Higher Education Council, National Board of Employment, Education and Training
Robertson, Dr A G	Deputy Principal, Nepean College of Advanced Education
Ronayne, Prof J	Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Administration, Staff and Finance, University of New South Wales
Ross, Prof I G	Acting Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University
Schroder, Mr M C	Academic Registrar, University of New South Wales
Scott, Prof J F	Chairman, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee; Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University
Scutt, Mr J R	Secretary, Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education
Smith, Mr M	Acting Vice-Principal, La Trobe University
St Lawrence, Mr G H	Associate Secretary, Nepean College of Advanced Education
Tabrett, Ms M L	Acting Registrar, Griffith University
Wallis, Mr L B	General Secretary, Federation of Australian University Staff Associations
Warner, Prof R F	Professor of Civil Engineering and Executive Member for Equipment and Maintenance, University of Adelaide
Williams, Mr W R	Secretary, Australian National University

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Appendix B: Submissions Received

Institutions

Armidale College of Advanced Education
Australian College of Physical Education
Australian National University

Ballarat College of Advanced Education
Bendigo College of Advanced Education

Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education
Catholic Theological Union

Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education
Darwin Institute of Technology
Deakin University

Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education
Griffith University

Institute of Catholic Education

La Trobe University

Monash University

Nepean College of Advanced Education

Orange Agricultural College

Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education

South Australian College of Advanced Education
Sydney College of Advanced Education

University of Adelaide
University of Melbourne
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Australia

Victoria College
Victorian College of Pharmacy

Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education
Western Australian College of Advanced Education
Western Institute

Organisations

Adelaide University Postgraduate Students' Association

Committee, Restoration Engineering, Bendigo

Department of Industrial Relations and Employment, New South Wales

Federation of Australian Social Science Organisations

Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia

New South Wales Teachers' Federation

Phillip Academic Staff Association
Public Service Association of New South Wales

Queensland Colleges' Association

Victorian Building and Construction Industry Training Council

Individuals

Brooks, Dr E, Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education

Cameron, Mr B J, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education,
Clark, Mr N J, Bendigo College of Advanced Eduation,
Cooper, R S, Howrah, Tasmania

Davis, Mr D, Macquarie University
Donohue, Dr D J, Cairns College of Technical and Further Education

Etherington, Dr N, University of Adelaide

Herbison-Evans, Dr D, University of Sydney

Kenos, Mr A T, Airport West, Victoria

Lonsdale, Dr A, Curtin University of Technology,

Moses, Dr I, University of Technology, Sydney,

Nielson, M L, Bundaberg, Queensland

Plowman, Mr I C, Toowong, Queensland
Poiner, Dr G; Temple, Associate Professor D, University of Sydney

Ray, Dr J J, Mt Gravatt, Queensland
Redgrove, E, Sarafis, V, Stevenson, A, Hawkesbury   Agricultural College

Sheedy, Mr J, Hillsdale, New South Wales
Stanley, Mr P, University of Technology, Sydney
Sullivan, Dr M G, Monash University
Svensson, Professor N L, University of New South Wales

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Appendix C: Exhibits

1. **Griffith University**
   Document - *Griffith University Research Management Strategy.*

2. **Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education**
   Documents - *Organisation of the Institute; Instrument of Delegation of Authority to the Director; Academic Staff Position Guide; Staff Performance Planning and Appraisal; 1989 Budgeting and Academic Programme Planning; Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education Unit Specifications.*

3. **Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education**
   Document - *Academic Staff Evaluation - Policy.*

4. **University of New South Wales**
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8-10 La Trobe University
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11. New South Wales Teachers' Federation
Document - Submission to the Minister for Employment, Education and Training in response to the higher education policy discussion paper released in December 1987.

12. University of Adelaide
Documents - *Outline of Workshop for Chairpersons of the University of Adelaide*, presented by the Advisory Centre for University Education; Summary by faculty and department of academic staff and student load statistics 1987; *Annual Report 1986* - Advisory Centre for University Education; Student evaluation of teaching questionnaire; Student Statistics; *Restructuring of Tertiary Education in South Australia.*

13. Australian National University
Documents - *Annual Reports* for 1985 and 1986; Statistical Handbooks for 1986 and 1987, submission to the CTEC for the 1988-90 triennium; Documentation on periodic reviews of performance of academic staff; policy papers on departmental and school reviews.

14. Mr D Davis
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15. Mr M A Muspratt
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17. Mr I C Plowman
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18. Mr T Cook
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19. **Mr L H Lawrence**
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20. **Monash University**
    Documents - *The Monash Plan: A Strategy for the Future; Monash University - 1988 Budget.*

21. **Sydney College of Advanced Education**
    Documents - *Historical Account of Reorganisation that produced SCAE; Budget Strategy/Philosophy - 1988 Budget Papers; Cost Centre Budgeting Recommendations; Output - Student Projection Model; Admissions Report 1987; Policy and Procedures for Staff Selection January 1987; A Policy on the Admission and Support of Disadvantaged Students; An Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement; Report of the Review Committee set up to Examine the work of the Multicultural Centre; Learning Assistance Centre Report - Semester 1; Establishment of an Aboriginal Studies Centre; Rationale for the Distribution of Equipment Funds 1985-87 Triennium; Academic Staff Development Program; Staff Development Annual Report 1986; Professional Experience Program; Report of Activities and Recommendations of the Planning Group; Report on the Practicum Administration and Procedures Review Committee Volumes I and II; Report on Academic and Administrative Structures and Policies; Review of the College Purchasing Function; Institute Administrative and Support Staff Review; Appointment, Promotion and Progression of Academic Staff.*

22. **Armidale College of Advanced Education**
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23. **Catholic Theological Union**
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24. **University of Melbourne**
    Documents - *University Submission for 1988-1990 Triennium; University Statistics, 1987; Evaluation of Special Admissions Scheme;* Submissions to CTEC Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education - December, 1985 and February, 1986; Report on Future Directions of Word Processing.

25. **Dr G Poiner; Associate Professor D Temple**
    Document - *Progress Report on ARGS Pilot Project: The Participation of Women in Academic Research.*

26. **University of Sydney**
    Documents - J M Ward "Accountability and Responsibility: the University Challenges of the 1980s": *Australian Journal of Public Administration* Vol XLIV No. 1, March 1985, pp 73-85; *Yellow Paper* 19 September 1986; *Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Address at Conferring of Degrees,* 27 June 1987; Registrar's Report on Selection into Quotas, 1987; information on Broadway Special Admission Scheme; *Conditions of Employment for Academic Staff.*

27. **University of Western Australia**
Documents - A summary statement of the University's total income and expenditure for the year ended 31/12/87; Student statistics - various tables describing the mix between enrolment types, course levels and fields of study; *Utilisation and Management of Physical Facilities; Equipment Management and Use of Technology; Research Performance and Management; Staffing Policies and Profiles;* The University's Mission Statement.

28. **Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education**
Document - Data on childcare needs, student composition.

29. **Griffith University**
Documents - 1987 student statistics; papers on energy conservation programs; proposal for a new policy on credit transfer; data on Housing Village.

30. **University of New South Wales**
Documents - *Summary of Activities during Semester Breaks;* data on employment rates of graduates; *University Faculty Centres.*

31. **Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies**
Document - *The Response of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies to the Government's Proposals for Tertiary Education, Training and Research.*

32. **Australian Committee of Directors and Principals in Advanced Education**
Documents - Submission to CTEC committee reviewing Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education, November 1985; letter of 2 December 1986 responding to CTEC report; response to Higher Education policy discussion paper circulated by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training in December 1987.

33. **Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee**
Documents - Reports of conferences on maintenance and energy management in Australian universities 1983, 1987; data on administrative costs for universities, by size; *Constitutions of the Governing Bodies of Australian Universities,* October 1986.

34. **Flinders University of South Australia**
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35. **University of New England**
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36. **Western Institute**
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37. **South Australian College of Advanced Education**
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Appendix E: Glossary

ASTEC   Australian Science and Technology
                                 Council

CTEC   Commonwealth Tertiary Education
                                 Commission

Effectiveness   The extent to which output achieves
                                 the best, or most desired, outcome

Efficiency   The extent to which given outputs are met at the lowest
                                 level of inputs or cost

EFTSU   Equivalent full-time student unit

Green Paper   *Higher Education: a policy discussion paper*,
                                 distributed by the Hon. J S Dawkins, MP,
                                 Minister for Employment, Education and Training,
                                 December 1987

Higher Education   The Commonwealth funded universities
Institutions/Sector   and colleges of advanced education

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SSAU   Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities

TAFE   Technical and Further Education