

World Education

# NEWS & REVIEWS

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## INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

### **SWEEPING REFORMS CHANGING AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Australian higher education currently is undergoing what some are calling the "Dawkins Revolution," sweeping reforms instituted by John Dawkins, Australia's Minister for Employment, Education and Training. To better understand the implications of these reforms, a brief review of Australia's tertiary history is in order.

Until very recently, Australia had a binary system of tertiary education which distinguished between universities and the colleges of advanced education. (A third level of postsecondary education, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), straddles the secondary and tertiary sectors).

#### **The Universities**

Australia's university sector dates from the 1850s when its first two universities, Sydney and Melbourne, were founded. By the time of the First World War, there was one university in each of Australia's six states. A rapid expansion of the tertiary system took place after World War II, until by 1988, there was a total of 19 universities enrolling almost 200,000 students.

Each university is an independent corporation by law. The universities patterned themselves after the model of British universities in the structure of their programs as well as the awards they offered. Close ties were maintained with the United Kingdom. Many of the academic staff were recruited from universities in the U.K.; most Australian teachers did their postgraduate training in British

universities. Research was considered the prerogative of the universities, and in the British tradition, the responsibility for academic matters was delegated to academic boards and committees.

Before World War II, the universities had derived about one-third of their income from endowments, one-third from tuition fees and one-third from their state governments. After the War, the Commonwealth government instituted a series of grants to assist universities with expansion programs and began to pay the tuition of returning service men and women who wished to further their education. The universities quickly became dependent on this financial support.

In 1974 the government abolished tuition fees, making the universities solely dependent upon the Commonwealth for funding and, therefore, vulnerable to government intrusion upon their independent status.

#### **Colleges of Advanced Education**

Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) were designated in Australia in the 1960s to provide an alternative to university education. Culled from the postsecondary level of existing technical colleges, their courses were designed to be vocationally-oriented, and they were first authorized to offer only diplomas, not degrees.

The original 26 recognized institutions, financed in part by the Commonwealth (central) government and in part by the states, included institutes of technology and the major technical col-

leges in each state, as well as small, specialized colleges for agriculture, art, pharmacy, nursing and occupational therapy. When it was decided to include teacher education under this sector, the number of CAE soared to 80 institutions between 1977-79.

The size and scope of the CAE varied greatly. Many of the colleges--particularly those in rural areas--had very small enrollments in the range of less than 200 students, while some of the larger institutes enrolled as many as 40,000. Although they were publicly funded, the formula for determining their grant per student was less generous than that used for university funding.

By 1969 the government decided that a number of courses offered by the CAE were at the same general level and length as degree courses offered in corresponding disciplines at the univer-

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sities. As a result, the CAE were authorized to award bachelor's degrees, and later, master's degrees. All CAE awards and programs of study are subject to review by the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE), which accredits or approves them for funding purposes.

Before the current reforms, the number of CAE had been consolidated into 47 institutions enrolling about 180,000 students.

### Basis for the Current Reforms

Throughout the 1980s the Australian government pressured tertiary institutions--particularly the universities--to shed their Ivory Tower mentality, to become more responsive to the country's social and industrial needs, and to become more efficient in their operations.

Minister Dawkins charged that the institutions were so poorly managed they did not know what they were doing. Also, inequities existed in the opportunities for higher education. According to government figures, 20,000 qualified students were unable to gain entry to higher education courses at the beginning of the 1988 academic year.

With the release of his White Paper policy statement in 1988, Mr. Dawkins set out the government's new strategy for the long-term development of the higher education system. Saying that "our educational institutions cannot be isolated from the major changes occurring in Australian society and the economy," Mr. Dawkins announced that henceforth these institutions would be "the prime agents in the process of change through both their teaching activities and their contribution to research and innovation."

Priorities stated were:

- an expansion of the higher education system to meet the

demand for higher education places;

- the abandonment of the old binary system, which distinguished between universities and colleges of advanced education, in favor of a unified national system;

- the consolidation of institutions, setting a minimum size of 2000 full-time students to be eligible for funding;

- the demand that institutions outline specific proposals for goals, strategies and measures of performance to help determine the amount of their funding;

- the requirement that research and postgraduate education have more applications for direct social or economic benefit to be eligible for funding.

### Results of Reforms

In the two and a half years since issuing his White Paper, Mr. Dawkins has put his reforms solidly in place, despite fierce and continuing resistance from some senior university faculty members and from students, who have been hit with unexpected fees.

The government says that enough additional funding has been provided for 63,000 additional places for Australian students between 1989-92. Emphasis has been placed on creating places for 3,500 Aboriginal students in that time.

The binary system of funding education has been scrapped in favor of the Unified National System. No longer are universities funded at a higher level than the country's colleges of advanced education.

Because no institution enrolling less than 2,000 students can be part of the unified national system, many of the country's colleges of advanced education are disappearing, swallowed up in mergers

which are producing jumbo-sized, multi-sited universities.

Two new universities were formed in 1989: The University of Western Sydney, which incorporated the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education in early 1989, and Charles Sturt University, which was created in July 1989 by amalgamating Mitchell College of Advanced Education and the Riverin-Murray Institute of Higher Education. More mergers are taking place, and it is advisable to keep a watch for these changes for some time to come.

Across Australia, mergers will cut the number of higher education institutions to 34. More important to both staff and students, the distinction between the universities--which carried out research--and the teaching-only colleges will be wiped away.

Competition for research money has been made more difficult. New Cooperative Research Centers have been established. Each is to be loosely affiliated with a tertiary institution, and each is mandated to be "user-oriented" and to play a "brokerage role" in bringing together public and private research groups. By giving industry tax incentives to help fund these new research centers, the government is making a deliberate attempt to commercialize research.

Tuition fees also have been re-introduced. Students are appealing to the High Court over the enactment of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), which obliges them to pay about 20 percent of their tuition costs as a tax levy once they graduate and find employment. Also, institutions are being encouraged by the government to develop more professional graduate and non-degree courses for which they can charge students and pocket the fees.

As of January 1, 1990, all new overseas students are being charged full tuition, although the government has

## AUSTRALIAN REFORMS continued...

increased the number of scholarships available to them. About 10,000 overseas students study in Australia each year.

Following is a list of Australian universities, showing in italics the institutions with which they have merged:

### NORTHERN TERRITORY:

**Northern Territory University**  
P.O. Box 1341, Darwin NT 5794  
(*University College of Northern Territory;*  
*Darwin Institute of Technology*)

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

**University of Adelaide**  
GPO Box 498, Adelaide, SA 5001  
**Flinders University**  
Bedford Park, SA 5042  
TASMANIA

**University of Tasmania**  
GPO Box 252C, Hobart, TAS 7001  
(*Tasmania State Institute of Technology*)

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Murdoch University**  
Murdoch, WA 6150  
**University of Western Australia**  
Nedlands, WA 6009  
**Curtin University of Technology** (formerly  
Western Australian Institute of Technol-  
ogy)  
Kent St., Bentley, WA 6102

### QUEENSLAND

**James Cook University**  
Townsville, QLD 4811  
**University of Queensland**  
St. Luci, QLD 4067  
(*Gatton Agricultural College*)  
**Griffith University**  
Nathan, QLD 4111  
(*Gold Coast CAE*)  
**Queensland University of Technology**  
GPO Box 2434  
Brisbane, QLD 4001  
Private:  
**Bond University**  
Private Bag 10, Gold Coast Mail Centre,  
QLD 4217

### NEW SOUTH WALES

**University of Sydney**  
Sydney, NSW 2006  
(*State Conservatorium of Music,*  
*Cumberland College of Health Sciences,*  
*Sydney CAE nursing program,*  
*Sydney Institute of Education*)  
**University of New South Wales**  
P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2033  
(*City Art Institute*  
*St. George Institute of Education*)  
**University of Technology Sydney**, for-  
merly New South Wales Institute of  
Technology

**Macquarie University**  
North Ryde, NSW 2109  
(*Institute of Early Childhood Studies*)  
**University of Newcastle**  
Newcastle, NSW 2308  
(*Hunter Institute of Higher Education*)  
**University of Western Sydney**  
P.O. Box 1000 St. Marys  
NSW 2760  
(*Macarthur Institute of Higher Education,*  
*Hawkesbury Agricultural College, Nepean*  
*College of Advanced Education*)  
**Charles Sturt University**  
P.O. Box 99 Bathurst, NSW 2795

## AUSTRALIA

Source: International Development Program of  
Australian Universities and Colleges



Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007  
(*Kuring-gai CAE*  
*Institute of Technical and Adult Educa-  
tion*)  
**University of New England**  
Armidale NSW 2351  
(*Armidale CAE*  
*Northern Rivers CAE*  
*Orange Agriculture College*)

(*Mitchell CAE, Bathurst Institute of  
Higher Education,*  
*Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Edu-  
cation*)  
**University of Wollongong**  
P.O. Box 1144, Wollongong  
NSW 2500

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**Australian National University**  
 GJPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601  
*(Canberra Institute of the Arts)*  
**University of Canberra**, formerly Canberra College of Advanced Education  
 P.O. Box 1  
 Belconnen, ACT 2616

**VICTORIA**

**University of Melbourne**  
 Parkville, VIC 3052  
*(Melbourne CAE, Victorian College of Pharmacy, Hawthorn Institute of Education, Victorian College of the Arts, and Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture)*

**Monash University**  
 Clayton, VIC 3168  
**Latrobe University**  
 Bundoora, VIC 3083  
**Deakin University**  
 Waurin Ponds, VIC 3217  
*(Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education)*  
**Victoria University of Technology**  
 P.O. Box 64  
 Footscray, VIC 3011  
*(Footscray Institute of Technology, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and Western Institute of Technology)*

Eight institutions also have been designated as Distance Education Centers (DECs):

**Charles Sturt University**  
**University of New England**  
**Deakin University**  
**Monash-Gippsland**  
**University College of Central Queensland**  
**University College of Southern Queensland**  
**South Australian College of Advanced Education and Western Australian Distance Education Center** (a joint DEC operation involving Murdoch University, Curtin University of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education)

-Marilyn Umehara

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