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## Contents

<i>Preface</i> .....	3
<i>Editorial Introduction</i> .....	4
<i>One Tertiary System for Community Engagement Andrew Smith CEO ACPET (Australian Council for Private Education and Training) .....</i>	7
<i>Forgotten but not Gone: Raising university-community engagement into the post-Bradley consciousness John Clarke - Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor University of Southern Queensland .....</i>	14
<i>Increasing Higher Education Participation by Equity Target Groups through University-Community Collaborations Florence E McCarthy, Margaret H Vickers - University of Western Sydney .....</i>	20
<i>Higher Education in the Aftermath of the Bradley Review: A Critical Reflection Professor Vin Massaro, Managing Director, Massaro Consulting Professorial Fellow, LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management, University of Melbourne.....</i>	28
<i>GUIDELINES for Authors.....</i>	44

## ***Preface***

The Australian Journal of University Community Engagement is a refereed journal published twice a year by the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance Inc. a not for profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the engagement capabilities of staff and universities by developing expertise, fostering collaboration and building their communities across Australia.

The **AUCEA E-Journal** strives to be inclusive in scope, addressing topics and issues of significance to scholars and practitioners concerned with diverse aspects of university-community engagement. The **AUCEA E-Journal** aims to publish literature on both research and practice that employ a variety of methods and approaches, address theoretical and philosophical issues pertinent to university-community engagement and finally, provide case studies and reflections about university-community engagement. The **Journal** aims to stimulate a critical approach to research and practice in the field and will, at times, devote issues to engaging with particular themes.

All manuscripts will be subject to double-blind peer review by three (3) professionals with expertise in the core area. The three (3) reviewers will include at least one (1) editorial board member.

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## ***Editorial Introduction***

**Donella Caspersz, Marie Kavanagh and Diana Whitton**

The current global financial crisis (GFC) has issued a challenge in many quarters to re-think policy and practice. It is thus prescient that the *Review of Australian Higher Education* chaired by Professor Denise Bradley was released as the GFC began. The review was conducted over a period of many months during which time the panel held national consultations and met with a range of stakeholders as well as received some 450 formal responses and submissions (Bradley, 2008). 'The challenge for Australia' or the need for 'The nation...(to have)...more well-qualified people if it is to anticipate and meet the demands of a rapidly moving global economy' appeared to preoccupy the Review considerations (Bradley, xi). In the pre-GFC Australian environment this could have been taken to refer to events such as the increasing reliance of Australian industry on imported skills to meet the labour market demand required for 'boom time' production levels, which the Australian union movement in particular highlighted the cause as arising from inadequate investment by employers and government in training (AEGIS/AMWU, 2006). In the wake of the GFC on Australian economy and society however, it is clear that the Australian government has drawn on the Bradley recommendations to re-think policy and practice in higher education as part of its own response to managing the GFC. As stated in the Government response to Bradley, the Government "will make an unprecedented investment in our universities and tertiary education system to drive comprehensive reform across the post compulsory education and training sector.... to enable Australia to participate fully in and benefit from, the global knowledge economy" (Aust. Govt., 2009, p 5). The significance of the GFC is clear when stating, "...To respond to the challenges presented by the economic downturn and to seize the opportunities of the new environment that will emerge during the recovery, Australia needs highly skilled people to be able to adapt to the uncertainties of the rapidly changing future." (Aust. Govt., 2009, p 6).

It was thus of no great surprise that in giving 'legs' to the Bradley recommendations in its budgetary announcements, the Government has resourced initiatives which will directly respond to the 'new environment that will emerge during recovery'. For instance, the \$400+m over four years to attract more students from low SES backgrounds will be very significant in capturing those communities who potentially face the greatest disadvantage as a result of the restructuring of industry and economy that is currently happening and will continue to occur over the next few years. Similarly, the allocation of \$491m over four years for a demand driven entitlement system for domestic higher education students will again be a vital initiative that will help provide a 'future' for those for whom the future is now uncertain as a result of the GFC influence on Australian economy and society.

In summary, the Government's formal response through its budgetary initiatives aligns higher education a la Bradley to the needs of economy and society as one route through which it may charter Australia safely into a sustainable post GFC future.

While these initiatives are vitally important in chartering a future for Australian economy and society post GFC, it is nonetheless curious that there has been a resounding silence on the question of how the relationship between the higher education sector will interact with the concept of 'community engagement' to facilitate these initiatives.

In fact Bradley expressly stated that funding should NOT be provided for 'community engagement or 'third stream' activities arguing instead that these activities are an integral part of an institution's teaching and research activities' (Bradley, p xxviii)<sup>1</sup>. While this may be so, the history of community engagement in Australian universities begs the question of whether the sector will 'integrate' these activities into its 'teaching and research activities'. One basis for posing this is, as Bradley notes, that the term is open to much interpretation (p 221). For instance, some submissions viewed community engagement as involving collaboration or two-way relationships with parties external to the higher education provider, while others specified that relationships could be established with community groups, industry, governments and other groups, and yet others again provided a more general definition suggesting it involved relationships with the host community or region. (p 221).

The confusion about meaning however highlights a more deep-seated problem and that is the ambivalence in some Universities about formalising a tradition of community engagement. While the AUQA Cycle 1 Audit (Stella & Baird, 2008, pp 55-56) concluded that a picture of 'consolidation and further engagement' in Australian universities about community engagement emerges from their review, and that Universities appear 'to be positively considering their community interactions and social obligations'; the AUQA review nonetheless highlights that the practice of community engagement was more usually pursued by individuals generally on an ad hoc basis, rather than as part of a comprehensive strategy by Universities towards community engagement. This is despite the reference to a community engagement goal in the 2007 revision of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (MCEETYA, 2007)<sup>2</sup>, and the role played by this journal's host organisation, the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) in stimulating a tradition of scholarship about community engagement as well as developing a national benchmarking framework to assist Universities improve engagement with their communities. In Cycle 2, AUQA is giving greater attention to the role of community engagement in universities and some institutions have selected it as a priority issue in their review.

Thus, can the funding initiatives proposed by the Government be effectively implemented without University's developing a proactive community engagement strategy; and will Universities do as Bradley suggests and 'integrate these activities' into their teaching and learning strategies? The goals and priorities framed by the report and the initiatives will require community engagement strategies if they are to succeed.

We have no answers to these questions, as only time will tell the tale. However, our purpose in focusing this edition of the journal using the theme "Reflections on University-Community Engagement in the context of the Bradley Report" was to begin a debate about the 'way forward' in the relationship between community engagement and our University sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 35 of Bradley ranks submission by topics on community engagement as equalling those received on internationalisation. Above these in order were research and innovation, functions and characteristics of higher education, governance and regulation, tertiary education system, student experience, labour market and industry needs, participation/social inclusion and resourcing/funding (p 209).

<sup>2</sup> All higher education institutions in Australia are required to meet criteria stated in the Protocols where in reference to the community engagement goal it is suggested that institutions receiving significant public funds are expected to 'engage with the community to enhance material, human, social and/or environmental wellbeing of the community' (Stella & Baird, 2008, p 9).

To this end, we have selected a series of articles that provide a number of different perspectives on this theme. While generally supportive, the article by Massaro nonetheless critiques both Bradley and the Government Response on the basis that, given current exigencies, Bradley may have been more effective by recommending fewer initiatives in key areas such as staff/student ratios so that Government funding could have been concentrated in addressing some of the underlying almost 'structural' issues that are hampering the advancement of a more effective higher education sector. Similarly, while being overall supportive, the ACPET article argues that to be effective, the sector needs to evolve into 'one' tertiary system, namely removing the barriers and hence access to resources between public and privately funded institutions. Both the articles by Clarke and McCarthy & Vickers more directly address the question of Bradley's 'silence' on the question of community engagement and the implications of this on both policy and practice in Universities in the future.

In conclusion, we would hope that this edition of the AUCEA e-journal adds some additional insights into the 'nexus' between community engagement and Universities. Given the Latin derivation of the term University as *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* or rather 'community of teachers and scholars', Bradley and the Australian Government have undoubtedly introduced a new array of factors and priorities for our community of scholars and teachers in Universities to take account of in shaping their responses and actions. Given their distinctiveness as a producer of 'public good,' Universities will have to seriously factor community engagement into their deliberations to effectively implement the intent of the Government's recommendations post Bradley. It remains to be seen how Universities and the policy environment respond to this challenge.

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# ***One Tertiary System for Community Engagement***

***Andrew Smith***

***CEO ACPET (Australian Council for Private Education and Training)***

## **Abstract**

As the world becomes more interconnected and global markets for skills and innovation develop even further, it will be crucial for Australia to have enough highly skilled people able to adapt to the uncertainties of a rapidly changing future. Higher education will clearly be a major contributor to the development of a skilled workforce, but as never before, we must address the rights of all citizens to share in its benefits. The aim of this paper is to provide a case study of the views of a peak non-government education and training service-delivery organisation, ACPET (Australian Council for Private Education and Training) about the implications that the Bradley Report holds for the future provision of higher education in Australia. This is particularly in reference to the significance of community engagement in both facilitating and sustaining high educational levels for previously marginalised groups.

Keywords: Community engagement, non-government, higher education

## **Introduction**

As the peak national industry voice for independent higher education institutes, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), representing more than 1100 members, supports the need for the Australian Government to act on developing one tertiary system – one system will assist in the means of improving community engagement. ACPET argued in its submission to the Higher Education Review<sup>i</sup> that:

Australia needs a ‘fit-for-purpose’ qualification and quality system structured around student and provider performance. With more complex life, work and productivity challenges, this review should not perpetuate old barriers to individuals or employers attaining learning objectives and useful qualifications. There appears no reason against Australia steering all formal post-school education through one efficient, effective, modern Higher Education system in place of multiple ‘sectors’, to deliver a matrix of qualifications responding to evolving stakeholder needs.

The final report into the *Review of Australian Higher Education* (HER Final Report) is university-centric despite the changed face of the higher education industry. The public-private divide is no longer a practical or sensible distinction with 37 public universities, two private universities and more than 150 other providers of higher education. Public universities derive significant proportions of their income from non-government sources and some private providers receive government subsidies.

Independent higher education institutions now account for over 9% of Australia’s higher education (equivalent full-time student load) and are an energetic and crucial part of Australia’s tertiary education system servicing local and international students<sup>ii</sup>.

ACPET is concerned that potential consequences of the HER Final Report should be carefully considered in light of wider Government policy objectives and effects on all types of students and education providers, not just public universities.

In both its initial submission and response<sup>iii</sup> to the HER Final Report, ACPET presented cases for:

- One Australian tertiary education system with a continuum of qualifications and removal of artificial sectoral barriers to tailoring and delivering innovative courses utilising both academic and vocational education strengths;
- One Australian tertiary system in which, aligned with national policy, productivity and competition objectives, institutions are not delineated on public or private/commercial business models – the key test should be provider performance in student outcomes;
- Close examination of student-demand based funding models because all types of students warrant choice to suit their needs and interests and equivalent public support for the range of institutions and courses they select;
- Recognising realities in Australia and internationally by using strength of scholarship as the key test for specialist university and university college in National Protocols; and,
- The need for streamlined, best-practice regulation and administration in a single tertiary education system and removal of anti-competitive elements from regulations and processes.

ACPET also reiterated support for initiatives to improve living assistance for students and opening tertiary education paths for people of all backgrounds and interests and for ensuring international students are recognised as clients, potential citizens and important cultural links. In addition, ACPET suggested that large increases in government funding should not be assumed. Australia needs to come to grips with university cost structures including direct and indirect costs of embedded research nexus. Australia needs to move away from embedded university traditions and mystiques particularly at a time when knowledge generation and dissemination is evolving rapidly worldwide.

Can Australia really afford to stay in past moulds? Independent education institutions can offer useful models of innovation, efficiency and education results particularly in regard to community engagement. For instance, universities do not have a monopoly over new knowledge generation and dissemination, and this cannot be achieved by decree. Knowledge generation and its power are well beyond the territory of universities, as proven daily. Where Australian universities and academics fit in the future picture will depend on how they respond to markets and interact with original thinkers and knowledge generators all around. As stated in the HER Final Report (p. 14), Australia needs to “...nurture, support and reward those who produce new ideas and new ways of doing things to prepare us to compete more effectively as the global race for talent intensifies’. This must apply as much to education providers – public or independent/commercial - as it does to students, academics and researchers.” The nation will need more well-qualified people if it is to anticipate and meet the demands of a rapidly moving global economy.

However, research by Access Economics predicts that from 2010 the supply of people with undergraduate qualifications will not keep up with demand. To increase the numbers participating we must also look to members of groups currently under-represented within the system, that is, those disadvantaged by the circumstances of their birth: Indigenous people; people with low socio-economic status; and, those from regional and remote areas (HER Final Report, p. 11).

We also face difficulties with provision of higher education in regional areas where there are thin markets which will not sustain a viable higher education presence. These problems will be exacerbated by projections of further decreases in the 15- to 24-year age group in many regional areas.

Current arrangements provide no clear incentives to set up education programs in areas of need or to work collaboratively with other providers to address problems of provision and they mask signals that provision in some areas may need review. It is in regional areas that some of the difficulties, blockages and inefficiencies which derive from the structures of tertiary provision in our federal system are most evident (HER Final Report Pg 12).

A major driver to achieve these targets is promotion of engagement between communities and one tertiary education system. The Council of Australian Government's (COAG) goals of substantially increasing tertiary education of Australians across all groups are vital and acknowledge that independent institutions have a proven record of contributing with energy and innovation to wide-scale education development. For instance, COAG has reinforced flagging productivity programs at meetings from 2006 into 2008. Various COAG statements acknowledge key regulatory reform directions pursued over the 1980s and 1990s to open the Australian economy to market signals and competitive innovation. These include:

- The shift of a wide range of services and operations from public to commercial sectors to achieve efficiencies and responsiveness. This occurred through Government Business Enterprises, privatisation, and progressively opening fields to competition moderated by associated development of Trade Practices law.
- National Competition Policy (NCP) implemented from 1995 and now an ongoing policy across sectors, including the Competitive Neutrality Principles plus continuing review and streamlining of industry, sector and business regulation.

The COAG February 2006 communiqué heralded a new stage of regulation reform:

“COAG agreed that effective regulation is essential to ensure markets operate efficiently and fairly, to protect consumers and the environment and to enforce corporate governance standards. *However, the benefits from each regulation must not be offset by unduly high compliance and implementation costs ... all governments will establish ... arrangements to maximise the efficiency of new and amended regulation and avoid unnecessary compliance costs and restrictions on competition* [and] identify further reforms that enhance regulatory consistency across jurisdictions or reduce duplication and overlap in regulation and in the role and operation of regulatory bodies”. COAG 2006

A year later, then Opposition leader Kevin Rudd, stressed the need for concerted action:

“The quantity and complexity of business regulation today is eating away at the entrepreneurial spirit of Australian business. ... enterprise is necessary to drive long-term economic growth, [and] too much of our business community’s time, effort and attention is being consumed by glorified compliance agents on behalf of governments, both Federal and State. This is stifling the incentive to take risks and to innovate. It throws sand in the engine of economic growth. ” *Press Club, April 2007*

In theory, private enterprise providers should be able to – and needs to – respond to changing marketplace demand (employer and student), and demographic shifts. This is occurring well in some arenas, where private ‘for-profits’ have and continue to address, substantial personal, community, industry and government needs. As suggested by King in the case of the US:

“United States’ private providers usually are demand-absorbers ... The University of Phoenix ... is a well-known example of a successful private (for-profit) university that caters for the demands of the working adult in ways generally not employed by more traditional providers - such as tying provision to employability, standardising curricula, instituting rapid credit accumulation, and providing convenient class times and locations. “ *King 2003*

Evidence suggests “a positive relationship between levels of education attainment and productivity” generally. “A combined increase in formal training and in the average length of education will boost both productivity and participation” highlighting the need as recognised by Education Minister Julia Gillard in the ALP Platform 2007 for a new set of strategies: “...the new Government will not ignore Australia’s human capital needs. A new era of collaborative reform is being initiated. Traditional priorities and modes of service delivery won’t do. New priorities are being set and new flexible ways of delivering services are being explored”. *Minister Gillard, Equity in the Education Revolution, 3.4.08*

The National Protocols 2007 state “diversity in Australia’s higher education system, both within and between institutions, is important to meet diverse and changing student, employer and community expectations”. However, the regulatory regime and its application (as discussed in ACPET’s submission<sup>iv</sup>) work against diversity. The ACPET submission developed a case for a one effective tertiary education system without artificial barriers – public/private, higher/vocational – to innovation, quality tailored products, productivity and performance. Australia’s institutional and system distinctions are arbitrary and funding-based, with unfortunately persistent ‘class’ features in terms of students (‘professionals’ or not) and teachers (‘academics’ or ‘trainers’).

Further, as ACPET explained in its response to the final report into the Review of Australian Higher Education - the biggest impediment to innovation is the historical dual-sector division<sup>v</sup>. Degrees, as much as diplomas and certificates, relate to industry expectations, and students want to be educated for work careers. Professional degrees have long had vocational elements and many vocational courses that educated today's allied professionals and managers across the spectrum, from accountants to event managers, are now provided as degrees. A range of discipline degrees can also now be attained in two years within double-degree sets. All types of qualifications increasingly involve education for thinking integration, problem solving, teamwork as well as knowledge and skills – as all types of work including self-employment and small/medium enterprise (SME) business now demand.

ACPET considers that Australia can have a national tertiary education system without sectors, and with a diversity of institutions focussing on parts of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) continuum and on different ways of delivering learning for people with different learning styles to successfully achieve AQF outcomes.

The frontline for the innovative education development that Australia wants is at the interface of higher education and VET – integrating thinking, analysis and multiple skills. Whether future skill needs will be 'university' or 'vocational' is a debate in theory based on old structures. Courses and qualifications at high-skill interfaces of traditional VET programs and degrees offer interest, options and strong work futures. When tailored by innovative providers to meet the needs of groups of students, such modern courses should also encourage wider education participation. As stated in Minister Gillard's 'a higher education revolution' speech of 13 March 2008:

“[Australians] know that the supposed dichotomy between academic and technical education is ultimately a false one. Australians know that high quality advanced technical skills, high quality research and the best analytical thinking must go together to improve the way our businesses operate. And that together, this skill and knowledge builds prosperity, more jobs and wealthier households.”

The Minister's support for one tertiary system and therefore the system's improved ability to engage with communities is evident in her second speech outlining the five pillars for reform in response to the HER Final Report:

- A **national system** of tertiary education and training;
- A **high quality system** that includes greater transparency and performance measures;
- An **accessible system** that allows greater ease and breadth of access across the tertiary sector;
- A **diverse system** that recognizes the contribution of both public and private provision; and
- A **productive system** that is focused on performance and delivers for students and employers.

The development of an Australian tertiary education system with a continuum of qualifications and removal of artificial sectoral barriers to tailoring and delivering innovative courses utilising both academic and vocational education strengths was a key principle of ACPET's submission to the Higher Education Review and aligns to the Minister's five pillars for reform. It is this approach which will improve access to education for all individuals and assist the development of the required community engagement.

Australia needs one Australian tertiary system in which, aligned with national policy, productivity and competition objectives, providers are not delineated on public or private/commercial business models – the key test should be provider performance in delivering student outcomes. It is this model which will escalate education and training across all groups in the population. ACPET contends that innovative education development occurs at the interface of higher education and VET – integrating thinking, analysis and multiple skills. When tailored by innovative providers to meet the needs of groups of students, such modern courses will encourage wider education participation. ACPET strongly agrees with the recommendations for student-demand based funding models because all students warrant choice to suit their needs and interests and equivalent public support from the range of providers and courses they select.

ACPET agrees with most characteristics of the demand-driven entitlement model recommended by the Panel. However, ACPET has major concerns with the proposition that *'initially only public universities (Table A) would be recognised for this purpose'*, with extension *'to other approved providers when new regulatory arrangements are in place'*. This would potentially have significant anti-competitive effects and therefore limit innovation.

ACPET questions a number of assumptions underlying the tests for university status and how this approach outlined in the HER Final Report indicates serious potential anti-competitive and anti-innovation effects. ACPET strongly supports streamlined, best-practice regulation and administration in a single tertiary education system and removal of anti-competitive elements from regulations and processes.

In conclusion, ACPET and its members look to be directly involved in all facets of development of a modern Australian tertiary education system, including a functional qualifications continuum, academic and teaching performance standards and monitoring performance and quality, modernising regulation, and strengthening services for a wider range of local and international students. ACPET members contribute to economic, social and cultural capital in multiple ways as they develop long-term student focussed education businesses.

Independent higher education institutions are parts of their communities and industries and have never been able to stand apart in the Ivory Tower manner of universities of times past. ACPET members will continue active engagement with stakeholder communities including industry. ACPET considers Government project funding for wider engagement projects should be open to application by all providers under a single Australian Tertiary Education System.

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ACPET Submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education, July 2008

<sup>1</sup> An arms-length estimation – cross checked by ACPET conservatively indicates that of a national higher education equivalent full time student load (EFTSL) near 340,000, private providers are educating more than 37,000 EFTSL or over 9% of students as EFTSL in recent years.

<sup>1</sup> ACPET Response to the Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report February, 2009

<sup>1</sup> ACPET Submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education, July 2008

<sup>1</sup> ACPET Response to the Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report, February 2009

***Forgotten but not Gone: Raising university-community engagement  
into the post-Bradley consciousness***

***John Clarke - Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor  
University of Southern Queensland***

**Abstract**

The Rudd government's higher education policy platform, which is strongly based on the notion of universities as a public good, contrasts dramatically with the former Howard administration's policy directions that were built largely on models of the enterprise university and the private benefits of higher education. This new government mindset which fully acknowledges universities' special role in community development and nation building and that encourages government investment in education should provide the basis for lively and renewed debate on the role and importance of university-community engagement in Australia. However, the issue has been all but ignored in the pivotal Report of the 'Bradley Review' and, as such, risks being overlooked in the important discussions on the future of Australian universities that are currently underway. The difficulties that the engagement lobby is having in raising the profile of community engagement in Australia include the absence of a commonly agreed construct for university-community engagement, the lack of a strong historical tradition of involvement in nation building by Australian universities, an elitist aversion by the Australian higher education sector to the notion of 'service', and the continued obsession by Australian universities to maximise research funding at the expense of all other professional activities.

**Key words:** University-community engagement, Bradley Review, nation building

## 1. The Prospects for University-Community Engagement in the Changed Political Landscape

Earnest Boyer is widely viewed as a leading figure in the modern emergence of community engagement as a serious consideration for universities. In the report *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer 1990) he proposed four interlinked and equally valid functions for scholarship – the scholarship of discovering knowledge that equates to research, the scholarship of sharing knowledge, the scholarship of integrating knowledge to provide a broader context through interdisciplinary dialogue, and the scholarship of the application of knowledge “... to avoid irrelevance” (Boyer 1996, p. 17).

In an essay written just prior to his death in December 1995, Boyer (1996) outlined the major arguments for the importance of what he then referred to as ‘the scholarship of engagement’. In essence, Boyer argued for the legitimacy of universities seeking to be relevant to society and for academic staff to consciously strive to serve their communities. The essay provides an insight into the arguments used so effectively by Boyer to champion the cause of university-community engagement in the USA. He noted at the time that:

... [American] universities are suffering from a decline in public confidence and a nagging feeling that they are no longer at the vital center of the nation’s work (Boyer 1996, p. 11).

In this context he described how the US university sector had moved from a rich historical tradition of contributing to the building of the American nation – as exemplified by the Land Grant universities that were founded in the nineteenth century as “*regionally embedded ‘people’s universities’*” (Goddard & Puukka 2008, p. 17) - to a widely held view “... *that it’s become a private benefit, not a public good*” (Boyer 1996, p. 14). Boyer then bemoans the implications of this changed paradigm:

... [I]t follows that if students are the beneficiaries ... then let students pay the bill. And I’m almost startled to see that, when the gap increases in the budget, it’s the student, and the student fees, that are turned to automatically. After all, it’s a private benefit, and let the consumer, as we like to say, pay the bill.

Observers of Australian higher education policy over the past decade will see a close parallel between the enterprise mindset that Boyer was reacting against in the United States in the early 1990s and what subsequently emerged as a principal higher education policy platform of the Howard administration. The Howard government tended to consider higher education as a private benefit, and hence tended to refer to government funding of higher education as a form of ‘subsidisation’ which warranted a higher contribution by those being educated (DEST 2002). By contrast, the Rudd government, as had the earlier Hawke/Keating Labor governments, sees higher education more as a public good; emphasising its role in nation building. This is clearly stated in the Australian Labor Party’s 2007 National Platform (ALP 2007, chapter 4, article 89) which states that:

Labor will ensure that Australia's universities are institutions of high quality teaching and research, where intellectual rigour and excellence are supported by sustained public investment acting as the cornerstone of our nation's social and economic prosperity.

Universities' role in nation building provides a central plank for policy development. For example, the Rudd government's heavy emphasis on equity in higher education tends to be framed in terms of the economic pragmatism of "building social capital" (Gillard 2009a) as achieved through broadening the pool of degree-qualified Australians rather than on principals of social justice or individual empowerment.

One important implication is that the change of government in 2007 should have created a far more supportive environment for the development of university-community engagement in Australia than had been possible previously. While service to industry, moves towards applied research and an encouragement of partnerships were all supported under the Howard government in an effort to make university research more relevant and accountable, the 'private benefit' and 'universities as enterprise' principles underpinning much of Liberal thought (Marginson & Considine 2000) limited the degree to which these sorts of initiatives could be used as a basis for a comprehensive and coordinated policy framework for university-community engagement. By contrast, Labor's nation-building agenda provides the broader vision needed to underpin sound policy development in this area; providing what Boyer (1996, p. 20) described as the "*larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction in the nation's life ...*" necessary to firmly establish the scholarship of engagement. Of interest is the fact that community engagement in itself is also a major focus for the Rudd government in areas outside of higher education – for example, through its Ministerial Portfolio of Social Inclusion (Gillard 2008).

The question remains as to whether the change in federal government in Australia has, in fact, resulted in a more receptive environment for the discussion of university-community engagement. The debates on the future of universities surrounding the recent 'Bradley Review' of Higher Education (Bradley *et al.*, 2008) provides an opportunity to assess whether this has, in fact, come to pass.

## **2. The Reality for University-Community Engagement in the Era of the Bradley Review**

Contrary to what may have been expected, university-community engagement receives very cursory treatment in the Bradley Review. The Review did receive submissions that raised issues in the area of community engagement and a section is devoted to this area in the summary of submissions provided as Appendix III of the Review Report (Bradley 2008, pp. 211-212). The section notes the differing views on engagement received through submissions and mentions that some submissions had argued for the creation of a 'third stream' funding pool. The information is presented in a way that suggests a lack of cohesion of ideas within the sector rather than as a basis for initiating discussion. In the body of the Report the subject of 'Supporting knowledge transfer and engagement' – the only section of the Report to consider university-community engagement – is addressed in less than 150 words (Bradley *et al.* 2008, p. 169). Essentially without discussion, university-community engagement is equated with engaged teaching and research – the notion of engagement as a 'third leg to the stool' which was raised in submissions was not mentioned here – and the notion of third stream funding is summarily dismissed on the basis that engagement is an integral aspect of good teaching and research and so does not warrant a separate funding stream. No discussion is undertaken in the body of the Report of what effective engagement might look like – although aspects of this were raised in submissions, as noted in Appendix III – of how it could be encouraged and of why this might be important.

Clearly, the Review Committee didn't feel inclined to seriously engage with the notion of community engagement and dispensed with it as an issue as cursorily as it could.

Given the potential that the change in government mindset should have provided, this outcome is particularly disappointing. There has not yet been an effective broad-based debate in Australia on university-community engagement. There has been no common understanding of what engagement is in the context of Australian higher education, no performance indicators for engagement that are routinely employed across the sector, and no government policy frameworks to support its development. There has of course been no lack of good work in Australia universities engaging with their communities and community engagement projects regularly receive public support – for example, both Macquarie and Flinders Universities received multi-million dollar grants for community engagement projects in the government's Diversity and Structural Adjustment (DASA) fund in 2008. However, community engagement still has some way to go to be fully understood and accepted in Australian higher education and the rigorous public discussion required to underpin the development of a sound policy framework to support this area is yet to be realised.

### **3. Factors limiting the development of a policy framework for university-community engagement in Australia**

It is useful to consider why the issue of university-community engagement is failing to gain much traction in discussions of the future of Australian higher education. One factor is that discussions of engagement often occur outside of a formal construct for engagement.

For example, the recent Review of Innovation in Australia (Cutler 2008, p. xiv) speaks of such things as *"building the capacity of firms to absorb and incorporate new knowledge"* and *"facilitating collaboration"* without consciously entering into a consideration of how university-community engagement can be effectively defined, enacted and promoted. The act of engagement therefore tends to be taken for granted and the scholarship underpinning it trivialised.

It is also clear that the raising of engagement into the consciousness of Australian universities faces some fundamental barriers.

The first is that Australian universities lack the strong tradition of relevance and contribution to nation-building that Boyer was able to draw on so effectively in the US context. The early push to establish universities in Australia from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century was not driven by a practical need or to satisfy student demand but rather to re-create the social order which the colonies' citizens had left behind in Britain. As a result, Australian universities prior to World War II remained aloof from mainstream society, did not undertake significant research and were not held in high regard by society at large – serving simply as 'finishing schools for society's elite' in the tradition of Cardinal Newman (DEET 1993). The Australian higher education sector has incorporated the remnants of such practically-oriented institutions as agricultural colleges and institutes of technology but the dominant culture of universities springs from traditional models. Hence, Boyer's call on the US university sector to *"affirm its historic commitment to ... the scholarship of engagement"* (Boyer 1996, p. 13) has little resonance here.

The second major barrier to a robust discussion of university-community engagement in Australia relates to what can only be described as an elitist aversion to the notion of 'service' amongst the university establishment. Observers may have noticed that while 'teaching, research and service' were at one time accepted as the principal functions of universities, the tendency now is to speak of universities' core business in terms of learning & teaching and research only. This aversion to the 's' word may arise, in part, from an association between service and the motley collection of uncoordinated and largely unsupported activities carried out by academics at their own volition that traditionally constituted service. This association between service and relatively low key and typically low impact activities has left a legacy of trivialising the impact and utility of the range of consultancy, professional and technical services, many of them with scholarly underpinnings, that universities now provide to the community. This historical taint on the service function is one of the factors that has made a serious discussion of 'third stream activities' so difficult to bring about.

Australian universities' aversion to the notion of service is also related to fiercely held notions of institutional autonomy and academic freedom; trading on a common belief that these are in some way threatened by an expectation for academics to be responsive to society's needs rather than being allowed to follow their own interests. Boyer (1996) also noted the tendency for academic styles to be intentionally exclusionary, creating natural barriers to knowledge transfer, and the commonly held belief that the 'popularisation' of academic work represents a lowering of academic standards.

A third barrier, that became clear when third stream funding briefly emerged as a national issue in 2007, relates to the continued research-obsession of Australian universities. The possibility of third stream funding quickly led to calls from senior academics along the lines of 'if there are any spare pots of money around then they should be directed into topping up research funding rather than being diverted elsewhere'. Experience shows that anything that is seen to compete for resources with research fights an uphill battle to be treated seriously in universities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The political climate is right for university-community engagement to be taken seriously in Australia. Considerations of institutional relevance, contributions to regional development and nation building and a desire for universities to be responsive to societal needs fit naturally into the platform of the Rudd Labor government.

However, raising university-community engagement into the post-Bradley political landscape requires persistent effort, the development of a rational and widely agreed framework for engagement in the Australian context and overcoming entrenched sector-wide prejudices.

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## ***Increasing Higher Education Participation by Equity Target Groups through University-Community Collaborations***

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### **Abstract**

The Bradley Report calls for increases in the percentage of the population aged 25-34 years old achieving higher education degrees, and for an increase in the percentage of university students who are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, it advocates that there should be no separate funding for community engagement, but rather it should be integrated into the teaching and research functions of universities. This article describes a number of University-community collaborations carried out at the University of Western Sydney that are embedded in credit-bearing teaching programs. Each of these illustrates in practical and proven ways how the Bradley participation targets might be met. These community-based academic subjects involve students in mentoring, tutoring, and other support programs that enhance the educational participation and outcomes of targeted equity groups. They are based on University-community collaborations that are supported entirely within the teaching function of the university.

**Key words:** Higher Education, educational equity, community engagement, teacher education, mentoring.

### **Introduction**

Among the many arresting recommendations and proposals of the Bradley Report, at least three stand out. One is the call to improve the percentage of the population aged 25-34 years old achieving a higher education degree, by 2020, from the current 29 percent to 40 percent (RAHE 2008: xiv). Second, among equity groups, it is proposed that the percentage of university students from low socio-economic backgrounds should increase to 20 percent by 2020 (RAHE 2008: xiv). Third, is that there should be no separate funding for community engagement, but rather it should be integrated into the teaching and research functions of universities (RAHE, 2008: xxviii). If other recommendations of the Bradley report are accepted, the argument is that the substantially increased funding to support teaching and research should cover the costs of a sustained university-community nexus.

These proposals pose important challenges to institutions of higher education. For example: How to increase the participation of disadvantaged populations if community engagement is not a 'third stream' of Commonwealth funding? How to significantly improve the quality of undergraduate teaching, especially for equity populations, when the everyday educational needs of many undergraduate students are already difficult to meet?

A series of initiatives undertaken at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) illustrate how such questions can be answered. These initiatives generally focus on providing essential mentoring, support and assistance for both the academic and social needs of a wide range of equity populations.

These initiatives can be categorised as 1) those focused on improving the teaching and learning environments of schools through the assistance of UWS undergraduates, many of them pre-service teachers and 2) those initiatives directed at improving the retention and performance of matured aged, or at risk-university undergraduates. Both sets of initiatives address the issues of improving student engagement with learning, as well as improving academic performance. This boosts the numbers likely to pursue post-secondary or higher education degrees, and increases the likelihood of success in undertaking such degrees.

This article will provide a brief description of these initiatives, and discuss basic principles learned in the processes of establishing these activities. It is thought that such information may assist other institutions that are aiming to place community-engaged learning within the regular budgetary 'teaching envelope' of the university. While other initiatives exist at UWS that also address student needs, only those that illustrate the linking of credit-bearing academic learning and community service will be discussed here.

It should be noted that UWS is basically a sprawling, working-class university located in the Greater Western Sydney region. Many of its students are first-generation students attending university; many come from immigrant families, and/or from low socio-economic and non-English speaking backgrounds. Therefore, the issues outlined in the Bradley report as most needing attention are quite germane to the mission of the University and to its connections with its surrounding communities.

At UWS there are two established umbrella subjects (units) that provide the opportunity for academic community-engaged learning to be integrated within the standard teaching scope of the university. These two established units, Learning through Community Service, and Professional Experience 3 will be discussed below. A third umbrella unit, Classrooms without Borders is being developed; it will offer academic community engaged learning to undergraduate students who are intending to become either Primary or Secondary teachers.

#### *Learning Through Community Service (LCS)*

Learning through Community Service (LCS) is a 20 point unit organized through the School of Education but delivered across the College of Arts at UWS. It is organized to avoid conflicting with regular classes and provides students leeway in scheduling their community activities around their other commitments. LCS also features on-line learning and relies heavily on internet discussion, chat rooms, emails, texting, and mobile phones.

LCS is organized into cohorts with each instructor designing their own cohort and working with UWS students in some form of community engagement that links academic knowledge and reflection with community service (Whitton, 2005). Less than 100 students completed LCS in the pilot year (2006), but since then it has enrolled over 200 students each year. A key aspect of LCS is that each strand meets a specific need in the community, and each student is required to do roughly 100 hours of actual service over the course of the semester. In addition, approximately sixty hours are designated for activities such as the orientation week, periodic seminars, written assessments, and end of term activities. The unit is organized around a three or four day beginning orientation; a reliance on online discussion groups and feedback from the instructors, as well as mid-term seminar meetings, and a final 'conference' where students report on their experiences and on what they have learned.

Student assessment is based on regular assignments requiring students to reflect on their current LCS activities; the connections of these activities to relevant literature, and changes in activities and/or plans for mentees or agencies with whom LCS students are working. In addition, LCS students provide a final essay or portfolio which is a consolidation of reflections, synthesis and overview of what has been learned as part of their final grade. An innovation in evaluating student's work is the use of the web-based vUWS system through which students upload their assignments for their instructors. Instructors read and comment on each student's assignment. The student is to improve the assignment and re-submit it at the end of the term along with the final overview essay. A significant portion of the student's final assessment is based on the corrected work as well as on the portfolios/final essays that are submitted.

### *Professional Experience 3 (PE 3)*

In the University of Western Sydney (UWS) secondary teacher-education program (known as the Master's of Teaching), an academically-based community engagement unit known as Professional Experience 3 (PE3) is a required, credit-bearing part of the qualifying degree for beginning teachers. PE3 represents a third 'practicum' alongside the two conventional classroom-based placements that are known as Professional Experience 1 (PE1) and Professional Experience 2 (PE2). The conventional PE1 and PE2 are block-placement practicums where most of the students' effort is focussed on the preparation and delivery of classroom lessons in the disciplines in which the student is aiming to qualify (for example, Mathematics, Science, English). PE3 has a different focus. It provides a series of contexts through which trainee teachers can become aware of the broader professional responsibilities that are carried out in public schools across the Western Sydney region, and can provide needed services to targetted groups of students within schools, as well as to students who may be on their way out, or alternatively, may be seeking re-entry to school (Vickers, 2007).

PE3 placements follow the principles that have been developed within the context of community-engaged teaching and learning at UWS. Known as service learning in other contexts, in PE3 it is expected that (1) students will be engaged in service-related activities that link academic learning with community agencies, (2) student placements are designed so as to meet community-defined needs, and their activities are mutually arranged and agreed upon by agency personnel and teaching staff, (3) student's experiences provide a basis for guided reflection, which may take the form of written assignments given to students by faculty, but may also involve reflective discussions facilitated by agency staff, and (4) agency placements are based on partnerships among students, teaching staff and agency personnel. Approximately 300 Master of Teaching (Secondary) students enrol in PE3 each year.

Plan-It Youth was an early activity within PE 3. This program entailed comprehensive training at Campbelltown TAFE and then participation in a sustained mentoring relationship with a young person at risk in a number of Western Sydney schools. This model – with targeted training and a cohesive approach, located within a productive partnership – seems to be the most successful in ensuring equivalence and effectiveness of the experience (Vickers, Harris, McCarthy, 2004). This early model of PE 3 has now become the general framework for the placements that PE 3 students carry out. That is, the preponderance of PE 3 placements are structured to incorporate targeted preliminary training that is relevant to whichever strand students take up, and to provide sustained reflection during and after the experience.

Other examples of PE 3 include the Dusseldorp *Future Generations* Program, Refugee Action Support, a leadership program known as Maximizing Potential, a remote area placement known as Beyond the Line, and a student mentoring program for International Teacher Education students. The Dusseldorp program involved UWS students in project based learning where students worked through a comprehensive process of negotiation and lesson by lesson planning before they begin their actual tasks (Gannon and Root, 2006). The mentoring of humanitarian refugee students (Refugee Action Support) will be discussed below.

### *Classrooms without Borders*

Classrooms without Borders is a unit that is currently under development, and will be offered from the beginning of 2010. It is a component of the newly organized undergraduate Education Studies major in the College of Arts. This is a 10 credit point unit that will provide aspiring teachers with experiences in community agencies, that will contribute to their understanding of the larger contexts in which schooling occurs. It is anticipated that over 300 students will enroll in Classrooms without Borders each year from 2010.

## Improving the Retention and Performance of University Students

### *Equity Buddies – a cohort in LCS*

The aim of Equity Buddies is to increase first-year retention of mature age students (over 25) at UWS by providing them needed information, assistance and support. Participating LCS students are educated and trained in the area of equity/diversity support as well as in the issues related to student attrition - particularly in relation to the access, participation and retention of mature age first year students. LCS students are trained to become first year equity mentors and are then paired with a small group of first year students to be mentored throughout the Autumn semester. LCS equity buddies have provided assistance in a variety of ways: a directory of facilities, assistance and information to mature age students; computer training, assistance in understanding and negotiating the university culture and its bureaucracy; and organizing social activities, some with other LCS cohorts.

It could be argued that here the engagement nexus is "internal" to the University, with one group of students helping other students. However, the experience of operating these forms of assistance often leads service learning providers to develop productive connections with support agencies on the periphery of UWS campuses, such as Migrant Resource Centres, early childhood education, or child care centres.

### *Sharing Ideas, Sharing Knowledge: Academic literacy through on-line service learning –a cohort in LCS*

Entering university can be a daunting experience, with some students finding the content challenging, the setting unfamiliar and unfriendly, and the academic literacy tasks and assignments especially difficult. These all contribute to students dropping out of the university. Third year LCS students participating in this elective are involved in peer mentoring and supporting a few first year students needing support in developing their academic literacy skills, particularly reading and/or writing. The prior experiences of LCS students at UWS and their knowledge of instructors' expectations for academic assignments assist in the mentoring of first year students. Academic staff provide training to LCS students about being a mentor, teach different literacy strategies, and discuss various ways of providing support to mentees. During the course of the unit, ongoing discussions and support are given by the Instructors to the mentoring students.

## Improving the teaching and learning environments of secondary schools

### *Refugee Action Support – a strand in PE3*

Refugee Action Support (RAS) is a collaborative initiative of the University of Western Sydney (UWS), the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF) and the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). Its focus is to help humanitarian refugee children make the transition from Intensive English Centres to mainstream classrooms in Australian high schools. RAS combines a number of objectives: to provide focused literacy and numeracy support for refugee students through the provision of tutoring centres; to identify the most effective pedagogies to use with refugee children; and to develop pre-service teachers' understanding of diverse student learners to best prepare them for the challenges and dynamics they will encounter in their future classrooms. The ANLF has developed an intensive literacy training program that provides an introduction to English-as-a-Second-Language pedagogies, and cultural awareness training. All students who choose to become RAS tutors participate in this two-day training program provided by ALNF.

Each year, approximately 80 UWS students work as RAS tutors in eight schools around Western Sydney and South-West Sydney. Two cohorts of RAS tutors are deployed over the course of the year, so that 12 weeks of RAS tutoring are delivered in the first half of the year, and 12 weeks of tutoring are also delivered in the second half of the year. The sessions run once a week for half a day, starting after lunchtime and continuing for two hours after school. Tutors' work is negotiated with each school. They may spend their time tutoring students, either individually or working with groups of students in their classes, or they may create lessons or teaching resources.

RAS began in 2007, and through 2007 and 2008 all four cohorts of RAS tutors participated in before- and after- interviews, aimed at assessing the impact of the program. These interviews indicated overwhelmingly that RAS provided beginning teachers with transformational experiences that gave them significant insights into the needs of refugee students, and strategies to provide them with the support they need (Ferfolja, McCarthy, Naidoo & Vickers, 2009).

### *Learning Links – a cohort in LCS*

Learning Links is an LCS cohort involving students from the School of Psychology who are participating in The Reading for Life (RFL) program in South-Western Sydney primary schools, all schools in areas of low socio-economic status. Reading for Life (RFL) is one of the school-based programs set up and managed by a not-for profit charity known as *Learning Links*. Unilever (Australia) has arranged for employees of the company to work as volunteer reading tutors in RFL.

Through an ARC-Linkage grant, UWS and *Learning Links* are working together to modify the Reading for Life Program to include self-concept and motivation enhancement. UWS students enrolled in this LCS program assist with the program, and administer a battery of psychological tests to students before and after the intervention. Learning to administer these instruments and evaluate the results a valuable experience for these students, in addition to the benefits they gain from participating in the Reading for Life training.

## Strategic directions and ways forward

At the beginning of this paper it was noted that the Bradley inquiry is seeking substantially to increase in the percentage of 25-34 years olds achieving University degrees, and to increase the proportion of University students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Inevitably this will involve collaboration with high schools and community organisations, yet separate funding for community engagement will not be available. Engagement that is integrated into the teaching functions of universities is, therefore, recommended.

The programs described in this article provide practical illustrations of the ways that Universities might achieve the Bradley targets without relying on a separate community engagement budget or a separate engagement administration. All of the activities described here function as strands or cohorts embedded in for-credit course-work units. All of them involve the use of service-learning pedagogies, through which UWS students provide mentoring, tutoring, or other forms of support to young people who belong to particular equity target groups. Some of these activities are designed to improve the engagement and academic performance of high school students. The aim here is to increase the likelihood that students who are from families of low socio-economic status will be admitted to and successful in higher education programs. All of these activities provide opportunities through which UWS has developed and sustained a vigorous University-Community nexus. Through collaboration with UWS, community agencies such as the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation and the Dusseldorp Skills Foundation have been able to meet their key goals. These collaborations also play a significant role in supporting the work of the NSW Department of Education and Training in relation to support for equity groups. The commitment of these organisations to engaged learning activities at UWS is exemplary, and it needs to be recognised and nurtured.

The other group of activities described in this article are designed to increase retention and success at University, leading to greater efficiency and higher numbers of graduates in the Australian population. These activities involve tutoring first-year students who need to develop better literacy skills, or providing additional assistance for mature-aged students, many of whom are 'second-chance' scholars whose either did not enter or did not complete University qualifications at an earlier age.

UWS academics who have negotiated, designed, and implemented the subjects described here have learned that establishing each new activity involves three stages. First, a connection is made with a community agency, and over a period of six to twelve months, meetings are held to negotiate the roles that the agency will play, and what is expected of the University. Second, the University promotes the activity as a strand or cohort and recruits suitable students, and the activity enters a pilot year. Third, some fine-tuning is carried out, but liaison needs to be maintained between the University and the community agency, while some of the routine jobs involved in maintaining the activity are standardised and (ideally) these are passed over to administrative staff.

Administratively, this is somewhat more complex than the standard mode of academic delivery but it is not more expensive. Resources must be allocated to the negotiations that need to take place the year before the activity is launched. The pilot year can also be resource intensive. However, once the activity is established there are savings, as the teaching load is shared between the academic responsible for the unit, and the community agency staff.

Much of the student learning takes place off campus, and the initial and final activities lie outside of the peak-period of standard timetabled subjects. Economically this is entirely feasible, as the costs, when computed over a triennium, are equal to or less than the costs per unit of a 'normal' subject. The benefits are palpable, especially in view of the incentives Bradley proposes for Universities that achieve their targets. The challenge lies in the need for a more flexible approach to workload planning and multi-year budgeting. Without these, the future of the University-Community nexus cannot be assured.

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## ***Higher Education in the Aftermath of the Bradley Review: A Critical Reflection***

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the Bradley Report and the government's response to provide some reflections on the new funding and policy framework for Australian higher education. The paper argues that in its conservatism the Bradley Report allowed the government to do less than it might have to create a sustainable and world class higher education system and that a more focused and better funded set of priorities would have delivered a better outcome than the proposed broad set of proposals, which have been funded at marginal levels. The paper further argues that a permanent and independent policy body would prevent the system from falling into neglect and provide governments with better evidence-based advice to maintain the Australian system internationally competitive.

**Key words:** Bradley Review, higher education, funding, staff:student ratios

### **Introduction**

The Rudd-led Labor government's early indications (even while in Opposition) that it intended to take education seriously were welcomed by the higher education sector. A perception of government neglect had developed in the sector under the Howard-led government, which was compounded by the continuing policy of encouraging the sector to seek greater levels of non-government funding to make up for the shortfall in public funding. The Dawkins reforms had introduced HECS (the Higher Education Contribution Scheme), requiring students to contribute some 25% of the average cost of a student place. The level of contribution had been rising under the previous Labor government and culminated in the new Howard-led government introducing differential contributions, depending on the course being studied, although these were not directly associated with the actual cost of teaching a student in that course. Today students in Law contribute a minimum of 84% of the total cost of their course, depending on the surcharge applied by their university (DEEWR 2009).

Coupled with these changes, there has also been a gradual decline in per capita funding levels, as shown by worsening staff to student ratios. These have been worsening consistently since the early 1980s and represent a bipartisan consensus on higher education funding – neither side of the political divide can be shown to have been more favourable to higher education than its counterpart. In the most recent reports from the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] it has also been apparent that while other OECD member countries had been increasing the level of expenditure on higher education, Australia stands out as the country that reported a decline in expenditure (OECD 2008a and 2008b).

So the prospect of a review of higher education, as part of Mr Rudd's "education revolution", was seen as significant. In an article for *The Australian* (Massaro 2008b) I examined the history of higher education reviews, to conclude that they had had limited if no effect on subsequent higher education policy or funding. Indeed the last review that had been fully implemented was the 1964 Martin Report, which led to the creation of a binary system and a major increase in the number of students entering tertiary education.

All subsequent reviews had been announced with great enthusiasm only to have their reports ignored for several reasons, including a lack of any response by the governments that had initiated them. I noted that the only major policy changes that had been made since 1964 had been brought about by Ministerially driven reviews or White Papers, in which the relevant Minister had a clear idea of what was to be achieved and tight control over the scope of the proposed changes.

In speculating on the reasons for having reviews if they were to be largely ignored I proposed a variety of reasons, including the need for the government to be seen to be doing something on an issue that was in the public domain. There was also the possibility that governments might have announced some lofty policy objective but did not know how to implement it, so were looking for ideas so that they could choose those solutions that most closely resonated with political needs. A final reason was that reviews provided governments with cover for when policies recommended by the review were ineffective in addressing the initial problem.

In the case of the Bradley review, the government had set the scene by declaring that it wanted an education revolution, so the sector was prepared for some dramatic policy directions and perhaps a major plan with a long-term implementation strategy. While the Bradley Report and the government's response have now been released, it is still not entirely clear how things stand. To what extent does the title of the government's response, "Transforming Australia's Higher Education System" live up to its promise, and what are the remaining challenges?

I would suggest that we have been let down by both Bradley and the government. I suggest this notwithstanding the significance of the GFC [Global Financial Crisis] on the ability of governments to fund major policy initiatives such as those recommended by Bradley. Nonetheless, I would argue that there remain sound economic reasons to better promote higher education and research, especially given the aftermath of the GFC on policy and practice in Australian institutions.

This article begins by providing an overview of the Bradley Report and its recommendations, followed by a summary of the government's response. The article then discusses what the landscape might look like under the new policy framework and the challenges the system will face as a result.

## An Overview of Bradley and its Limitations

The Bradley Report was disappointing and short-sighted. Reading it in the context of the promised education revolution and early suggestions that the review team was proposing to make some bold recommendations, it lacked both a long-term aspirational vision for higher education and a sustainable funding model that would meet the Report's own objectives. This was largely prompted by the comment in the Report that "...the recommendations in this report, if fully implemented, are likely to do no more than maintain the relative international performance and position of the Australian higher education sector" (Bradley, 2008: xvi).

I was struck by the fact that the Report could on the one hand demonstrate that the system had been falling behind its international peers while on the other consign it to that position indefinitely. The Report seemed to be concentrating on what the government might be able to afford rather than what the system needed to achieve the high status that both the Report and government seemed to want. While it was understandable for the Review to ensure that its demands were not overly demanding, my fear was that not having made a starker case for additional funding might leave the government with the capacity to argue that it had done enough even while providing less than was requested.

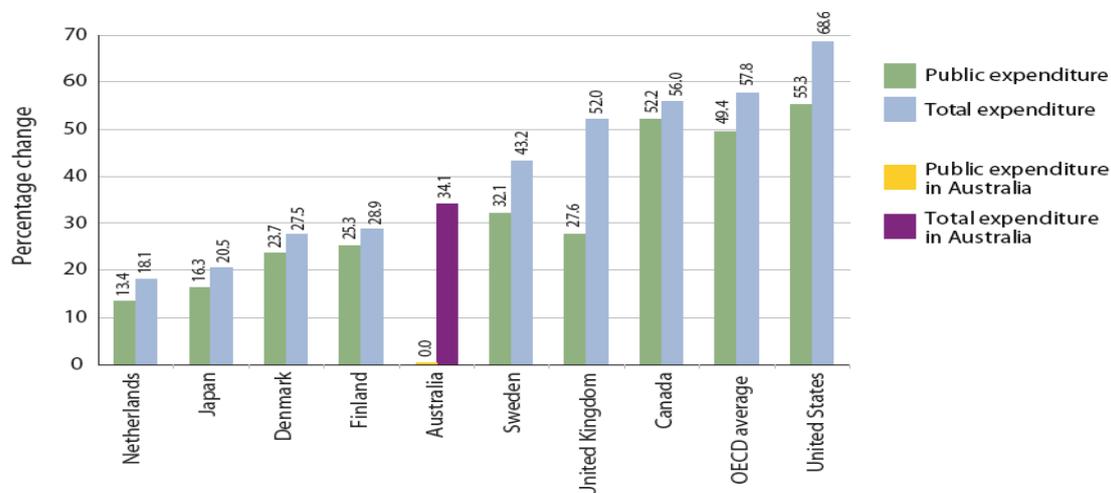
The title of the government's response, its tenor and the fact that it has not delivered the funding that had been proposed in the Bradley recommendations, suggest that my fears were not ill-founded. My preference would have been an outcome in which the government would reduce the number of reforms but fund each adequately. Instead the government seems to have adopted the rhetoric but failed to fund it adequately.

The compelling public benefit argument for increased higher education funding had been made previously in the Cutler Report (Cutler, 2008) and in OECD reports (OECD 2007, 2008a, 2008b) that underpinned Labor's policy in Opposition. Bradley restated this argument. As Figure 29 (see below) from the Report illustrates, Bradley argued that the higher education system had suffered significant neglect over recent years, with public spending reducing to unacceptable levels<sup>3</sup>. The Report confirmed the government's contention that the financial situation faced by universities had been worsening; it also confirmed that as a result, Australia was losing its earlier competitive edge in education: "Australia is losing ground against a number of its competitor countries on a range of indicators... In 2020 Australia will not be where we aspire to be – in the top group of OECD countries in terms of participation and performance – unless we act, and act now." (Bradley, 2008: xii).

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<sup>3</sup> It was suggested that government contributions had reduced by 10% between 1996 and 2008 (from \$12,000 to \$10,800 per student) (Bradley, 2008: 144)

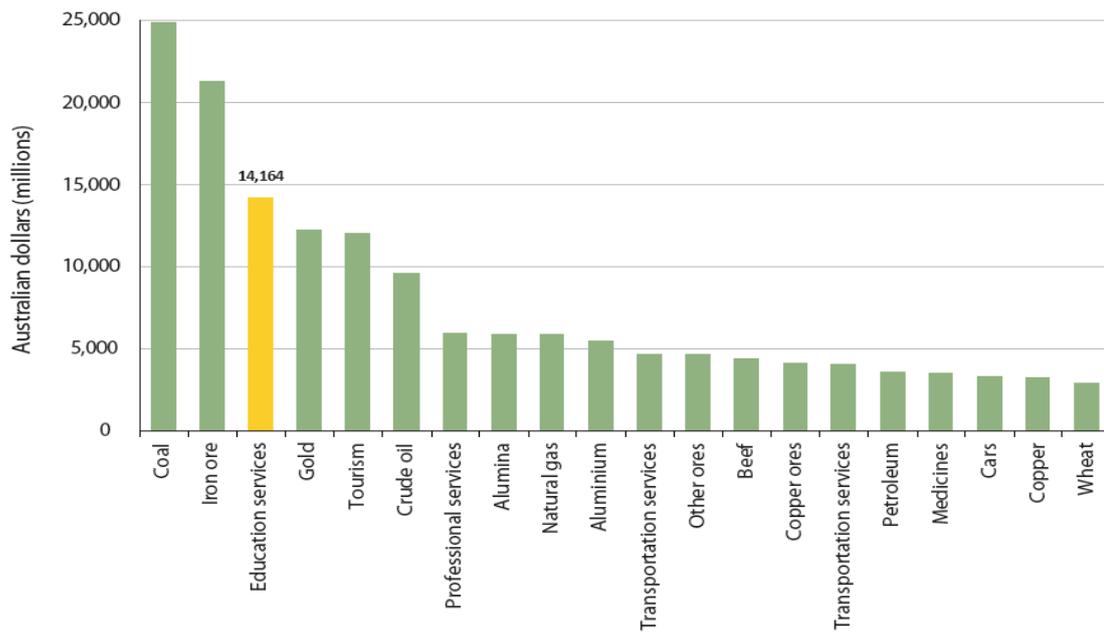
**Figure 29: Percentage change in real expenditure on tertiary education institutions, selected OECD countries, 1995 to 2005**



Source: Calculated from *Education at a Glance 2008: OECD Indicators*

The Report also noted that education was Australia’s third largest export earner (see Figure 23 from the *Report*), although it did not use this as a further argument for increased funding. While these are difficult economic times, higher education should be protected against the risk of a perception that it is not maintaining its competitive position. Such a perception could lead to a reduction in international students and that could cause the financial failure of several universities. Lesser industries have been supported to maintain their competitiveness as part of the stimulus packages, but higher education has not been mentioned in any of them.

Figure 23: Australia's top 20 exports 2007-08 financial year (\$ millions)



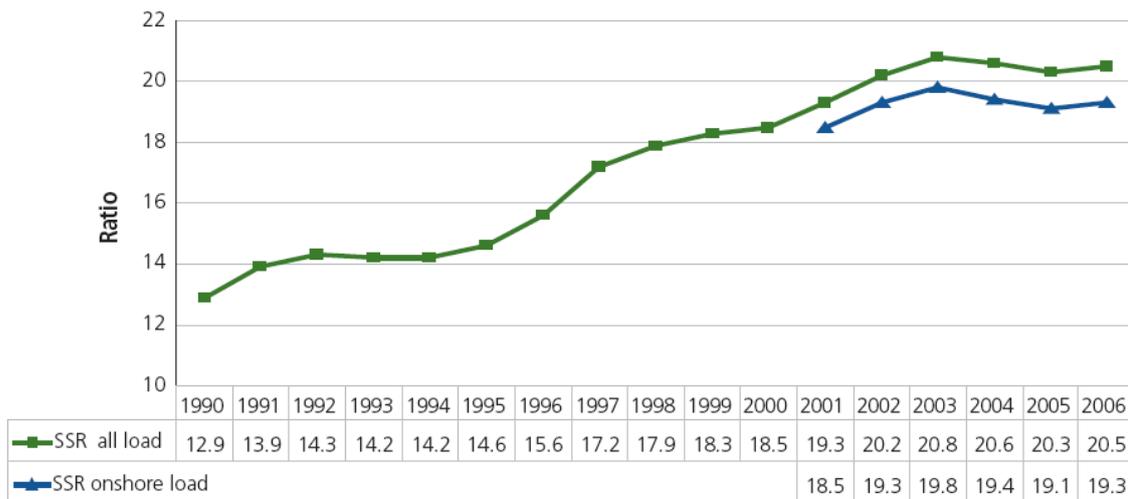
Source: DFAT 2008 - ABS trade data on DFAT STATS database and ABS catalogue 5368.0

In response, Bradley recommended higher education funding should be rebalanced through an immediate increase in public funding (Bradley, 2008: p.149) and that funding should then be indexed. It proposed an increase of 10% in total government grants relating to teaching and learning, totalling \$1.8 billion over four years (2009-10 to 2012-2013), with indexation totalling \$1.14 billion over the same period. (Bradley, 2008: pp. 151ff and Appendix IX). The Report also proposed a new policy and funding framework, built on the following principles:

- ❖ A student centred, demand-driven funding system, with no quotas on total or discipline places from 2012 – moving from a mass to a universal higher education system;
- ❖ Concentration of research activity and research teaching in those institutions that can demonstrate capacity;
- ❖ Improved completion rates;
- ❖ Improved performance indicators to justify funding;
- ❖ Higher participation rates to achieve a graduate (bachelor or higher) output of 40% of 25-34 year olds by 2025;
- ❖ Higher participation (20%) and completion rates for disadvantaged students;
- ❖ Year 12 achievement rate of 90% by 2020;
- ❖ Quality assurance that is focused on standards and outcomes through a National Regulatory and Quality Agency for Higher Education;
- ❖ Negotiated compacts between the Commonwealth and institutions to determine mission and funding;
- ❖ Additional base funding amounting to 10% of the teaching and learning component of the budget;
- ❖ Indexation to increase from some 2% to 4%;
- ❖ Increasing the amount to cover the indirect costs of research from 20 cents to 50 cents in the dollar.

Both Bradley and the government's response particularly highlighted the parlous state of staff:student ratios in the sector. Figure 19 of the Bradley Report shows that ratios have worsened constantly from 12.9 in 1990, to 15.6 in 1996 and 20.5 in 2006. The same Table appears on p.15 of the government's response. Staff:student ratios are a sentinel indicator of the health of the system because they reflect the decline in per capita student funding. Addressing them is crucial to supporting teaching quality and enhancing the student experience.

**Figure 19: Universities Australia student-to-teacher ratio, 1990 to 2006**



*Note: Data is for Universities Australia member universities only.*

*Source: Universities Australia 2008a, 2006 Student to Teacher Ratio For Academic Staff with Teaching function, October. UA cited sources are DEEWR Higher Education Student and Staff Statistics 1990 to 2000 and DEST Unit Record Files 2001 – 2006; Bond University Management Report August 2007 (data for 2001 to 2006 only).*

However, while Bradley (and the subsequent government response) argue that worsening staff:student ratios have been the cause of several of the problems identified in the Report, including student access, student retention, student experience (in Figure 21, the Bradley Report indicates that CEQ results are lower in Australia than in the UK), staff workloads and staff attraction and retention at a time of major staff shortfall, the Report's proposed increase of \$1.8 billion over the first four years would not even have taken staff:student ratios back to 1996 levels, because that measure alone would require an additional \$772.5 million per year (\$3.09 b over four years), let alone the 1990 levels. This is one example where seeking adequate funding for a smaller number of recommendations would have been a more effective strategy than a breadth of initiatives at marginal funding. Fixing staff:student ratios should have been given priority over reaching the 40% attainment target, which might instead have been further deferred.

## A Critical Review of the Government's Response

The early responses from the two responsible Ministers consisted of aspirational statements suggesting they wanted to create a new higher education framework and a coherent policy and funding regime (Gillard, 2009a, 2009b; Carr, 2009). There was a reassuring continuing emphasis on the centrality of higher education to national development. At the same time, they both acknowledged that reform would come at considerable cost and that it was not the most propitious timing.

The formal response, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, (Australian Government, 2009c) appeared to accept the Bradley proposals and laid claim to a new era in higher education. When discussing the new quality assurance arrangements, for example, the paper talks about a central feature of the reform agenda being an increased focus on quality to underpin "our vision for Australia to be one of the most highly educated and skilled nations in the world" (p. 31).

A closer look at the Budget papers, including the more detailed Budget Paper 2 (Australian Government, 2009b), which also contains the savings being planned, indicates a challenging picture. If we take five major items in Bradley (that is, the increase in the funding base, demand driven funding, indexation, the indirect costs of research and the new quality assurance system) and compare the recommendations for funding to the now committed funding we see that the total recommended amount equals some \$5.47 billion, while the funds allocated is approximately \$1.64 billion – about 30% of the total amount required. However, the government has also abolished the Learning and Teaching Fund and will begin withdrawing funding from 2009-10 to achieve a total saving of \$324 million by 2012-2013.

### Bradley Proposals and Government Funding (the higher cell represents the Bradley recommendation and the lower the allocated funds)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
10% increase in base	250	500	520	540	1810
	0	0	0	0	0
Demand driven funding	0	70	340	720	1130
	36	74	117	265	491
Indexation	70	200	350	520	1140
	0	58	185	334	578
TEQSA	20	50	60	60	190
	10	13	14	20	57
Research Indirect Costs	300	300	300	300	1200
	31	121	161	201	512

Thus, teaching and learning has not fared well in this budget. In particular it is worth noting that the 10% increase in base funding has not been accepted and the indexation proposed has been both deferred until 2012 and reduced by half. Furthermore, the indexation amount comes with the caveat that the "new arrangements will still require productivity improvements to contribute to wage increases" (p. 22). Perhaps worsening staff:student ratios will be counted as a productivity improvement!

From 2012 universities that meet agreed institution level performance targets will also receive performance funding of about 2.5% of their teaching and learning funding. This will be at risk funding, in that it will only be paid if the institution meets its targets. The amounts allocated for this are \$69 million in 2011-12 and \$138 million in 2012-13 (reference details for these figures)

Some new income will be generated in 2010 from increased HECS rates for new teaching and nursing students. The good news for graduates is that there will be reductions in repayments if they work as teachers or nurses.

Demand-driven funding, which is a major part of the government's new funding regime has also been reduced to half the amount proposed in Bradley, while the student numbers have remained the same. Of considerable interest here is that there is no allocation for capital works to house the additional enrolments.

The full indexation of research to meet indirect costs was never likely, but Bradley had proposed to raise the level from 20 cents to 50 cents in the dollar. The government has allocated less than half the amount sought in Bradley, although there is a promise that \$301 million will be provided in 2013-14, and the government suggests that it will approach 50 cents over time (Australian Government, 2009c p.25).

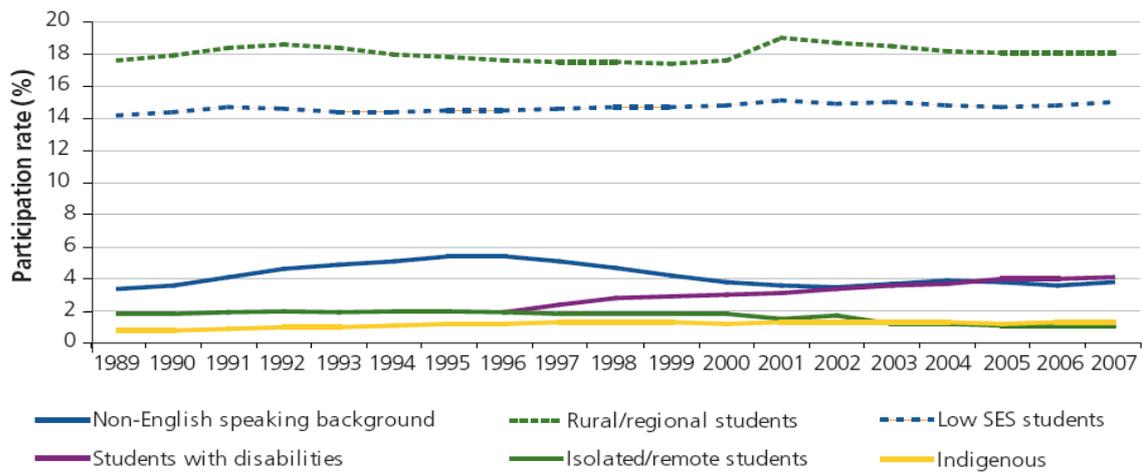
While it is acknowledged that universities use funds from other sources to meet the full costs of research, the government believes that the precise amount of that cross-subsidisation is not sufficiently clear to enable it to provide the additional resources without further investigation. As a result, "funding will be allocated on the basis of negotiated funding agreements as follows: 20 per cent on the basis of a university's relative success in attracting research income (the current means of determining all of the RIBG funding); and 80 per cent contingent on universities undertaking activity-based costing of the indirect costs of research and meeting performance targets which are to be developed and agreed during 2009-10" (Budget Paper 2).

It should be remembered that this is in the context of Bradley's contention that the Report's recommendations were only sufficient to maintain a steady state. A further reason for concern that this budget might not have delivered enough is that it will be a long time before we can expect further increases – for the government to meet its surplus target of 2015-16 it decided to contain additional government spending to 2% per annum (a reduction from 3%) and it has already made firm commitments for increases in defence spending.

### **Equity, Access and Student Financial Support**

The Bradley Report demonstrated that participation from disadvantaged groups had barely changed over the past 20 years despite concerted efforts to support it (Figure 2 of the *Report*). This problem is further exacerbated when we look at completion rates, which are consistently below the system average.

**Figure 2: Participation rates by groups, 1989 to 2007**



*Note: a) Definitions for regional/rural and isolated/remote students were altered in 2001 causing a break in series, b) Post-2001 is based on 2006 Census SES postcode allocations, whereas prior years are based on earlier Census SES postcode allocations*

*Source: DEEWR (Equity Performance Indicators - national indicators), various years*

The Bradley proposals to increase disadvantaged participation to 20% and the proposed changes to financial support were commendable. The government has accepted the new target, although it seems that the additional funding that is to be made available will be based on enrolment targets rather than retention. Measures are required that promote success as well as access. This is a matter that the government should re-assess as it implements the new measures.

There are several experts on this subject so I will not venture too far with solutions. But I will declare an interest. Having come from a low SES, non-English speaking and regional background (and a migrant to boot), and having family and friends who have spent their teaching careers in disadvantaged schools, I have retained a personal and interest in assisting able children to enter higher education.

On the basis of this small sample, it is clear that adequate financial assistance while at university is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for participation and completion. The problem starts much earlier and involves changing perceptions in parents and teachers to create a culture in which there is the inspiration to aspire to higher education. Parents need to understand the value of higher education and that their children can aspire to it, despite their presumed inadequate background and despite the fact that for them higher education is an alien place. In several disadvantaged regions, teachers and schools perpetuate the vision of victimhood, having given up any belief in the capacity of their students to succeed.

There is a need to change our approaches and reward mechanisms so teachers and schools are recognised for having supported the higher education aspirations of their students, and higher education institutions are rewarded for having attracted and retained them past the first year danger zone and then onto completion. I therefore welcome the government's decision to provide specific funding to support low SES participation (Australian Government, 2009c, p. 13 – see Table below), including a loading for each student and funds to support better partnerships between universities and low SES schools.

### **Funding Support for Low SES Participation**

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Partnership Activities	7	21	36	44	108
Enrolment loading	21	64	108	132	325
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>433</b>

Once in higher education, disadvantaged students must be supported adequately and receive qualifications that meet minimum threshold standards. They should not end up in institutions with low standards and high pass rates. The Minister's response will address this through the proposed emphasis on standards and outcomes in the changes to quality assurance and accreditation.

As already noted, Bradley also suggested that high dropout rates among this group are caused by the worsening staff:student ratios. So making a start on the staff:student ratio problem would have helped. If the system is to change from a mass to a universal one, there will be an increasing number of students who will need support and nurturing that cannot be achieved without the more individualised teaching that lower ratios would allow.

The government has also made significant changes to the structure of student financial support although it is unclear whether there is a significant amount of new money. With the inclusion of the funding support for low SES students, there will have been \$385.5 million added to student support initiatives over the next four years, including an increase in the postgraduate research stipend at 50% of the rate proposed by Bradley. If we assume that many of the 50,000 projected new enrolments will be eligible for income support, the additional amount per student would seem to be on the low side.

### **Demand-Driven Funding**

The government has accepted a new model from 2012 that will fund public universities for the number of students they enrol, with no limits on total or discipline enrolments. While this gives students the choice of where they want to enrol and what they wish to study, there are some significant implementation details to be worked out, not least whether there are sufficient funds to support the additional places and whether there are enough qualified students to take them up.

The entitlements appear to be unlimited and, it seems, unconditional, with no stated limits on students who drop out of courses for personal reasons or for failure. Such a blank cheque must have struggled to get through the Treasury and the Expenditure Review Committee, so I surmise that the basis of this decision is that the only institutions prepared to take them at the marginal rates suggested by the funding announcements will be those prepared to concentrate on teaching with little or no research – the VET sector has been excluded from the scheme.

It is also acknowledged that governments will continue to play a role in providing for additional numbers in areas of national interest and limiting numbers in courses such as medicine, where there are significant problems in finding clinical placements and which lead ultimately to cost pressures on the medical and pharmaceutical benefits schedules.

A further element in this policy change is the government's acceptance that aiming for 40% attainment for all 25-34 year olds by 2025 is achievable in terms of student demand and funding. The Bradley Report based its estimates of the additional cost of this measure on a staff:student ratio of 1:20 and an expectation that the Education Investment Fund would be adequate to cover the infrastructure costs associated with the additional 355,500 students that would ultimately be enrolled.

These additional students will need new facilities even if they are enrolled in many of the existing institutions, but it would seem unlikely that they can all be accommodated without creating some new ones.

Building the additional space in which to teach the new students, much of which will be in new institutions, will cost in the order of \$25 billion over the next fifteen years, requiring an additional \$1.7 billion per year in infrastructure alone. Any improvement on staff:student ratios will increase the costs further. The prospects of attracting the necessary staff (at least 18,000) is another unexplored issue, yet it is likely that doing so will require measures to address the recruitment and retention of staff in a globally competitive market that will also add to costs.

Given that there is a significant backlog of building works across the sector, the calls on the EIF are many and urgent and several projects have been identified in the government's response. However, few if any of these are for teaching space to cater for the additional enrolments. Furthermore, the EIF will now be depleted and the projected Budget deficits will mean that no new funds will be added in the foreseeable future.

## **Compacts**

Compacts are set from a major part of the new funding and policy environment, as a means of "aligning institutional activity with national priorities" (Australian Government, 2009c, p.47). Compacts will be negotiated between the government and each institution on an annual basis, although funding will be planned for three-year cycles. The compacts will be negotiated separately for teaching and learning and for research, but the two departments will then prepare a single agreement that sets performance targets for quality, attainment and participation of low SES students.

The precise details of the operation of compacts will be determined during 2009, although the new Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency [TEQSA] will have the task of assessing whether agreed targets have been met and may also have an interventional role in institutions it deems to be at risk. As performance bonuses will need to be paid in arrears, there will need to be some transitional arrangements to ensure that institutions do not lose 2.5% of their general funding while performance measures are implemented.

### **Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

Bradley argued that the accreditation and quality assurance system should be changed to concentrate on measuring standards and outcomes to assure the public that these are internationally competitive. This is a position I have been pursuing for many years, so I am pleased that the government has decided to establish a new TEQSA with these objectives.

The role of the Agency is much expanded on that proposed in the Bradley Report. While it will concentrate on higher education in the first instance, it is planned that the Agency will expand to cover all of tertiary education, provided that the States cede their powers over these matters to the central agency. The Agency is to be established under its own legislation and will replace AUQA, whose funding has been removed from the Budget estimates to contribute to the new Agency (Australian Government 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

TEQSA will be a very powerful independent auditor in the true sense of the word. Not only will it determine standards and accredit institutions but it will (Australian Government, 2009c) p.31):

- ❖ evaluate the performance of institutions and programs and encourage best practice;
- ❖ establish objective and comparative benchmarks of quality and performance;
- ❖ collect richer data and monitor performance in areas such as student selection, retention and exit standards, and graduate employment
- ❖ identify and take action on institutions at risk;
- ❖ assess whether institutions can demonstrate that their graduates have the capabilities required for successful engagement in a complex world;
- ❖ assess whether institutions can demonstrate students' academic performance and document what students learn, know and can do;
- ❖ ensure that domestic and international students have better information about how our higher education institutions are performing and taxpayers can see whether value for money is being delivered and the national interest is being well served;
- ❖ simplify current regulatory arrangements and provide greater national consistency;
- ❖ evaluate the performance of universities and other higher education providers every five years, or whenever there is evidence that standards are not being met;
- ❖ determine whether compact performance targets have been achieved; and
- ❖ be able to recommend sanctions up to and including withdrawing the right to use the title of 'University'.

Missing from this considerable list of tasks is the means by which universities will retain their title. Bradley had recommended that universities should only retain their title if they can continue to demonstrate a sufficient level of research activity. The Minister has said that the “right to be designated a university must be earned rather than taken at face value”, but she has not explained how this right would be earned (Gillard, 2009a).

I would suggest that the Bradley proposal, based on the tenuous argument of a tight nexus between research and good teaching, is unsustainable and unenforceable. The evidence for the teaching and research nexus is acknowledged by Bradley to be inconclusive at best. The political implications of removing a university’s title because of insufficient research activity would be too great, while reducing the test to provide for the least research active of the existing universities would negate its credibility and lead to a reduction in research quality.

The better alternative is, neither to prescribe nor proscribe research in any institution. This can now be achieved through the compacts and would support diversity by allowing universities to play to their strengths, while not preventing any from engaging in research that reflects their capacities. TEQSA would concentrate on whether universities are capable of delivering qualifications of an internationally comparable standard, which in itself will reflect whether there is sufficient level of scholarship to support teaching.

### **Governance and Policy Development**

Contrary to the Bradley Report’s proposal that there be a new governance structure to bring VET and higher education under one umbrella (Figure 33 of the *Report*), the government has decided that there would continue to be two sets of governance arrangements, but with a Ministerial Council for tertiary education to ensure consistency and to promote closer relationships between the sectors.

While TEQSA will provide some of the overall reporting on the system, we still lack a solution for long term, sustained planning and coordination. My preference remains the creation of a senior, expert and independent Commission with responsibility for coordinating and advising government on tertiary education.

The Commission would:

- ❖ be a joint body of the Commonwealth and the States, with operational independence from both;
- ❖ have two Councils, for higher education and VET, and TEQSA reporting to it;
- ❖ have an advisory role with funding decisions remaining with the Minister and government, advised by the Department;
- ❖ be the main regulatory and quality assurance body and might assist in negotiating compacts with institutions within a broad policy framework from government and the Department;
- ❖ be responsible for policy advice on tertiary education as a whole, including teaching and research, to provide comprehensive and evidence-based advice;
- ❖ be a free-ranging advisory body that can test new ideas and set new boundaries. There is currently a lack of capacity for the system to respond to truly innovative solutions. The Commission would be able to canvass ideas and options without committing the government while providing options that the government can adopt or reject as it chooses;

- ❖ have significant data collection, analysis and dissemination functions and maintain a watching brief on the health of the system, making recommendations on the actions that should be taken to maintain and improve it to meet the government's objectives;
- ❖ use its information and reviews of the system to measure its performance and make recommendations on costs, providing the government and the sector with comprehensive and sophisticated data;
- ❖ have access to strong policy research centres specialising in higher education and VET or have its own policy development staff.

A Commission focused on the long-term health and promotion of an excellent tertiary education system will ensure that it does not inadvertently fall into a further period of neglect.

## **Conclusion**

It is not surprising in light of the current financial crisis that the funding climate should be difficult. However, reading the government's response you would imagine that it had delivered on all the promises. The concern therefore is that the government might have concluded that its job is done.

My over-riding concern is that in the great enthusiasm to make bold changes the government has lost sight of the fact that they must be adequately funded. For example, while there is little argument with the government's idea of a higher participation rate, this can only be achieved if the current system is adequately funded by international standards. Universal access cannot be achieved on the cheap and per capita funding needs to reflect the needs of a more diverse student population.

Reforms should therefore have been staged over a defined period and introduced as funding became available – the nation cannot compete internationally with current resources and should not be expanded on marginal funding.

Another approach would have been to address the elephant in the room by examining options for increasing student contributions either through removing the HECS cap to create a true market or through the reintroduction of full fee places for domestic students. The government has ruled this out for now, but several countries have begun to explore it simply because budgetary pressures will not allow them to continue to fund universities at world competitive levels; we should at least have a proper assessment of the options and consequences. My prediction is that this will be back on the agenda in the not too-distant future.

The current set of decisions will simply increase staff:student ratios further and condemn research to the second rank. We would have done better to have delayed reforms until funding was available and in the meantime used what few resources are available to begin to fix the per capita funding crisis.

A slightly deferred but excellent system would be better than an immediate but mediocre one.

The sum total of the new arrangements is that the system will need to increase its reliance on international students to make ends meet. Recent falls in investments have removed the slim buffer that some universities had to cover inadequate funding levels, so international income has become the only means of saving some institutions from financial collapse or a major reduction in quality. While the new quality assurance system is fine the assumption is that it will always find that quality has been maintained. If it finds that it has fallen because per capita funding has not kept pace with demands there will be no recourse to a solution because the funding will not be available.

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## **GUIDELINES for Authors**

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The paper should be ordered as follows:

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3. Tables and figures must be emailed on separate sheets and not included as part of the main text. All tables and figures should be mentioned in the text and numbered by Arabic numerals. Captions and legends should be grouped together. Figures and line drawings should be of a quality suitable for printing and will not normally be redrawn by the publisher.
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Evans, A.W. (1990). The assumption of equilibrium in the analysis of migration and interregional differences: a review of some recent research. *Journal of Regional Science*, 30(4), pp. 515-532  
Jensen, R.C., Mandeville, T.D & Karunaratne, N.D. (1979) *Regional Economic Planning*. Croom Helm: London.  
Putman, S.H. (1990). Equilibrium solutions and dynamics of integrated urban models. In L. Anselin and M. Madden (Eds), *New Directions in Regional Analysis*. Belhaven: London. pp 1-10 (as example)

If the paper is accepted for publication the paper will be emailed back to authors. They should be corrected and returned to the editors as soon as possible (within seven days). The e-journal edition will be emailed to authors and more widely available at [www.aucea.org.au](http://www.aucea.org.au).

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<sup>i</sup> ACPET Submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education, July 2008

<sup>iii</sup> An arms-length estimation – cross checked by ACPET conservatively indicates that of a national higher education equivalent full time student load (EFTSL) near 340,000, private providers are educating more than 37,000 EFTSL or over 9% of students as EFTSL in recent years.

<sup>iii</sup> ACPET Response to the Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report February, 2009

<sup>iv</sup> ACPET Submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education, July 2008

<sup>v</sup> ACPET Response to the Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report, February 2009