DRAFT

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

SPARE PARTS OR MISFITS?

John McLaren
Department of Humanities
Footscray Institute of Technology
Victoria

Australian colleges of advanced education are a product of the

Martin report, which was the result of investigations by a committee of

enquiry during the early 1960s. The report enshrines the general

beliefs held at that time about the social benefits of education and

technology, as well as the fear that general higher education for all

was a cost the community could not afford. The committee had been

appointed in 1961 on the eve of an election which followed one of the

Menzies government's periodic binges of economy. The concern with

financial economies did not, however, extend to economy of its own time, and by when

after its appointment

the time the committee reported three years later the government was

once again in firm control of parliament and the economy and prepared to

sponsor any innovation which might give it the appearance of meeting

major

problems without taking on any real responsibilities. Consequently, it

gutted the administrative recommendations of the report and instead

gave a subsidy to the states for an expansion of what was thought of

as higher technical education. Unfortunately however events are not as

easily controlled as electorates, and the initiatives so generously

announced and grudgingly supported led in practice to the most rapid

expansion of a system of formal education that Australia has seen since

the introduction of compulsory schooling. Since 1963, when approximately

70,000 students were enrolled in universities, 14,600 in teachers

colleges, and 34,300 at technical colleges, the numbers have grown until

in 1976 there were 153,000 students enrolled in universities, 59,000

at teachers colleges, and 76,000 in other courses in colleges of

advanced education. The last figure is not strictly comparable with

any of the earlier ones, as college places represent partly an upgrading

of technical college courses and partly the creation of new courses to

absorb some of the continuing increase in numbers seeking university

entrance. The former process has extended the range of tertiary education, but has simultaneously confused the effects of the latter. The consequence has been the creation, almost without thought, of a new form of tertiary education, which is still probably little understood, either among academics or among the potential students and their employers, whose needs it was supposed to meet.

This misunderstanding is not merely a matter of academic concern, nor even one that could be solved by better vocational guidance in the schools or placement by graduate careers officers - although there is an irony in the fact that the universities, supposedly non-vocational, are able to provide placement services which none but the largest colleges can afford and none of the co-ordinating agencies have seen fit to provide. The fact of lack of knowledge about the colleges destroys all the political rhetoric about meeting student interests and community needs, and perpetuates instead the reality of institutional hierarchy. The 'popularity poll' provided by the Victorian Universities Admissions Centre demonstrates that students nominate courses according to the perceived prestige of the institution, modified by the fashionability of broad areas of study.[7] Thus, courses in engineering and physical sciences are less popular everywhere, while those in biological, environmental and social sciences, and in the performing arts and physical education, are in high demand. Within these categories, however, the greatest attraction is towards the best established institutions, particularly although not exclusively universities. The impression given by ~~these~~ figures is stengthened by discussions I have had with students who have entered the Arts (Urban Studies) course at Footscray. For a minority,

proximity has been a factor. A further minority have been interested in

urban studies, particularly planning, and have taken the course as next

best to more conventional planning courses rather than for its distinct

quality of offering urban studies within a humanities framework. The

rest have come because they wanted to study humanities and this was the

first Institute to offer them a place. It is probably fair to say that

this picture may not be equally true of regional colleges, where

proximity, and thus, potentially, regional relevance, may be a more

important factor in influencing students' choice, and where it is easier

to develop and make known unique courses which will attract students who

are prepared to move away from home.

We can see, then, the reality of the colleges is far removed from

the rhetoric. To understand how this came about, we must consider the

ideas that presided at the creation of this new system of tertiary

education, the historical characteristics of the institutions in which

it commenced, and the political, administrative and social factors

which have influenced its development.

The early sixties were, in the western world, a time of confident

liberalism. Stalinism seemed dead, and Russia, under Khrushchev, was

engaged in an economic and technological competition with the west,

and particularly America, which, although in some ways threatening,

also promised a liberalization of attitudes within Russia. Western

communist parties, disillusioned both by the disclosures of the reality

of Stalin and by the apparent success of their own societies in

containing misery and revolutionary fervor, provided a bogey only to the

extreme right. A new president in the White House promised to spare

no effort to remove injustice from the world. At home, capital was plentiful, interest rates were low, the mining boom was about to take off, and Australia's future seemed unlimited. It seemed that material success had indeed brought an end to ideology, and the activists on campuses at home and abroad complained about student apathy. Numerically, schools and universities were expanding, and the dream of the liberal educationists of equal opportunity for all appeared to be on the brink of realization.

It is pertinent to look at the actual composition of the Martin committee in the light of this background. There were actually seventeen members of the committee, in size a council rather than a committee. In such circumstances it is more likely that the strongest personalities will create a broad consensus than that opposing views will be fiercely contested until resolved. The size precludes many members from pursuing the kind of purposeful and consistent questioning and argument necessary for such an outcome. At any rate, the individual members were more accustomed to the world of consensus than that of debate. All of them held, or had held, senior and influential positions in the interlocking sphere of institutional administration and establishment politics. Ten held or had held university chairs, and six of these had moved to essentially administrative positions. The Victorian Director and the New South Wales Director-General of Education were members, as was a former Public School principal who, having been retired for little more than a decade, probably had a closer connection with teaching than any other member. Surprisingly, there were only two representatives of industry, none of commerce or the public service, and one grazier to represent primary industry. There was no historian or

philosopher, sociologist or social critic, no-one distinguished for his

present involvement in undergraduate teaching, no-one involved in either

unions in general or teaching unions. The committee was thus too large

to conduct an adequate inquisition into actual practices and assumptions,

and too unrepresentative to be itself a forum. It is unsurprising that

its report should present not only the consensus of its members, but the

settled views of its time, tempered by political expedience.

The general line of the committee's thinking is shown clearly in the

first chapter of its report. This chapter refers to the problems of

contemporary society faces which call for 'mature judgements by free

and well-trained minds'; to the problem that, although 'man may be

distinguished by his reasoning capacity, nonetheless, when considering

his need for education for life in the societies of the future, it is

well to remember the extent to which his behaviour is irrational and how

many of his attitudes are unscientific'; to the fact that technological

changes 'create problems which can only be solved by increased activity

within the humanities and social sciences'; to the contribution education

makes 'to the development of a responsible and enlightened community' and

'a deepening understanding of human nature, a raising of cultural

standards, and a wiser use of leisure'. The implications of these remarks,

however, are not explored. The thrust of the chapter rather develops

from a glorification of science's role in the liberation of man, and moves

from a consideration of education as an investment to the benefit - in

material terms - to the individual and the community and to the claim

that a 'modern industrialized community like Australia could not operate

without a well-educated and trained work force', coming finally to the

conclusion that a continuing expansion of higher education will serve the

needs of both the individual and the economy.

It would, however, be unjust to criticize the committee for accepting assumptions which were at the time largely unquestioned in either educational or political circles. It was not until the work of such people as Jencks and Berg became generally known that the supposed relationship of cause and effect between education and income was questioned. [10] The committee's predictions of future enrolments, moreover, have in most cases been outrun by the facts. They are, perhaps, culpable in their belief that 'conflicts between students' aspirations and community needs should be allowed to be resolved by the operation of supply and demand in the market', which they supported on the grounds that 'Students' aspirations are not insensitive to the scale of remuneration and job opportunities for different callings' and thus 'shortages and surpluses tend to produce corrective forces'. [11] While they could probably not have foreseen the swing away from the technologies and sciences which would occur during the next dozen or so years, they might have been expected to question the match between market forces and community needs, and, even more, to have anticipated the problems of redundancy which such changes in demand cause. However, at a time when the whole wisdom of the educational enterprise is being questioned in the light of market conditions, it is well to recall the committee's warning:

> The Committee believes that research into future labour requirements is useful both for aiding the decisions of students and for guiding business and government; it does not however subscribe to the view that the entry of students into the various courses of higher education should be restricted by forecasts of future needs. Such

a policy would not only run the risk of grave error, but
it would also restrict educational opportunity to an
undesirable level.

The central criticisms of the Martin Report lie in areas other than these. The first is their confused attitude to the humanities, and therefore to education. Clearly, they believe that the humanities are valuable and should receive some consideration, but they are not sure what. The statements they make about them are magniloquent generalizations which melt into nothing when you attempt to extract a meaning. When they get onto the technologies and practical education their tone becomes much more confident, but they are in fact speaking not of education but of training to fill places. They have no concept that the technologies and sciences, properly understood and taught, can and should be as much an education of the mind as the humanities proper. Their remarks about the need to include some humanities teaching in these courses therefore miss the point entirely.

The second major criticism of the report, which follows from the first, is their attempt to distinguish two kinds of mind. This distinction is evident through a great part of the report, but is most evident in the following paragraph:

5.137 The objective of the education provided by a technical college is to equip men and women for the practical world of industry and commerce, teaching them the way in which manufacturing and business are carried on and the fundamental rules which govern their successful operation. The university course, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the development of knowledge and the

.../8

importance of research; in so doing it imparts much information

which is valuable to the practical man but which is often

incidental to the main objective. Both types of education are

required by the community, but it is important that students

receive the kind of education best suited to their innate

abilities and purposes in life. At present, certain pressures

tend to overtax the academic ability of a considerable segment

of the student population which could be better provided for in

institutions offering courses of different orientation and less

exacting academically. *5. 137*

It is worth examining this paragraph in a little detail. The first two

sentences seem to make a clear distinction between practice and

knowledge, but this distinction becomes less clear when we realize that

the practical men do have to obtain knowledge of the rules. Then, we

might think that the emphasis given by universities to research and the

development of knowledge should involve concepts and skills, but we find

that it means the imparting of information - surely a traditional

technical college function. The report speaks elsewhere of the need

for the doctor or the engineer to know basic sciences. Where does the

information become irrelevant? The committee senses a true distinction

between the demands of research, where the practitioner must never go

beyond the evidence, and of practice, where decisions almost invariably

have to be made in the absence of sufficient information, but they

invalidly extend this to the suggestion that the two activities appeal

to different kinds of mind possessing different levels of innate ability.

Had they spoken of different levels of conceptualization their argument

may have had some validity, but even here it is possible only two point

to a continuum, not to make a distinction. Yet the greater part of the political and bureaucratic effort which has followed from this report has rested on this false distinction and the attempts to give it reality. Because the potential of the colleges has been defined in terms of outcomes supposedly resting on innate differences between kinds of students, they have been hampered in such attempts as they have made to meet the real educational needs of a different range of students from those traditionally catered for by universities. Paradoxically, this has made them move towards rather than away from the university model.

The third major criticism of the committee's report hinges on this fact. Partly because they accepted a restrictive meaning of the word 'tertiary' in their terms of reference, partly because they largely accepted the established order of professions and institutions, and partly because they conceived themselves as catering for the needs of a group of people aiming for a different destination in life from that at which the members of the committee had arrived, they give no more than trivial attention to the content or organization of existing courses. They provide a wealth of organizational suggestions on how to extend and supplement these, but there is no real consideration, for example, of whether paramedical studies should be conducted separately from medical, or whether either belongs in a university, of whether courses should all be of fixed length, of whether the forms of teaching employed do meet the high aims voiced by the teachers. When confronted with evidence of the failure of teaching, they put the blame on the students, and suggest they be dealt with by providing a less advanced institution.

Underlying all these criticisms, of course, is the fact that the committee at no time addresses itself to the issue of the social effect of education. It is thus oblivious to the consequences - for the graduates, for their clients and those affected by their future decisions, for the distribution of authority in society at large - of how the creation and perpetuation of institutional hierarchies. Nor, despite their mention of the way technology creates new problems which it alone cannot solve, do they give any attention to the issue of how the selection and education of technologists should be changed to take account of this fact, or of how the increased activity in the humanities and social sciences they asks for should be promoted. Just as they see the benefits of education largely in the quantitative form of increased income, so they see the problems largely in terms of increased demand for places and increased knowledge to be learned.

While, however, these weaknesses in the Martin Report can be blamed for the misconceptions underlying subsequent policy, they cannot be blamed for the policy itself. To start with, the Martin committee made specific recommendations covering university, technical and teacher education. These recommendations included quite precise administrative arrangements at both federal and state levels. In accepting the general principles, however, the commonwealth government rejected the administrative recommendations and adopted a form of financing which penalized technical and teacher education, and promoted instead a new form of college to assume responsibility for the part of the committee's recommendations which dealt with providing an alternative to the universities. At least one member of the committee, Sir Samuel Wadham, in a pair of articles

in The Age, protested most bitterly that this arrangment betrayed the
central interests of the committee.¹² It certainly meant that the
education of teachers and technicians was left neglected for another
decade, that the issues of general tertiary education remained unexplored,
and that the new colleges were left with a responsibility which their
system of control made it impossible to fulfil. Because they were seen
as providing a form of education as valid as that provided by the
universities, and in fields which overlapped those of the universities,
they had to provide graduates who could compete in all ways with those
from universities. Yet they had to do this in the same time and at
less expense than the universities. This, together with the fact
that their sub-tertiary activities were funded even less generously
than were their tertiary, led invitably to a narrowing of the range of
students from whom they chose their entrants and a concentration on
the areas most like the universities. The test of the marketplace was
that, despite the lip-service paid to practical understanding, the
holder of a diploma could not compete with a graduate for entry to the
same field. So the colleges moved towards degrees, and the needs both
of the students and of the sub-professional areas were again neglected.

Despite these pressures, the committees responsible for advanced
education continued to maintain the conception of vocationalism and
its corrolary of meeting the needs of industry, as the distinguishing
feature of the college system. The Wark committee, charged with the
responsibility of implementing the government's adaptation of the Martin
committee's proposals, wrote in its first report that

Students entering colleges of advanced education will

tend to have a different outlook and different needs from those entering the universities, being more interested in the application than in the development of knowledge. They will already have decided on the career they will adopt. [14]

This led to the observation that 'in the colleges there would be a greater applied emphasis in the courses', although the Martin committee had already provided the evidence, contrary to its own recommendations but substantiated by later investigations, that among university students too there was a strong vocational aspiration, stronger in fact than the interest in general learning. [15] Nevertheless, the distinction was maintained and hardened by subsequent committees and ministers, and it became an article of faith that the colleges were providing for a different kind of mind. Most recently, the panel appointed to advise on the amalgamation of the tertiary education commissions wrote that, whereas the purpose of the universities is 'the preservation, transmission and extension of knowledge, the training of highly skilled manpower, and the critical evaluation of society', the primary purpose of the colleges is 'the provision of vocational education to meet the known needs of society'. [16] Nothing could more clearly indicate the intention that the colleges should be institutions for the less able, serving the needs of other members of society.

The failure of the colleges to establish a clear identity or a useful function for themselves depends, however, on internal factors relating to the nature of their development as much as on the failure to produce an adequate definition of their function. In all states, the colleges were built on or grew from an existing structure. [17] This was

truest of Victoria, where a handful of senior technical colleges were upgraded and a state Institute of Colleges imposed on them. In Queensland and New South Wales there was a mixture of old institutions transformed and new ones established. Tasmania and Western Australia created new institutions which nevertheless absorbed elements of older bodies. Only in Canberra could it be said that a completely new institution was created.

The most important consequence of the way in which the new colleges originated was that they inherited public service rather than academic traditions. The extent to which this happened varies from college to college and from state to state, but for a variety of reasons is particularly true of Victoria. This state had the most developed system of senior technical education at the time of the Martin enquiry, and thus had a ready-made base for the new system. It also had a government which was as incapable of saying no to any pressure group as it was of meeting its promises, and which was politically committed to provincial university centres. The Martin report gave it the opportunity to discharge this commitment without having to expand too much thought or money. Nine senior technical colleges were declared colleges of advanced education and, together with a number of special purpose colleges, became eligible for commonwealth financing. Internally, however, there were no immediate changes. Those colleges which had not previously had their own councils were given them, and the control of the education department over the tertiary sections was progressively eliminated, but the senior academic and administrative staff remained as they were. They acquired new status and salary, but accepted few new responsibilities. In order to ensure

that the awards granted by the new colleges carried sufficient authority,
and in an attempt to force the old wine into new bottles, the government
set up the Victoria Institute of Colleges, closely modelled on the Martin
recommendations. The result was, however, that the colleges were shielded
from the responsibility of their own decisions, and that staff accustomed
to carrying out the dictates of a state department now merely carried out
the instructions of a statutory authority. All the forms were changed,
but the reality remained unaffected.

The effect of these measures was that the new colleges became part
of a system rather than autonomous institutions. The elaborate
administrative structure and exhaustive consideration of the content and
aims of the courses developed for the colleges did mean that the new
awards maintained credibility, that the aims of industrial relevance were
observed, and that the system earned a measure of public esteem, but the
responsibility for this lay outside the colleges. The decisions were not
made by the people ultimately responsible for implementing them. In
principle, initiative flowed upwards from the academics and course
advisory boards in the colleges by way of academic committees, schools
boards and boards of studies. In practice, these state committees, each
responsible for one segment of the operations, developed their own rules,
precepts and precedents, which the academic sponsors of a course then
had to meet. As these sponsors had grown up in a system where power
flowed downwards, they were all too ready to acquiesce. The reality of
the structure was concealed by the involvement of academics in the committee
system, but they were involved as individuals outside their own colleges,
responsible ultimately to the council of the Institute, not to their peers.

This system, which was duplicated when the teachers colleges were incorporated in the State College of Victoria in 1973, with similar results, enabled Victoria initially to develop the strongest system of colleges in Australia, but the same factors which led to its initial success later came to inhibit the development of the colleges as independent centres of learning.

Other states fared somewhat better. In Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia there was only one major institution involved, and in the first two states new authorities were constituted and positions filled by open appointment. In New South Wales and Queensland the new colleges were created under the aegis of the state departments, but new institutions were staffed by public advertisement. Nevertheless, because appointments were made in the first place by public service bodies, and because salaries were initially lower than were offered for equivalent university positions, the early appointments were predominantly from state teaching and public services. All states eventually followed the Victorian pattern of constituting a state co-ordinating authority, although none acquired the sweeping powers and complex structure of the Victorian body.

Two crucial weaknesses of this system are the separation of authority from responsibility and the consequent reliance on external criteria for the evaluation of success in particular courses, departments and colleges. The consequences can be seen in the administrative structures and procedures, the methods of planning and resource allocation, and the style and methods of teaching.

The most common model of college government could be described as
that of the irresponsible committee. Legally, responsibility for both
financial and academic matters rests with college councils, and none of
the state advanced education acts provides for academic boards with a
statutory share of authority. Nevertheless, most colleges have
constituted such bodies, normally in an advisory capacity. Their functions
are modelled on those attributed to university professorial boards,
although in most cases they include a strong elected representation of
academic staff. But the authority of a professorial board derives not
only from its statutory rights but from the fact that its members have
traditionally had independent responsibility for the conduct of their
departments and the award of degrees. This responsibility extends to
resources and information. The board is therefore in a position to be
obstructive to others rather than to be obstructed itself. This is why
the struggles over university government have to a great extent been
directed against the powers of the professors, both as individuals and
in their corporate boards. In the colleges, by contrast, the powers of
heads of school and department, and hence of academic boards, are merely
those delegated by the council and admininstration. The academic board
serves to sanction this centralization without effectively moderating it.
Its key committees can be controlled by the administrators responsible
for their various functions. Yet these officials can in no sense be held
accountable, for the only bodies with a knowledge of the whole situation,
of how decisions in one area interlock with those in another, are the
informal groupings of the college director and his immediate advisors.
This structure is maintained on an ideology of togetherness, good
fellowship and community loyalty, which assumes, because there is no forum

in which issues of purpose and priority can be exposed or differences
of interest and opinion resolved, that no such conflicts exist. In this
system the role of the staff is seen as carrying out their prescribed
duties according to rules uniform across the college, and staff action
becomes directed to modifying these rules and conditions. The
centralism and triviality of administration produces a similar centralism
and preoccupation with bureaucratic issues on the part of staff
associations.

Two models of college government are emerging to challenge this one.
The first could be described as industrial dictatorship, the second as
collegiate participation. They both depend on a director strong enough
to resist the pressures of both the state bureaucracy and of the
conservatives within his college who prefer to shelter from responsibility
under the cover of collective authority. In each model, authority is
identified with responsibility. The difference is that, in the former,
responsibility is determined from above, in the latter, it emerges from
below.

The dictatorial model may be concealed by forms of consultation, but
its essence is that the director determines the directions and priorities
for the college and allots to individuals within his staff the
responsibility for meeting particular objectives. These people in turn
delegate their responsibility downwards. At each stage, the individual
given the responsibility is expected to argue for the resources, for _and_
the authority he needs to meet the responsibility given him, but he
argues this in the context of the single issue. It is ultimately the
director who decides on priorities and on how resources will be allotted,
and if necessary alters responsibilities to take account of the arguments

put to him. The result of this process is that each person has a clear
statement of his responsibilities and of the resources available to him
to meet them, and will be judged on this basis. The advantages of the
system in promoting efficiency are so obvious that its defects must be
stressed. It is easy to say that it is appropriate to an industrial
rather than to an academic organization, but it is necessary to establish
why. The problem is the underlying ideology of efficiency, which omits
the question, of the end to which it is effort. It assumes that the aims of education can easily
be established in vocational terms, in terms of meeting the demand of
particular employers or professional bodies, and can be so stated in
course objectives. Teaching is thus reduced to a matter of producing
the maximum output of suitably qualified students. There is no room
within it for such considerations as the professional responsibility of
staff for the personal development of their students, for critical
evaluation of industry., and therefore of vocational requirements, or
for the modification of the course and its objectives to meet the
particular interests, needs, abilities and wishes of the students. The
ideology of efficiency seeks to reduce education to a set of external
criteria which will transform the humanity of both staff and students into
effective instruments of an impersonal economy.

The collegiate model is the most difficult to bring into being, but
is, I believe, the only one appropriate both to the present level of
development of the colleges and to their educational potential. It
depends on the recognion that, while there can be many kinds of teaching,
learning occurs within the mind of the individual; that learning is the
result of his relationships with others, not only in terms of what they

say but of how they treat him and perceive him; that the aim of formal

education is to give the individual control over his own reality; that

the educational outcome will be determined by the extent to which each

person involved in the process is responsible for his own actions.

The collegiate model envisages responsibility commencing with the

student, who enters into a contract with the members of staff to help

him to learn particular things. If such a contract is to recognize the

responsibility of all parties it will, of course, be implicit, constantly

revised in the light of the dialogue of learning, not explicit, verbal

and external. On this basis, the staff member states the responsibilities

that he will accept - to an extent, in practice, these are spelled out

in his contract of employment - and, more importantly, the authority, the

control over resources and over his students' time and activity, that he

needs. In seeking this authority, which needs constant renegotiation

in the light of changing circumstance, he is in fact competing with his

peers for scarce resources; these allocations should therefore be

decided in the first place by boards or committees of which each person

immediately concerned is a member. However, such committees should be

consultative and advisory, not determinative. Where authority is vested

in a committee, decisions are inevitably made on the basis of rule and

precedent rather than on judgement. In the collegiate model, unlike the

dictatorial model, responsibility flows upward, but authority downward.

Thus, the head of department or school is responsible for the co-ordination

of his school, and makes the decisions of allocation of resources within

it. At college level, he is merely one of a number with responsibilities

in distinct areas competing with each other for a share of the total

resources available to the college. He should therefore be a member of the board where the issues of college priorities are debated and clarified and advise is given, but the final decision should be made by the director, who has responsibility for the whole college. The weakness of this system is that it can, without apparent institutional change, be converted into the dictatorial model. The only safeguard presently offered against this is the college council, which should understand that none of the superior officers can discharge their responsibilities without the confidence of those for whom they are responsible, and should hold them accountable for maintaining this confidence. It is not, however, likely that councils comprised largely of local Rotarians will prove capable of discharging this function - they prefer to oscillate between high-sounding emptiness and mean-minded trivia. Such sanction could easily be given legal force by making every academic removable by the vote of those for whom, and therefore to whom, he is responsible.

The failure to develop adequate administrative structures and procedures is reflected in the standards of resource planning and academic teaching of the colleges. The colleges are required to submit most detailed justifications for their future developments and spending proposals, and these are then co-ordinated by state and federal authorities, and subjected to the limitations of the relevant departments of treasury. These checks are, however, always based on an assessment of the statistical validity of future projections rather than on any evaluation of the worth of past expenditure measured in terms of educational outcome. The only checks imposed on expenditure once the

money is approved are those made by state audit departments, who are more

interested in ensuring that expenditure is under approved categories

and that no individual is appropriating the tea money than they are in

judging whether value has been received for money. As in administration,

the procedure is to apply known rules, not to exercise judgement. Thus,

it is perfectly possible for a college which has raised a million dollars

for a building appeal to find it is unable to spend the last million

dollars of its annual allocation, even after recarpeting and refurnishing

its entire office space. The result of this particular episode was not

a reconsideration of that college's operations, but a reduction in the

following year's allocation for every college in the state. There was

no other redress in a system where finances are considered by a separate

committee from buildings, staffing, courses or furnishings, and where an

entirely different set of committees considers rationalization.

The teaching methods of the colleges are characterized by the same

observance of extrinsic standards and lack of concern with intrinsic

values. The mythology of the colleges is that they are concerned with

teaching rather than research. If this were true, it would be a sufficient

justification for the existence of the college sector of tertiary education,

but in practice it means that the college staff have even less opportunity

to think about their teaching than do members of a university staff.

Dr. Bessant has pointed out the way the demands of publication dominate

the university lecturer, so that his undergraduate students become merely

an interruption to the essential matters of his career. In quite properly

reacting against this model, the colleges have created the eqully

philistine situation where the lecturer is expected to confine all his

research and study, that is, his thinking, to his spare time. It is,

for reasons that have never been demonstrated, assumed that the application of knowledge to practical problems can be done by picking up the textbooks written by university staff and merely interpreting them, or perhaps paraphrasing them in lecture notes, to students. Research in the colleges is confined largely to that which is funded from external sources and that which is being undertaken so that individual members of the staff can obtain higher degrees and thus confer some degree of academic respectability on their colleges. Neither the C.A.E. or its predecessors, nor, as far as I am aware, any of the state co-ordinating authorities, has ever investigated the proposition that 'the application of knowledge to human needs' is a project demanding the investigation of the present state of both knowledge and needs. If it is reasonable to demand that college teaching be directed to community needs, it is surely reasonable to demand that the people responsible for such teaching be continually involved in the dispassionate investigation of the actual relationship between these needs and the disciplines within which they teach. Despite all the apparatus of course approval and accreditation, however, this central issue is taken for granted. Even the statistics and analyses of demography and manpower planning on which the co-ordinating authorities rely for their projections are derived from outside sources.

Within the colleges, such facts have to be taken for granted, and teaching is a matter of carrying out predetermined tasks to meet pre-ordained objectives. Far from pursuing understanding, vocational or otherwise, where it leads, the individual lecturer must seek the approval of an outside committee before he can make any substantial change to his course. This is a very different procedure from that of having to justify his teaching to his peers, which involves them in what he is

doing and extends the understanding of all. In the absence of this intrinsic form of justification, the colleges and their co-ordinating authorities again fall back on the external measures of an individual's contribution and of the worth of his course - the number of class contact hours. In keeping with the traditions of the teachers and technical colleges from which the colleges of advanced education originated, measurable work is all, quality is nothing, and thoughtfulness even less. The great advantage of quantitative and external controls is that they leave everybody, including the student, happy, undisturbed by the kind of thought which has sometimes been considered a prerequisite of education.

Within this general pattern there are of course many variations, although these are not substantially recognized in the administrative structures and procedures. The greatest factor for change in the college sector has been time itself. The very magnitude of growth has given the colleges an impetus which cannot be checked by the slogans of politicians or the controls of bureaucrats. As the numbers of college students have increased, they have, by their very presence and by the unspoken expectations as well as their stated demands, forced the colleges in new directions. As a whole, according to the findings of the Regional Colleges Study, they have more in common with university students than they have distinguishing qualities. Their expectations therefore press the colleges in the same direction as universities.

Within this commonality there are significant differences. Among all matriculating students, the most common reason for choosing to continue to further education is for the sake of education itself, the next most common, the expectation of obtaining a good job. Yet a higher

proportion of those whose motive for continuing education is intrinsic prefer to go to a university rather than a college. The differences between students intending to enter different institutions are however matched by differences between those with different vocational aspirations. Thus those choosing engineering and paramedical courses show significantly less interest in community and world problems than do others, and students choosing liberal arts, like university students as a whole, place a greater value on the intrinsic values of education than do others. The difference in the attitudes of students entering different institutions may therefore reflect more on the present balance of courses in these institutions than on the kinds of institutions themselves. As the colleges come to provide as many places as universities over as great a range of courses, the differences in attitude among students coming straight from school are likely to decrease still further.

A major reason for the reduction in differences between college and university students has been the implementation of the recommendation of the Martin committee that the continuing expansion of the numbers of people seeking tertiary education should be catered for by allotting new functions to existing institutions. Whereas they had previously catered for students who did not wish to undertake traditional forms of higher study, they were henceforth to develop educational programs for those who did. Certainly, as the committee foresaw, the expansion in numbers also changed the characteristic background of those seeking higher education, and they hoped that the colleges would develop courses to cope with this change. However, while the change in background is a product of the increase in numbers, the increase in numbers is a product of

rising aspirations. These aspirations remain directed towards the

traditional outcomes of university education - security, status and income.

The colleges were however directed to assume differences in aspiration,

and were, by virtue of the accrediting procedures, limitations on the

length of courses, withholding of finance from preliminary years, and need

to compete with universities, inhibited from developing courses which

would meet the real differences in the background and aptitudes of their

students. They have continued to take students from lower socio-economic

backgrounds, from among those who have fared poorly in matriculation

examinations, and from families where English is not the native tongue.

The differences in attitude which persist among college students possibly

reflect these facts as much as differences in personality or vocational

interest. For such students, education represents the most likely

avenue of escape from the social restrictions which cramp their parents,

or, in the case of the failures, the best hope of redeeming their parents'

expectations of them. Yet all the colleges can offer is a replica of a

university course, shorn of its intellectual excitement in order to meet

the requirements of an employer.

The professed interests of the colleges in the needs of the job

could, if translated into a teaching method based on practical performance,

instead of the rote learning of the skills and practices needed for success

in industry, offer a means of developing the intellectual interests of

these students by starting with involvement in the practical. This

assumes not a difference in personality or kind of mind, but the need for

a different point of entry. It would offer the antithesis of the

university philosophy summed up in the Martin report in the chapter on

legal education, where we read:

> just as universities have tended to shy away from techniques
> and the mere performance of arts [my italics], whether
> pictorial, dramatic or musical, so as to concentrate upon
> scholarship with respect to them, so it is proper that
> universities should be more concerned with legal scholarship
> than with legal practice. (Para. 32.)

By contrast, practice would be the starting point for the college
student, and performance the ultimate criterion of his success. Such
courses have already been developed by some colleges, particularly
in the creative arts and in some media studies, although the pressure
to upgrade them to degree status threatens to make them academic in
the worst sense.

Practice informed by scholarship, research into problems arising from
practice, including problems arising from the social effects of practice
and the relationships between theory and practice, and teaching which
uses practice as a means of training the mind, could well provide the
proper and distinctive characteristics of a college of advanced education.
The performance expected of the students would be that which demonstrated
in a practical context their command of the theory, concepts and skills
relating to their field of interest. Those students with more immediate
or concrete goals, those with a record of failure in conventional forms
of education, and those with an interest in doing and making would be
suited by such courses, but there would be no limit to the goals open
to them or the immediate intellectual challenge. The ultimate ends
served by the courses would be no different from those of the
universities, but the means would be quite distinct. Unfortunately the

development of such courses, which would require considerable efforts
of research and design, is unlikely while courses are controlled by external
committees which require that everything be elaborated in words before it
is tried in practice.

If the nature of the student population has been one factor pushing
the colleges away from their original model and towards a university
model, the truncation of sub-tertiary courses has been another. This
truncation was brought about by the original terms of reference given to
the Martin committee, which restricted it to a consideration of tertiary
education, and by the strict interpretation placed on this by the
subsequent arrangements for commonwealth funding, which excluded even
short courses.[19] The sub-tertiary courses not only provided for students
of differing abilities, but retained a practical orientation within the
colleges and their student populations. Their disappearance has destroyed
one of the characteristics which distinguished the old technical colleges
and has reduced the opportunities available to early leavers and academic
failures to continue their education. The inclusion in 1973 of teachers
colleges in the system of advanced education has maintained the vocational
intent but has further departed from the technological concept.

Another factor pressing the colleges away from their original
intentions has been their obligations to their immediate communities and
regions. The very success of the colleges in raising themselves in
public esteem has led parents and students in their regions to look to
them to provide a complete range of tertiary courses. This pressure has
been strengthened by the change in student preferences away from the
sciences and hard technologies towards the humanities and social sciences.

The result has been to move the colleges still further away from their industrial and business orientation in the direction of general higher education. The course approval and funding authorities have been seriously worried by these developments, and have insisted that the new courses maintain an orientation to specific careers,[20] but the careers which require the direct application of a knowledge of the humanities, as opposed to the use of skills and abilities developed through the study of the humanities, remain limited and threaten to become more so.[21] The only ways open to the authorities to prevent such developments, however, would be to restrict overall enrolments and thus deny an opportunity to students who have qualified to use it, to reverse the policy that the expansion in student numbers as a whole should be accommodated in the colleges, or to compel students to undertake courses for which they have neither the interest nor the aptitude.

The proliferation in the colleges of tertiary level courses, particularly in the liberal and creative arts, has had the unintended and paradoxical effect in many cases of actually contributing to a narrowing of opportunities. The demand for vocational relevance has forced the designers of these courses to look for areas where the learning could be applied, and this has led to courses being designed to prepare students for entry to occupations which were formerly open to mere ability in practice. Now the entrance is open only to those who can first pass a matriculation examination and then succeed in a course which involves the mastery of theory as well as of practice. While this can undoubtedly raise the general level of a profession to the extent that it adds to its ranks people who are able to combine critical and scholarly detachment, it can also exclude people who have the highest level of practical ability without the verbal skills which could translate that into academic

exposition. To counteract this tendency the colleges should be encouraged
to develop a variety of lower level courses which will be open to anyone
of demonstrated aptitude and which will concentrate on practical skills.
These could be complemented by other courses for mature people who have
already developed practical skills but who want to supplement these with
theoretical understanding, but who do not want to undertake the full
professional training which would change their relationships to those with
whom they are working. Such courses would be particularly valuable in
areas of social welfare, where people are needed who can provide help and
support from within the community, rather than as professionals coming
from outside.

The final factor moving the colleges away from their origins has
been staff recruitment. Once parity or near parity with university
salaries was attained after the Sweeney report, the colleges were able to
recruit staff of comparable experience and ability and similar aspirations.
Contrary to the expectations of the Martin committee, both universities
and colleges were able to attract sufficient qualified staff to meet the
demands of expansion. The average qualifications of college staff remain
below those of the universities, but this does not necessarily reflect
discredit on the colleges. University appointment and promotion has
tended to become as bureaucratised as that of the state departments,
with career paths becoming completely standardized from the first degree
through research and overseas experience to a higher degree and tenure.
With the fall in the rate of university expansion, however, many young
academics have found this path blocked, and have turned to the colleges
to fulfil their expectations. The danger is that the colleges will

fall intro the trap of qualifications, and consistently prefer such

people to those with wider experience but lower formal qualifications.

Similarly, too great an emphasis on qualifications can encourage members

of the college staff to spend on the pursuit of higher degrees the time

and energy they should devote to teaching, research and development of

their professional areas. Finally, the emphasis on comparability may

lead colleges to neglect the importance of professional achievement in

practical areas such as the arts, and appoint people instead whose

interests are primarily scholarly. Such developments will not raise

the colleges to the level of universities, but will leave them as poor

relations, aspiring to qualities they cannot attain and neglecting the

excellences ~~of practice~~ which are within their command, *if they provide room for both scholarship and practice.*

The path of these developments has led to an impasse. Where the

Martin committee believed that its recommendations would lead to a general

improvement in the standard and esteem of technical education, we find

that this is still the neglected area of Australian education, although,

if the recommendations of the Kangan report were taken seriously, it

would become in practice as well as in theory the most important part

of the whole educational enterprise. On the other hand, the method of

implementing the Martin recommendations has promoted the growth of a

whole new sector complementary to and in competition with the universities.

This sector is, however, still impeded by the muddled philosophy of the

Martin committee, now amplified, although not clarified, by several

other committees, and handicapped by the diversity of the colleges in

size, control and intent. Meanwhile, the mood and economy of the community

have changed, so that the benefits of education are being doubted at the

same time that the government has seen fit to cut back on all forms

of public expenditure. The professed commitment of the colleges to
vocationalism makes them an easy target for the demagogue in a
period when the curtailment of government spending has made it difficult
for graduates in most fields to find employment, regardless of the need
of the community for their services. Furthermore, the amalgamation of
the commonwealth commissions responsible for providing funds to university,
advanced and technical and further education, and the threat that much of
this responsibility will in any case go back to the impecunious state
governments, gives urgency to the issue of the function of the colleges
at the same time that it takes away any formal body to speak for them or
to work out a rationale for their future development or reduction. The
questions which must be faced therefore are twofold - what, if any,
useful functions are they performing in society at present, and what might
they usefully perform in the future?

We have seen that the responsibilities consistently given to the
colleges have related to practicality and vocationalism, but we have
also seen that the controls intended to keep the colleges to these
functions have in fact militated against them. The notion of two kinds
of mind has also proved an inadequate basis for distinguishing two
segments of higher education. Dr. David Armstrong, working from a
similar observation, has argued that the proper function for the
colleges in the future should be as community colleges, offering in
effect to take anyone from his present starting point to the objective he
wishes to reach. 24 Such a function would not preclude degree work, but
it would not see it as the prime reason for a college's being. It would
maintain the traditional commitment to technical education, but again
this would not be seen as the principal function - merely one among a

number of ways of satisfying community needs. Such a policy may indeed

offer the way forward for some of the smaller colleges, which do not

have the numbers to sustain a full ~~arrangement~~ range of tertiary work but do

not wish to retreat to an education department and give up even the

limited degree of independence they at present have, without which no

real education is possible. Had such an approach been adopted from the

outset, neither the advanced colleges nor technical and further education

may have now been faced with their present difficulties. I doubt, however,

whether the adoption of a complete binary system would leave an appropriate

place for either the large metropolitan colleges or the special purpose

institutions. I would prefer, therefore, to see a ternary system, which

would place colleges of advanced education between universities and

community colleges, overlapping with each, but with a distinct role of

their own.

If the colleges of advanced education are to develop a clear

function within such a system, the concept of vocation will need to

be redefined. For reasons I have suggested above, the colleges have

already outgrown the more limited connotations of the definitions

provided for them by the co-ordinating authorities, but in the absence of

any clear ideas to replace these statements they have become subject to an

academic drift which pushes them towards the appearance of universities

without the substance. They feel they are doing more than serving the

needs of industry, but are less than clear about how they are serving

the community other than by providing opportunities for some form of

higher education for students who would otherwise not have had the chances

open to their fellows. The opportunities they provide, however, remain

limited by the standing of the colleges. Unless a clearer statement of

purpose can be given, drift will continue. The only model of excellence
will continue to be that provided by universities, however modifed by
practical considerations, and the bulk of college graduates will ~~continue~~
~~to~~ occupy the lower range of business and industry, whatever the
aspirations they originally brought with them. To meet the aspirations of
their students, the colleges need to reject both the single model of the
universities and the limited model of the commissions. They can then
meet the demand that they 'provide a range of courses at least equal to
that of any sector of tertiary education in this country', but they will
do so not by aping older paths but by providing patterns of excellence of
their own.

The development of such patterns depends not only on the extension
of the concept of vocational education beyond that of training for
a job, the mere application of existing knowledge, but also on abandoning
the related idea that the colleges are to meet the needs of industry.
This has meant on the one hand that the 'colleges do not cater for a
number of fields of little or no direct 'industrial' interest', and on the
other that they have continued to offer courses 'in areas which
universities may regard as marginal or inappropriate'. This latter
characteristic accounts for some of the diversity of the colleges which
puzzles and troubles some observers. It is probably also true that it
is in these specialist fields that the colleges have been able 'to make
the most progress in the development of courses of a unique nature which
emphasize the practical and meet perceived social needs. On the other
hand, the reduction of the involvement of the colleges is sub-tertiary
work, assumed by the form of commonwealth finance, encouraged by the
Wark committee, and further abetted by the salary recommendations of the

Campbell tribunal, inhibits further development in this direction.

The main development of the concept of vocational purpose, however, has been towards the idea that colleges should meet the known manpower needs of the community. This assumes on the one hand that manpower forecasting can be accurate, and on the other that the political and market forces which determine the positions which will be offered to prospective employees will also ensure that society will obtain the kind of trained intelligence that it needs to ensure a healthy future. It may be that liberal educationists were unrealistic in their expectations that a free system of education with the widest possible access would train the future leaders of society, but that hope seems modest in comparison with the expectation that the task can be carried out through techniques of statistical planning.

It is true that the planners, and particularly the demographers, can tell us a great deal about the future shape of the community. Educational planning in Australia would have been sounder had it been realized that the problems of our society for the rest of the century are more likely to concern the old than the young. We can go further and assert that technological and economic changes are likely to lead to a continuing contraction in the relative sizes of the rural and industrial workforces, and to an increased demand for people in tertiary occupations. To go even this far, however, we have to assume that certain changes in society are irreversible - for example, that the population at large will continue to choose a style of living which depends on high technology and that Australia will continue to command the resources necessary to provide this style of life. A change to smaller scales of organization and lower levels of technology would change these patterns of development.

Completely new forms of social organization are probably sufficiently

unlikely to emerge on a large scale as to make them of more than

peripheral relevance to plans for the next decade of education. On the

other hand, a movement towards a more complex and turbulent international

environment, where social, physical and economic systems are so interwoven

that even the short-term effects of corporate decisions cannot be

adequately predicted, would make any attempt to predicate the provision of

education on the vocational outcome quite irrelevant to human needs. In

such circumstances, the only education which can be justified is that which

enables the individual to develop those of his qualities that he himself

finds most valuable, *including those that may enable him to fulfil an immediately useful role in society.*

Even on the assumption that no such major changes of society are

likely to occur in the immediate future, there are other reasons for

doubting the ability of manpower planning to give a picture of future

employment patterns accurate enough to provide a specification for the

present provision of places in advanced education. First, technological

change may make whole occupations redundant. This can occur particularly

in the skilled trades, which educational systems are constantly

criticised for neglecting. Second, career patterns are not necessarily

stable. This refers not only to the fact that people are likely to move

from specialist tasks to more general management positions, but also to

the fact that they may move to entirely different areas of occupation as

opportunities arise. Such opportunities are rarer in times of economic

contraction, and consequently in such periods there are fewer specialist

opportunities for new graduates. Third, there is no necessary relationship

between employment opportunities and the tasks which actually need to be

performed. As general levels of education rise, so the entrance levels

to many forms of employment rise. Specialists may be employed for tasks
that do not really call for the exercise of professional skills, either
because the position has traditionally been filled in such a way or because
the professional organization has been able to secure a monopoly over
the activity. Fourth, fashion may influence which areas look to for new
employees. For example, it would appear that British and American
employers are more willing to offer positions to general arts graduates
than are Australian. Fifth, the growth in the size of national and
international organizations reduces the demand for specialist operators
at the same time that it expands the demand for bureaucrats. As industrial
organizations expend internationally, they may contract the amount of
research and development done in each country. As the media are
monopolized, the demand for journalists and production technicians
diminishes. Finally, the overall nature of community organization affects
the extent to which its needs can be met by paid employment, and therefore
the range of jobs which will be available. A move away from private
medical practice towards community health, for example, would materially
affect the numbers of social workers and paramedical technicians required.
Similar changes would occur in legal employment as a consequence of any
expansion of public legal agencies or change in practices relating to
planning and environmental law. A strengthening of local government
would lead to a demand for one range of professional services, a move
back to reliance on charity would lead to a demand for quite a different
range of skills. In short, the planners can forecast some of the future
needs to the community, but the way these needs are translated into terms
of jobs depends on factors outside the control of either planners or
teachers.

If, however, we distinguish, as the committees on advanced education have not done, between the concepts of community needs and of employment, we can see how the planners can come to the assistance of education, and perhaps reduce that gap between the vision of an educated society and the reality which has frustrated liberal hopes. The first information that is needed is a clear statement of deficiences in particular skills. It is argued, for example, that there is a serious deficiency in the numbers of skilled tradesmen available for employment, but at the same time employers seem reluctant to take on sufficient tradesmen to meet future needs. It would be desirable that the figures of present vacancies could be supplemented with further analysis of the probable futures of those trades where there are currently shortages, as well as of the alternative forms of training available to provide this skilled labor. If recurrent education is necessary in a time of technological change, then the role of the initial apprenticeship has to be reconsidered.
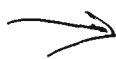
The identification of such areas of specific demand and the provision of facilities to satisfy it are relatively easy tasks. The graver problem is to assess the likely overall patterns of future employment and the careers which it may be possible to follow within them. Some elements of these patterns can be determined from present demographic facts, others can be suggested by projecting present movements in those economic and technological patterns which decide how the nation as a whole will in the future produce its income. These facts alone however will not tell us either what occupations will be available or what skills will be used in them or needed to obtain employment within them. These will depend on the overall organization of society, the patterns of control and management adopted by organizations within that society, and the work patterns

adopted within that society. If society chooses to expand the public
rather than the private sector, then the growth in tertiary employment
will be more in the direction of service and creative occupations than
of managerial and entrepeneurial. If authority is decentralized within
society and its institutions, and if the ownership of the facilities of
production and distribution is separated from their use, a variety of
occupations calling for imagination and initiative will be opened in
place of those calling for the administrative and organizational skills
required in a bureaucracy. If the working life is curtailed by delaying
entry to the work force, lowering the age of retirement, and reducing
working hours, there will be a growth not only in the professions caring
for the aged but in those catering for an increasingly mindless leisure.
If, on the other hand, the right to a satisfying job is recognized, it is
likely that the working life will be extended by lowering the age of
school leaving and discarding the concept of retirement entirely, and
providing instead for the normal course of life to be punctuated by periods
of education and varied by successive changes of occupation.

If manpower planning is to be of service to education it must analyze
not only the alternatives available to school leavers and recent graduates
in the immediate future, but also the kinds of alternatives I have sketched
which are available to society in the future, and the implications of
each. These implications will relate not only to education and vocational
training, but to the whole range of industrial, developmental and social
policy. Finally, in spelling out the alternatives available, the manpower
planners should consider the problems which are likely to arise as a result
of social change, planned or unplanned, both so that education can be
planned to prepare people to meet these problems, and industry organized

to create the jobs in which these people will be employed. Instead of
education serving the needs of industry, both will be shaped to meet the
purposes consciously chosen by the community.

It is only within such a framework that the concept of vocational
education becomes meaningful. This wider concept was adumbrated in the
Wark committee's ascription to the colleges of specific responsibility
for technology, defined as 'the application of knowledge to satisfy
human need'. This wide ambition was, however, reduced by the committee's
persistent equation of human need with the needs of industry, as perceived
and defined by the employers. The report speaks of the students as 'agents
of change', and recognizes the importance in their education of developing
their understanding of the historical and social context of their
occupations, but it does not come to grips with these issues, and contents
itself with advocating some form of liberal or general studies within
courses otherwise oriented to obtaining specific skills and knowledge.
Following the subsequent broadening of the range of courses offered in
the colleges, degrees and diplomas in humanities are now provided, but
these are intended to prepare students for specific careers in teaching,
administration, and community affairs. The actual issue of the role of
the humanities in vocational education has been avoided because the issue
of vocation has been avoided. The issue becomes more urgent as
opportunities decrease in the traditional careers open to arts graduates,
particularly teaching. Yet the impact of technology on society, and the
problems brought in its wake, increase daily.

The issue of vocation is essentially one of ends, not means. It is
the end to which a person directs his or her life, or the way he creates

As well as the rights of members of the community to find satisfying occupations, & we should take into account the rights of people as consumers to enjoy the products of various skills which the market economy/itself does not make available. As industrialization raises the general standard of living by increasing total production, and as this production is distributed in the form of higher wages and salaries, so those products which cannot be mass-produced through machinery and standardization become proportionately dearer. This leads to the ~~expixt~~ export of some inddstries,~~whxrexthex~~ such as clothing manufacture, and thus offers the prospect of ~~pexxibixyyprmdxcss~~ a better balanced world economy, provided that the pattern is not again distorted by tariff policies. It leads also, however, to the disappearnace of some products and services which formerly depended on an affluent clientele and a poorly paid workforce. This is true not only of basic services such as postal communications and public transport, which are in an apparent state of chronic inefficiency in most of the industrialized world, but also to the decline of whole areas of small-scale enterprise in ~~publishixy~~ such areas as publishing, food supply, and the crafts theatre. On the other hand, there is a move, particularly among those groups who are providing the demand for further education in the human arts and sciences, to move outside the normal commercial patterns and establish small enterprises catering for these needs. At present, such enterprises probably depend for their survival on the patronage of those who have succeeded in obtaining sufficiently luctrative positions in the public and private bureaucracies, including education, to be able to afford to indulge their individual taste. The decline in public spending and return to a society based on the more aggressive forms of capitalism threatens this group above all, but if these new activities are to do more than survive, and are to

to offerytheirx make their skills available to the wider community,
they will need to be given some form of community support, as is at present
made available to xuxhxx sport and recreation.   Such a productive society
would require quite different forms of education from a leisure society.
The issue of vocation is essentially one of ends, not means. It is
the end to which a person directs his or her life, or the way he creates

himself through his life in society. These inherent meanings of the word have been lost sight of in a society which separates a person from his work, so that his true life is felt to be only that part outside the workplace. This development has been produced by the industrial system and the ideology of domesticity and individualism which has accompanied it. It is associated with a decline in the institutions of community, and consequently with the feeling of individual powerlessness. The individual is placed in opposition to society, and freedom is perceived as his ability to do what he wishes apart from society, rather than to work within society to adapt it to his needs. Society is merely a vehicle to provide the individual with the goods he needs to live his life, or the people to manipulate to gratify his desire for power. It is ironic that the radical ideology which has developed in opposition to this view of human possibilities, and which rejects both material affluence and individual power, in its very proclamation of the individual as totally free is enforcing the ideology it rejects. Yet in its groping towards a life style based on creative work, and its rejection of the ethic which defines work as a necessary external discipline, the radical culture is recovering in practice the idea of vocation as an expression of the whole person.

If this conception of vocation is to be given expression in education, it must accept the individual as subject, not as object. Such education starts from the student's relationship to society and his perception of the ways he can work within it, of the forces which he wants to use to shape his world. If he sees himself as a teacher, he talks with children. If he is an engineer, he starts working his own motors or building his

own switching gear. If he is an artist, he paints, a writer, he writes.
These activities are provided not because they give him skills he will
use in employment, but because they are worth doing now. His engines
are used, his paintings exhibited, his books published. They make
an immediate impact on the world, and they raise the problems which can
be solved only through disciplined application to mastering the theoretica:
learning which gives us our understanding of the world in which we work.
The practice generates the need for theory, and the individual then applies
the theory to extending his practice. The individual student is the missir
link in the Wark equation, just as the role he will play in the world has
been left out of a system of education built on the assumption that the
job specifications are already decided, and that the task of teaching is t(
mould the student to fit them. To adapt the words of Denys Thompson,[29] we
have designed an education system to produce spare parts for the industria:
machine, when we should have been educating misfits who would redesign the
machine.

By thus placing the individual student and his vocation at the centre
of education we both assign the colleges a distinctive role which is built
on their present skills and resolve some of the thorny issues of teaching,
curriculum and government. By starting with the student's own interest
and his involvement in the practical problems around him, the course will
retain its vocational relevance, yet will still broaden out to consider
social issues and the whole question of technological impact. When taught
as a course in their own right, the humanities will start with the world
around us and move to a consideration of the forces which have shaped it.
In this way, humanities and the hard technologies move towards each

other, rather than being seen as opposing cultures. Instead of students being forced to broaden themselves by acquiring a smattering from somebody else's discipline, they will learn to co-operate with people of different interests and skills in common tasks. This implies, of course, that they will be freed of some of the more time-consuming forms of instruction and left free to find their own way to solving problems. The accreditation of the colleges will depend on the demonstrated success of their students, rather than on adherence to approved syllabuses. Such a system, which could probably most easily be implemented through some variation of the British system of external examiners nominated by the colleges themselves, would leave the responsibility for anticipating changes in employment patterns and social needs with the colleges themselves.

The adoption of this vocational role would enable the colleges also to regain that community role which was taken from them by the Wark committee's rejection both of general adult education and of shorter courses. In conjunction with TAFE colleges, the colleges of advanced education could form a network which would enable people at any stage of life to return to full-time education, not merely as a form of retraining, but as a way of pursuing those interests which seem important to them. These successive periods of education would provide the opportunity for some people to catch up with new developments in the field of their interest, for others to deepen their understanding and professional skill, while for still others they would provide the chance to enter a new occupation. Such a scheme would depend on some form of guaranteed income, but the prospect of such opportunities through the length of life would enable people to cease full-time education at any stage they chose, and this in turn would take much of the pressure off both secondary and tertiary

educational institutions as they presently exist.

This community function would commit the colleges to meeting the particular needs and aspirations of the regions in which they were located, and this in turn would require that they develop research projects designed to identify these needs, and, where problems are found to exist, propose solutions. In this way the colleges would provide inputs for the same system of national planning which would provide the framework within which to develop their students' vocational interests. The college would thus become the focal point which enables the region to participate in the wider society and brings the resources of that society to the service of the region. Local students, their ideas and understanding nurtured in the region, can satisfy their aspirations through the college courses, which allow them to work with greater understanding in their home area, or to move to a different sphere.

By focussing on matters distinctive to its region, each college will acquire a reputation for its own particular excellence within the general fields of its learning, and this reputation will in turn attract from beyond the region those students who must come to it if regionalism is not to become parochialism. So, for example, a college obtaining a reputation for its understanding of ethnic affairs will not only attract students from migrant families living in its neighborhood, but those from other areas interested in broadening their own background in this particular way. People working effectively in a community would be able to increase their effectiveness by studying courses designed to complement their practical understanding with theoretical disciplines, and would at the same time share their experience with those becoming acquainted with the area for the first time, and thus needing a course of different design, but both

groups of students could finish with the same award. The dynamic for the development of the college would come from the region, the community, and the students, who would be developed to follow a vocation which in turn would lead them back to effective participation in the community and the region of their choice. A college that is open to everybody as he chooses, and which accepts the obligation to take each person from his present position to the goal of his own choosing, will not merely be an arbitrator of privilege, and the awards it grants will in fact become marks of distinction, the recognition of attained excellence rather than of a mere passport to an occupation.

This proposal leaves unresolved the issue of accountability. Within the individual college, this would be ensured by the means outlined earlier, that is, by making each member of the academic staff removable by vote of those for whom he is responsible. This does not ensure, however, that colleges continue to discharge their responsibilities to the wider community. It would be very easy for them to develop courses which satisfied the students presently enrolled, by avoiding unpleasant questions or by guaranteeing them access to higher paid jobs, while controlling entrance requirements in such a way as to exclude the people who could most profit from study. There would be no incentive to develop new courses to meet changing needs, as staff in a declining area could happily potter away at their own interests without the embarrassment of students. The colleges could become elitist institutions, not in the desirable sense of maintaining standards of excellence, but as places isolated from the mainstream of life where salaried academics follow esoteric but pleasant hobbies and students while away a few years before entering a profession, taking up politics or retiring to the

family business. One solution to this problem is to ensure that the
councils of the colleges maintain the power to discipline the academics,
but whereas local representatives on the council can be entrusted to curb
financial extravagance at the expense of the public purse, they are less
likely to have either the time or the ability to be responsible for
seeing that the needs of the whole community are met. If it is the
duty of the academics to identify and meet these needs, then they must be
protected from those whose interests and prejudices are likely to be
upset if other parts of the community are given access to power.

Final accountability must therefore remain, as at present, with a
central authority. There seems no reason for this authority to be other
than national, provided that it does not interfere in the detailed
operation of the individual colleges. Its authority would be limited
to the approval of courses on the basis of community need, the accreditation
of awards on the basis of demonstrated achievement, and the conduct of
research into the educational implications of manpower, social and
economic policies, and the implications for these policies of educational
developments. The power of approval would prevent the multiplication of
narrowly specific courses, the power of accreditation would maintain
minimum standards. Beyond this, if approved courses are funded on the
basis of student demand, the perceptions of the potential students operating
as a market force can be relied on to ensure that courses retain their
vocational relevance, assuming that all areas of tertiary education are
funded on the same basis.

It may be objected that such a system would still leave blurred
the boundaries between colleges of advanced education, universities, and

TAFE colleges. Certainly, the notions of community responsibility and vocational relevance are applicable to the TAFE area, and could be developed with advantage in some universities. However, the main thrust of institutions in each of the sectors would be distinct. The universities have a prior commitment to the advancement of knowledge, the colleges of advanced education to the furthering of vocation within the context of the whole community, the TAFE colleges to the development of personal skills. These differences of emphasis, together with the differences in history and tradition between the three segments, are sufficient to ensure that they develop different but complementary functions in meeting the total higher educational needs of the community. No segment need however have exclusive functions; rather, they will balance them differently.

The attempt to codify differences by administrative or legislative edict is likely only to inhibit free development, establish a clear hierarchy of esteem, and thus perpetuate the pressures which force each institution to seek to raise its status according to a single criterion of excellence. It may be that in Australia there will eventually emerge a single system of widely different institutions, each known according to the reputation it has established through its own efforts. There is no need to fear this possibility, or to attempt to stifle it by decree. In the meantime, however, it seems that the cause of variety will best be serviced by ensuring that the system provides sufficient places overall to meet demand, and that demand is not distorted by financial incentives or discouragements to particular groups of students, and by allowing each segment of the system to grow freely according to the dynamic of its own traditions and responsibilities.