



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Reference: Role of institutes of TAFE

SYDNEY

Wednesday, 18 March 1998

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

CANBERRA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Members:

Dr Nelson (Chair)

Mr Barresi	Mrs Gash
Mr Bartlett	Mr Latham
Mr Brough	Mr Marek
Mr Charles	Mr Mossfield
Mr Dargavel	Mr Neville
Mrs Elson	Mr Pyne
Mr Martin Ferguson	Mr Sawford

The Committee is to inquire into and report on:

the appropriate roles of institutes of technical and further education; and

the extent to which those roles should overlap with universities.

WITNESSES

ANDREWS, Mrs Jan, Director, Education Planning and Development, New South Wales College of Nursing, Locked Back 5, Glebe, New South Wales	502
CONYNGHAM, Professor Barry, Vice-Chancellor, Southern Cross University, Military Road, East Lismore, New South Wales 2480	515
CRAWFORD, Ms Heather, President, TAFE NSW Managers Association, PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209	463
D'ARBON, Professor James Anthony, Chairman of the Academic Board and Member of Council, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118	449
EASTCOTT, Professor Leslie Raymond, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle, 10 Chittaway Road, Ourimbah, New South Wales 2258	479
FLOWERS, Ms Susan Adele, 6 Erola Circle, Lindfield, New South Wales 2070 .	490
GRIMSHAW, Mr Warren, Executive Director, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, Southern Cross University, Hogbin Drive, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales 2457	515
HARRIS, Ms Ardyce Marianne, Vice-President, TAFE NSW Managers Association, PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209	463
KEELY, Dr Vivienne, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118	449
KRETCHMER, Mr Graham Maurice, Secretary, TAFE NSW Managers Association Inc., PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209	463
MacDONALD, Ms Robyn Adele, Executive Member, TAFE NSW Managers Association Inc., PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209	463
MACKENZIE, Professor Brian, Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Locked Bag 1, Richmond, New South Wales 2753	529
McMILLAN, Professor Margaret Anna, Chairperson, Australian Council of Deans of Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, New South Wales	502

NOBBS, Dr Raymond Keith, Dean and Chief Executive Officer, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118	449
PHELPS, Mr Lionel, Chair, Board of Governors, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, and Deputy Chancellor, Southern Cross University, Military Road, Lismore, New South Wales 2480	515
WELLSMORE, Mr Jim, 9/140 Crimea Road, Marsfield, New South Wales 2122	540

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(Subcommittee)

Role of institutes of TAFE

SYDNEY

Wednesday, 18 March 1998

Present

Dr Nelson (Chair)

Mr Marek

Mr Pyne

Mr Mossfield

Subcommittee met at 9.32 a.m.

Dr Nelson took the chair.

CHAIR—Good morning everyone. I declare open this public meeting for the inquiry into the roles of institutes of TAFE and the extent to which those roles should overlap with universities.

The committee has received over 90 submissions, and has conducted public hearings in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra intended to give business and the wider community, TAFE itself and the university sector an opportunity to participate directly in the inquiry.

The purpose of the inquiry is to clearly identify the appropriate roles for institutes of TAFE and the extent to which they should overlap with universities. The committee aims to produce recommendations for government action that will enhance TAFE's capacity to meet community expectations in relation to these roles.

Matters raised in submissions and at public hearings so far include the importance of TAFE's community service and vocational education and training roles; the importance of TAFE's links with industry; the effect of competition on TAFE's traditional activities; the appropriateness of TAFE's current administrative and financial structure; and the funding anomalies between TAFE and higher education which affect both students and institutions. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered nor an indication of where the committee's final recommendations might lie.

Today, in Sydney, the committee will hear evidence from people and organisations with an interest in the TAFE and higher education sectors. I now call representatives of the Sydney College of Divinity.

[9.32 a.m.]

D'ARBON, Professor James Anthony, Chairman of the Academic Board and Member of Council, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118

KEELY, Dr Vivienne, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118

NOBBS, Dr Raymond Keith, Dean and Chief Executive Officer, Sydney College of Divinity, Woolwich Building, 216 Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford, New South Wales 2118

CHAIR—My name is Brendan Nelson and, as I think you are aware, I represent the Sydney metropolitan seat of Bradfield for the Liberal Party. On my left is Mr Frank Mossfield who has the western Sydney suburban seat of Greenway, which is a good Labor seat, and on my far right is Mr Paul Marek who has the National Party seat of Capricornia in Central Queensland.

If you would not mind giving us a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission, then we will discuss it and ask questions.

Dr Nobbs—Thank you for the chance to speak. Perhaps I could mention three headings—the notions of dialogue, association and articulation—to give some brief profile of why I think it is appropriate for the Sydney College of Divinity to give evidence here.

We are a consortium of theological colleges, so we are in dialogue with one another. Twelve institutions are involved in this college. Beyond that, we are in association and dialoguing with other institutions which might prepare students for certificates and diplomas, and they come to the Sydney College of Divinity to do a conversion course to take out what is our central degree, the Bachelor of Theology. Beyond that, of course, even though we do have a very substantial postgraduate program now both at masters and doctoral level, some of our students also move on to other tertiary institutions to do doctoral programs.

The matter of articulation, I think, probably has particular relevance in that we offer the one-year Certificate in Theology, the two-year Diploma in Theology and the three-year Advanced Diploma in Theology—awards which are common to TAFE institutions. That is one part of our role but, beyond that, we then assume the function and role of a university by offering bachelors, masters and doctoral programs. So we articulate right through from a certificate to a doctoral program.

We are also in association with a number of our metropolitan universities—not that they accredit us. It is now the Department of Education and Training, formerly DTEC et

cetera, which gives the power and right to the Sydney College to offer these awards. We have a variety of programs with the Australian Catholic University, the campuses of Western Sydney, and also the University of Sydney, to offer in the first instance joint degrees in an abbreviated time—for example, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Theology. But, with Western Sydney, we have a more integrated partnership program in which we offer conjointly what we might call Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Health Science, in which folk do this double stream in a minimum period of four years.

As well as that, with the university, we have had accredited for their programs a major and a submajor in theological studies, so that someone doing the Bachelor of Arts degree or health science may, for example, do something in the order of a year of their studies in one of our associated member institutions.

As to the submission we sent to you, there have been some further developments since that submission was sent to you. The first is what I have just identified, the integration of theological studies in bachelor programs in our universities and, I suppose, the crowning glory of our awards, the Doctorate in Theology. We are pleased to say, and perhaps Dr Keely might like later to speak as she is the director of postgraduate studies, we have had accredited the Doctorate of Theology which is now on offer from our institution.

I said before that we have the functions basically of a TAFE, but also of a university. But, as a private provider, we also do feel at times somewhat disadvantaged. Our students, of course, have been recognised. They receive Austudy. There is certainly a pedigree and a long history for a number of our member institutions. The Catholic Institute of Sydney, for example, began in the 1880s. Our staff, for example, do not have access to ARC funding. There is no provision for our postgraduate students to have access either for funding for their higher degree awards.

Beyond that, apart from the kind invitation to appear before you now, we are often not privy to the information that would automatically devolve to universities and other bodies. That is why at the end of our submission we made that plea that consideration might be given to those three particular issues that we raise.

Dr Keely—Perhaps I would just add and reinforce some of the points which Ray has made that, I think, we are of interest to you because we combine in one institution those functions traditionally thought to be proper to TAFE and those traditionally thought to be proper to the university. We might like to discuss how it is that that works, and we would say that it works well for us.

We do now have the doctorate program, and I am pleased to say there is a piece in this morning's higher education supplement about that. Now that we actually have this doctorate in place, it is certainly the case that our students, our potential students, are disadvantaged against other students because the access to Commonwealth scholarships is

not open to them.

The third thing I would like to draw your attention to in particular as we follow on this conversation is the interface between theological education and various government policies. Theology is no longer a study for a small number of people who preach on Sundays; it has a much wider application in terms of the number of people who undertake it, the jobs they have and the uses to which they will put this qualification. One can think, for example, of ethics which is perhaps now almost an essential component of business courses, nursing courses, ethics committees in hospitals and so on. Theology itself has a much wider application in our society than it had previously where it was perhaps seen as simply a kind of professional training for ministers in churches. For that reason, too, the number of students who are disadvantaged has increased and represents a much wider spectrum of society than simply those who might have been going on for ordination studies.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for that. As I hear about the cabinet enthusiastically and appropriately speaking to Mr Gates, it occurred to me as I was reading your submission last night that perhaps they might benefit from spending a bit of time with your group as well.

Perhaps the first thing I might say is that Mr Pyne, who has come in, represents the Liberal Party seat of Sturt in Adelaide, and has a longstanding interest in education. Mr Pyne in particular—like all of us—is concerned that, if universities really do become too articulated to TAFEs and vice versa, it will distract each of them from their primary role or their purpose. There is an issue of whether we are becoming a society in which everybody is trained and few are educated—there being a difference, and I am sure you know better than any of us what I am talking about.

Do you feel that basically the incorporation of vocational education and training into university, learning, knowledge and research that you have done is something that you can uniquely do in your area? We have spoken to a broad variety of people—university educators and TAFE education and training providers—who do not often feel that there is a problem. But it just seems that increasingly people are looking for training that is going to lead to employment, and one wonders where learning, research, fine arts, language, history and these things are going to end up.

Dr Nobbs—Yes. There is not the polarisation. I think we cover within the Sydney College community the full gamut of folk doing study for a variety of reasons. The Certificate in Theology is not vocationally driven; it tends to be for folk who want to have some basic understanding of the Christian faith, and therefore it is not necessarily vocationally driven.

Some of the other awards certainly are but, if we looked at the range of folk who are studying, for instance, our central program, the Bachelor of Theology, we would find

that those who are seeking ordination—which probably was the main reason a couple of decades ago for folk studying theology—would represent less than a quarter of our candidature. There would be another good quarter or more who are going to do something in sympathy with ministry but not necessarily ordained ministry, and there would be a good cohort as well, around 50 per cent, who are doing it just for that dialogue between faith and reason, for their information and for the knowledge that is acquired. So it is a cerebral exercise—not that one would want to divorce vocational training from cognitive skills. Some folk are doing it for the sheer pleasure; others are doing it for vocation and preparation for such.

CHAIR—But you do not have any concerns that, for example, in other sectors, if universities are offering vocational education and training, that might be diminishing their core activities?

Prof. D'Arbon—I think you are in the difficulty then of defining what becomes vocational education. If you take medicine, that could be defined as actually a vocational education.

CHAIR—That is right. It has a very strong research base, though. But, yes, you are right; it is training; it is not an education.

Prof. D'Arbon—Many of us who have come through the TAFE sector would acknowledge the fact that, as the TAFEs became larger, they actually specialised in areas and became universities. The University of Technology, Sydney, emerged out of the Sydney Technical College and the University of Newcastle emerged out of the Newcastle Technical College. You have got the whole range of institutions which have emerged with that research base, so you have actually got the people who have got a particular specialist interest and actually are specialist focused and also a congregation of specialist researchers. That would not necessarily occur in the TAFE area.

One of the interesting things about the Sydney College of Divinity is that we cover the whole spectrum. So I think we are reinforcing that a little bit because, if you have a look at section 4 in the submission which we provided you with, we are going from the certificate right through to the doctoral program. We are trying to do research. We are trying to do actually what people would consider to be some of the vocational things.

An interesting point to make is that nearly 50 per cent of people studying in the Sydney College of Divinity in the area of theology are women. When you think about the old seminary training days where it was 100 per cent men, it has now moved to a more gender equity based issue where it is an acceptable thing for women to be studying theology, and in fact they will be increasing beyond 50 per cent in a few years time. So it is an interesting area, it is a developing area, but the point that is made here is that, as part of the education, the Sydney College of Divinity is providing people with a better informed public, and it actually leads to a better quality of life for the Australian citizen.

Dr Keely—In response to that question, too, I was just wondering to what extent the debate about the proper functions is economically driven rather than educationally driven. As the pie that can be carved up gets smaller—as Gavin Brown is suggesting and as is reported in this morning's *Herald*—institutions want to think about the ways in which they are distinctive from others, so the top five or the top seven universities want to highlight their eliteness and say, 'We do these things in a very special way; you do other things.' I think his argument is how the public purse can sustain 36 universities when each of them has the same mission statement, when each of them wants to do the same thing. Can we have 36 publicly funded institutions doing the same thing? Do we not want to think about some of them doing different things?

In our case, because we have a unique mission, that we teach theology only, we are able to function in that way towards which he is aiming, not in any elite sense but in a unique sense because theology is the only thing which we offer; therefore, it is easier for us to articulate from programs to programs. In theology, too, I would agree with Tony that it is very difficult to separate completely what is vocational training and what is education. In our society that is becoming an increasingly difficult thing to do as people enter the work force or enter training at various points and then move on, get greater experience and come back and move on ahead. I think the two conflate far more easily and far more quickly than before.

Mr MAREK—Reading through, I see you comment about the need for the seamless overlap between the TAFE and the university sector. Would you like to comment on that and, to the point, are you aware of any restriction to the overlap process?

Dr Keely—The comment was that this is how it is with us rather than this is how it ought to be with everybody else. I would go back to the point I just made: because our curriculum is concentrated in one area, it is easier for us to have that seamless articulation than for others.

I do not think it is impossible for others. What makes it possible are very clear sets of outcomes. This is what TAFEs have been very good at in the last few years with their competency based training. Where the competencies are clearly listed along with the measures or the steps which students have to take to demonstrate they have those competencies, they very easily are turned into outcomes based education or training. If universities were to consider having that sort of outcomes based framework for their curriculum at least in the undergraduate program, that kind of articulation could be made much more seamless than it currently is.

Mr MAREK—A student or someone comes into your college and moves through the process and then having done so many parts of the course decides that they want to move on and do psychology or arts in another area. They would obviously want to take some of the credits with them. That was what I was talking about. You are saying that you are the only college that is offering this course but, if people decide to move on to a

another particular thing because they do not want to continue in the ministry or whatever, they would want to take that with them. Are you aware of people who have left and have had problems with taking the credits for what they have already done?

Dr Keely—People who have abandoned the Bachelor of Theology degree and move on to do an arts degree at Sydney University for example, because of our partnership and our joint degree there, can carry all those units with them if they want to continue to do the Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Arts. If they want to ditch the theology part and just do the Bachelor of Arts, they could have some of those units credited. The amount of credit they get then depends on the receiving institution. There is no agreed system across all providers that we will give X amount of credit. It does depend on the receiving institution.

Mr MAREK—Do you have an OP system? Do you work on an OP system in relation to the intake of people who want to do courses in theology. Do you know what I am talking about? Moving from schools, they have to have an OP system. Do you work on a level of OP?

Dr Keely—This is probably an interesting development too. Not very many of our students come directly from school. Most have had training or education in some other field. They are already coming to us with some training or with a part degree or in many cases with a complete degree, a Bachelor of Arts.

Prof. D'Arbon—I think it is the nature of theology and the nature of the ministry that people would approach an organisation and would wish to identify with that. They would go through a screening process and then would probably want to go through some form of training or initiation before they would enter into the college. That is the first one.

The second thing is that, if you are getting people coming as it were from the streets into the college, you would probably find a lot would be doing that as a more mature reflection rather than coming directly from school. They probably would already be doing some other course before they came to a theological course.

Mr PYNE—Before I ask my question, I would just take some issue with you, Professor D'Arbon, about medicine. We have heard a lot in this inquiry about how medicine is simply vocational education and training in universities. It needs to be said that I do not believe that it is. All this needs to go on the record for later discussion. Medicine is a degree which has been an undergraduate course for hundreds of years and, more importantly, it does not just teach you how to perform surgical procedures and how to identify physiological ailments. It actually teaches you about the whole man or the whole woman and about life and society as part of its six years training. It is important that we understand that VET is not just medicine in universities.

To ask a more constructive question, I think there is a lot of room in our education

sector for specialist universities and specialist courses and colleges like yours. In fact my father was instrumental in establishing the same college in Adelaide with Bishop Kennedy in the 1970s at Flinders University, so I am well aware of the work that you do. But is it fair to say that specialist colleges like yours can offer the whole gamut from certificate through to doctorate? Because of the very nature of your institution as a small and compact one—I think you have 700 undergraduate students or 700 students—you concentrate on one specific area which is obviously theology. At the micro level that can work because everything is integrated and everyone understands what everybody else is doing, whereas perhaps at the macro level, at a wider university level, it is not possible to achieve that seamlessness, simply because of the size of the institutions. Would you agree that specialist colleges like yours probably have a big advantage in offering that seamlessness over perhaps a University of Sydney or University of Melbourne?

Prof. D'Arbon—I think you have got an interesting point there. One of the things is that if you have a look at the consortia that are involved in the Sydney College of Divinity, there are eight or nine colleges already involved and people are wishing to join. You have areas of specialisation and areas of what we call traditional interest and you are able to direct students into these. As you say, it is a small institution in one sense. Eight hundred students are then distributed across the various institutions; some of them are small, some of them are quite large, some with long histories, some with short histories and so on. You are able to draw upon scholarship and experience in a whole range of areas. This is where the role of the Sydney College comes in, inasmuch as you have got a chief executive officer who, in a sense, has got the oversight of the whole group. You have got a director of postgraduate studies to oversight the whole group. There is an awareness right across the institution. It is a very specialist role that these people have and they are able to identify people with particular specialisations. So, yes, the Sydney College of Divinity is a very specialist one. But it is not only in theology—I do not want to go into the medicine thing. I am sure we could have an entertaining morning on that one, but we will not address that one.

Mr PYNE—I lost the argument years and years ago, but I am still hanging on to it very strongly.

Prof. D'Arbon—I noticed that. The point of it is, if you talk about the Bachelor of Theology, there are a whole range of things like philosophy, theology and pastoral practice. Theology is a very broad umbrella, which does cover a whole range of issues. One of the things that the college is able to do is to address a number of very interesting specialisations within a theological degree—under a theological umbrella—which may not necessarily be available in other institutions.

Mr PYNE—Yes. Dr Keely, in your submission you talked about how Gavin Brown had been talking about 36 institutions and they are all doing the same thing and they are all competing for the same thing. Universities are starting to offer certificate courses to try to get revenue in, et cetera, and taking away, perhaps, some of the roles of

TAFEs; TAFEs want to offer degrees and there seems to be a bit of a mishmash of issues. When you said you think that we should perhaps have universities doing particular things, are you talking about a more segregated university structure where the universities who offer the best engineering degree are given support to do mainly engineering in their university and encouraged to get out of areas where they do not need to be? Take Ballarat University, for example, where there is a very good engineering course. Should that be encouraged to take almost all the engineering students that are able to get to Ballarat, as opposed to offering arts and science and all these other things as well?

Dr Keely—It is an attractive road to consider, I think, when economies are stringent. But would it actually work? Apart from Newman's idea of what a university is, whether you can coerce students into attending a particular place because it has got a strength in a particular subject is one question. Another one would be the social implications of moving students around the country, of disconnecting them from their family support bases and so on. Would you perhaps be creating further problems upon which the public purse might have to be drawn. If we continue in the present system of cutbacks and if market forces prevail, I can see it happening without it being made to happen. Some institutions will build on their strengths, simply as a promotion or marketing ploy.

We all know that even now, if you want to have a very good classics degree, you go to one place rather than another. If you want to have a good engineering degree in Sydney, you will go to place B rather than place A. If you want to have a good ancient history one, you go to place C rather than places A and B. These things are happening now and, if market forces develop rapidly, that will happen naturally without it being made to happen by any recommendation from legislative bodies.

Mr PYNE—So you think that natural competition for who is best at offering certain courses will probably weed things out?

Dr Keely—Yes.

Mr PYNE—But the problem with that of course is that Australia is such a large country. Say that you live in Karratha—although, I suppose, Karratha is not a good example, since if you live in Karratha you may as well go to Sydney as to Perth, because they are the same distance away. But, if you live in Perth, you are much more likely to go to the University of Western Australia or to one of those other universities than you are to take a course in Brisbane, even if the course in Brisbane is much better.

Dr Keely—Yes.

Mr PYNE—But it is noticeable around Australia that some of the dental schools, veterinarian courses, et cetera, are starting to pick up specialties in particular areas and that other universities are dropping them. At the moment, we have the question of whether

the Perth Dental School will continue, as opposed to the Adelaide Dental School, which seems to be growing. It may well be that, in the same way that Adelaide lost veterinary science, Perth will lose dentistry. So there is probably a specialisation growing in the universities.

Dr Keely—Yes. Once you move beyond the general BA degree for example, in the present climate, that is increasingly likely to happen.

Mr PYNE—I suppose it is important for every university to offer a BA, because a BA is the foundation.

Dr Keely—That would be my own view, yes.

Mr PYNE—I would agree with you. It is the foundation of what a university is all about, which is learning for learning's sake.

Dr Keely—And a Bachelor of Science degree, too.

Dr Nobbs—This is the difficulty, if by 'specialisation' we mean 'narrowness'. It is sad if disciplines do not talk with one another and rub shoulders. Some universities have always insisted in the science faculties that you do at least one unit in the humanities to try and round out your education. I hear what you are saying: there is a certain privilege, if you live in one of the metropolitan areas, that perhaps you can still fraternise with other disciplines. We are in a privileged position in some ways because, at the Sydney College, with our affiliation with a range of metropolitan universities, we do recognise the strengths that are already there. There is a variety of electives and specialisations that can be done within the BTh program.

If folk wanted to become Bible scholars with an emphasis on language, they might well do classical Greek and Hebrew at the University of Sydney. Or, if they are following another tradition and want to do philosophy, they might well go to the ACU. Or, if they are thinking of a vocation in nursing, they will pick up other issues or do women's studies at the University of Western Sydney. We see that theology should be in conversation with the other disciplines. One buttresses and reinforces the other. We are grateful for that situation; but I do hear what you are saying.

Mr PYNE—I would not support a narrowing in terms of specialisation. I agree with you entirely. I think there should be a greater interaction between disciplines, and that is why I think there should be a BA or a BSc, a basic undergraduate degree, in every university; so that you can have that sense of achieving what universities are for, at least in my opinion. But I have probably had too much to say, Dr Nelson.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I am interested in looking at the career paths of your students and where they go after they complete the education in your institution: obviously, into

the ministry. Is there a demand for theology for people that may be teaching at Christian schools, such as lay Christian schools? Of course, you did indicate that some do go into industry of various descriptions. Have you got any record as to where people finish up going—the numbers, and all that sort of thing?

Dr Nobbs—A year ago we did this exercise. We did a survey through our colleges. If it would help this committee, I could send this on as an appendix, because we broke it down into a variety of areas: folk who are doing work overseas, folk who are in full-time Christian ministry or in schools, chaplaincy work, nursing, et cetera. In fact, one of our programs was especially geared to equip teachers in denominational schools, Christian schools, to get some feeling for theology as well as to develop their skills as educators.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Thank you. You have been saying that you do articulate with universities and that some of your students will be going to university to do particular education programs. What about TAFE: is there any articulation into TAFE courses at all?

Dr Nobbs—From or to?

Mr MOSSFIELD—Either way.

Dr Nobbs—Several of our students have done TAFE courses and have completed them, but we have not worked out a partnership or a joint program with TAFE.

Mr MOSSFIELD—So it is obviously more towards universities.

Dr Keely—Yes. With the programs we have worked out, we have been thinking mainly of us making the movement towards these institutions. But, if a TAFE were to approach us, we would be very open, I would think, to conversations about partnerships or articulation; but that has not happened yet.

Dr Nobbs—The first approach to build a joint program came from Sydney University to us, because they did have a graduate program, the Bachelor of Divinity, which they were then phasing out, and they wanted us to pick up where they were leaving off. The first overture was from a university to us; and now we have made approaches to other institutions.

Dr Keely—The very high qualifications of many other faculties are an attraction for universities, because there they see people who can supervise research.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Just as a matter of interest, someone mentioned competency based training. Do you adopt that, and is it suitable for your type of education?

Dr Keely—The very fine detail of competency based training, such as you would

find at TAFE, is not suitable, because we do not have those particular levels or stratifications of skills. But our outcome statements are based on that kind of approach: at the end of six months of this course, a student will be able to do X, Y and Z; and, at the next level up, you can see the development of that skill at the diploma level. That is particularly so for the certificate, diploma and advanced certificate courses, which approximate most to those offered in TAFE.

CHAIR—You basically have competency based or outcomes assessment.

Dr Keely—Outcomes assessment, yes. It is not as finely stratified as a full competency based one would be in TAFE. I have read some of the adult education work from UTS and have seen some of the competency based courses in metalwork and so on. It is not as step-by-step as that; nevertheless, it is pretty well outcomes based.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I would not have thought it would lead towards your type of education, because competency based training is self-paced, which means that some people could move ahead of others. In your case, with people having to attend lectures and all that, people would basically move at the same level, wouldn't they?

Dr Keely—There is a cohort, yes. Some of our courses are quite skills based, though: for example, language courses and exegesis courses, which require the application of a skill at particular levels. In that sense, there can be some comparability of approach.

Dr Nobbs—As well as our clinical pastoral education program.

Dr Keely—Yes. Some of these are field based, so there is supervised training in the contacts in the parish or in the hospital or whatever it is.

CHAIR—Funding is a problem for everybody. You are offering degrees within the same confine as you are offering diplomas, certificates and things, so how do you deal with the funding issues? Do students pay fees?

Dr Keely—Yes, students pay fees.

Dr Nobbs—They pay up front.

CHAIR—But you have problems because you have certificate courses and degree courses being offered alongside one another?

Dr Keely—A problem with fees because of that?

CHAIR—Yes. There is no problem?

Dr Nobbs—All students, whether they are doing certificates, diplomas or bachelor

degrees, have to pay up front. There is some anomaly here with the university sector, but none of our students can defer fees. They always have to pay up front.

CHAIR—What sorts of fees do they pay? What do you charge?

Dr Nobbs—For a BTh award, there is a fee of approximately \$4,000 per annum. That is collected by the colleges—they do the tuition—and then there is a certain amount which is devolved back to the Sydney College of Divinity, as the central body.

CHAIR—So there are no deferred payment schemes?

Dr Keely—No. I read recently that if you were a full fee paying student at the University of Melbourne, the first year of a Bachelor of Arts would cost you \$10,000. Well, our entire doctorate program would cost \$5,000. The reason we are able to keep the fee low is that many of our colleges are subsidised by the churches which sponsor them. For example, the people who work at the Catholic Institute of Sydney do not earn a full salary; they earn a stipend. In that way fees are able to be kept low.

Dr Nobbs—It is also often funded by denominational groups. Denominations were happy to do that, and might still be, believing that this was the training of ordinands, but now we have a variety of other folk coming just to develop general skills. Folk are taken to degree level for the equivalent of \$4,000 a year. That is being funded by denominations who may not see the end result.

CHAIR—Are the demands for your programs increasing, static or decreasing?

Dr Keely—Increasing in the postgraduate area especially, I would think.

Dr Nobbs—I have been looking at our graduations and I have been plotting the number of graduates going through and there has been a steady increase in the order of 10 to 15 per cent. There are also expressions of interest from a variety of other colleges to join the consortium, to offer accredited awards. Our programs have also become a little more sophisticated. We are now offering a greater range of degree and awards at the postgraduate level. For example, as we have just said today, there has been the introduction of a doctorate in theology. There is growth or expansion at every level, numerically in terms of students, in terms of interest from college, as well as in the range of awards.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Do you take in overseas students at all?

Dr Keely—Yes, a very small number of overseas students, mainly as a service to sister churches in the Pacific rim. We do not recruit. We have no agents operating or anything like that. In the whole of the enrolment we would have fewer than 20 overseas students.

CHAIR—They call it a pilgrimage in this college!

Mr PYNE—I notice in your submission that you said you do not have access to Australian Research Council grants. Firstly, why is that? Secondly, is it not possible for you to get access for the grants through, say, the Australian Catholic University?

Dr Keely—Is it possible for us to get access through the Australian Catholic University?

Mr PYNE—Could you not apply for grants for research under the auspices of the ACU and then they could do them through the Sydney College of Divinity? Is that not possible?

Dr Keely—No. Our arrangement with the ACU, when it is formed, is that of a partnership award. The partnership is with the award. It is not that our faculty is part of their faculty.

Mr PYNE—So you do not have that sort of crossover.

Dr Keely—No.

Mr PYNE—Why are you not part of the ARC scheme?

Dr Keely—Because we are outside the university system. We are outside the publicly funded system.

Mr PYNE—What has been the attitude of successive governments to that? Are they reviewing it? Have you approached them? What is the status of it?

Dr Keely—To my knowledge we have not approached them in the past.

Dr Nobbs—There has been a submission. The consortium, or deans committee, wrote to this government last year. The previous government was also requested to consider this amongst a variety of other funding issues, but nothing came of that. The only way we would have access is if we worked in collaboration with someone who is a full-time member of staff in another institution, as a joint project. It is the only way. A lot of our staff are very competent and publish research, just as any other university professor would, but they are barred from doing that. It is a self-funding exercise.

Dr Keely—The previous approaches for this kind of access were part of a much bigger package and probably were not considered as a separate item at all, whereas we felt it might be possible for governments to consider giving access to something which already exists, rather than creating a precedent by saying, 'Yes, you can have something,' which has not been carved on a budget line before.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for providing us with a submission. It is a little different from all of the others. It is very thoughtful. If you have any other suggestions or ideas, feel free to send them on.

Dr Nobbs—Would you like a copy of our handbook, both undergraduate and postgraduate?

CHAIR—Yes. I would, and I am sure some of my colleagues would too.

[10.17 a.m.]

CRAWFORD, Ms Heather, President, TAFE NSW Managers Association, PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209

HARRIS, Ms Ardyce Marianne, Vice-President, TAFE NSW Managers Association, PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209

KRETCHMER, Mr Graham Maurice, Secretary, TAFE NSW Managers Association Inc., PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209

MacDONALD, Ms Robyn Adele, Executive Member, TAFE NSW Managers Association Inc., PO Box 66, Narwee, New South Wales 2209

CHAIR—Welcome. Thank you very much for taking the time to provide us with a submission. It is obviously important, if not critical, to your activities. Could you give us a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission and then we will discuss it.

Ms Crawford—We thought we would start by outlining who our membership is, a little bit about the TAFE NSW Managers Association, and then how we came to the position as presented in our paper.

Our association is a professional development association for our members, and it acts as a lobby group for our membership. At present we circulate data to 200 members, and potentially we reach the total population of institute managers, which averages about 70 to 80 institute managers per institute. As you know, there are 11 institutes in New South Wales, either institutes of TAFE or institutes of technology in TAFE. So the number of people that we reach is quite extensive because members and non-members come to our activities.

The range of members is extensive—from our CEO, Ken Boston, who is a member of our association, right down to our functional managers and our educational managers in institutes. The institute managers under our CEO manage, on average, 40,000 EFT—that is, effective full-time students—in New South Wales, and that is made up of 377,000 actual enrolments according to the figures from NCVER. I brought those along just in case you wanted to check the data that we have presented. So that is 377,000 students in New South Wales that we are responsible for. The 40,000 EFT—effective full-time students—represent about 34 per cent of the total TAFE student body in Australia. So New South Wales is a fair-sized component of that TAFE sector in Australia.

In the present New South Wales TAFE system—and I have got some handouts here just so you can follow the models that we are talking about and that we have considered in terms of looking at some change—in today's model, which is the top one under 'today', you will see that there is a lot of overlap between the secondary, the

university and the TAFE institutes. For our purposes, even though that says TAFE institutes, we are talking about the TAFE sector, not only including the New South Wales TAFE Commission but also other private providers who are involved in technical and further education components of training.

You will notice that there is a lot of overlap, and this represents arrangements such as articulation arrangements where our courses are offered and, on successful completion of our courses, you get advanced standing in university courses. It represents strategic alliances such as we have in the Hunter where we actually have a university campus and TAFE campus and a school operating together. There are a few of those models in New South Wales. It also represents different partnerships with universities and schools.

In preparing our paper, we looked at a variety of models as evidenced in Europe, USA and Canada and decided that, of all the models that we had researched and talked about, our present system of relationships with schools and universities meets our present needs of the portability of awards, meeting diverse student needs and differing delivery styles. However, we feel that the development of more strategic partnerships and alliances with universities would indeed be a good thing. We have been consciously working at that for quite a few years now.

The TAFE sector has always been seen as the approachable educational face. Combined with this, the fact that 7.2 per cent of our graduates hold a bachelors degree shows that TAFE indeed has the practical expertise to offer people for getting on with the job that they are desirous of doing. If there was a push for change, we see that the two by two model that we have suggested—which is one of the diagrammatic handouts that I have given you—which is two years of TAFE followed by two years of university in a formal arrangement, would allow for the best of the present system and the potential for positive change to occur.

In our association coming to the endorsement of our two by two model, we as a professional association looked at the issues of market thinness, how many delivery points we have in New South Wales and how they would be used in the third model which we considered seriously, which was the seamless pathway, where it is a formal system where all are in the melting pot. We felt that a seamless model really would potentially have the ability to create thinner markets, particularly in country regions, than are there now. For that reason, we endorsed the two by two which we think will enhance delivery, particularly in the country, which will allow for a diverse range of courses to be offered.

We looked at another issue of student performance, particularly in terms of access to courses—our first chance education, second chance education. Another issue we looked at was the focus on TAFE teaching, the industry expertise and knowledge that our staff—particularly our teachers—bring to the teaching arena, and how that is a part of our market edge.

Also, we looked at the federal funding implementation; what it would mean if we were to move to a seamless federally funded arrangement and what that would mean for HECS for our students; the implications of the changeover of funding sources, and what the loss of state funding would mean. We realise that we would not like to see any reduction of the present funding levels to either the TAFE or the university sectors combined. We felt that there was compromise in amongst all of that for HECS charges, maybe for some of the higher level courses in TAFE. But it is certainly not something that we would endorse freely.

We also looked at some of the inconsistencies of the universities not recognising our qualifications. As you know, we have quite a thick folder in New South Wales of those universities who recognise our qualifications and give advanced standing, such as in the accounting courses, where, after they have completed our courses, they get the equivalent of a year's advanced standing in a university. There are some inconsistencies, of course, with the universities on who recognises our qualifications and who does not.

We also looked at the level of qualifications in Australia, looking at the OECD figures of the decline in university completion rates. We thought that this is maybe also tied to the HECS fees, particularly at present, leading us to again think that we would not endorse that for the majority of our students. That is another access issue as well.

We also looked at the issue of teaching and learning strategies and the competencies of our staff. As you know, our staff are experts in their field and are recruited for such, and we provide teacher training. There are reviews that show you that most of our teachers hold qualifications up to bachelor degree and quite a percentage have a masters degree, predominantly in the education field. Therefore, we feel that they also have a grasp to meet the needs of individual students, and this expertise in industry is certainly of benefit to our students. Also, we looked at the issue of protection of the second chance education which we feel in some models would be denied, and we were concerned about that.

Just to conclude I might say that, in the model that we have presented, we have looked at the seamless web and there is information there, but we endorse—if there is to be any change—a two by two method, and that model presented allows for strategic alliances, partnerships, diverse funding sources and pathways that are only going to benefit our clients, our students.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. So your preference is for two by two?

Ms Crawford—Our preference is for the continuance of what we have got, with continuing pathways and an increase in pathways and alliances with universities. We found that the two by two model is similar to what we have got, but it is in a more formal context than the ad hoc arrangements that occur now with universities, particularly given that some universities recognise our qualifications and some do not.

CHAIR—Do you have a view of Roderick West's recommendations in relation to seamlessness between the post-secondary VET sector and universities?

Ms Crawford—Yes. As I said, there is a document here. In considering all of the issues that we were talking about, we felt that the seamlessness approach did disadvantage some of our clients, and that some of our clients would be lost in that. We had some concerns about that report. We had a presentation at our recent conference and agreed that we have a lot more work to do on that in terms of the implementations. The issues for us in the seamless pathway are listed on the back page: access to the systems and equipment, being all things to all people versus thin markets. We talked about teaching strategies. There is a whole range of things listed there.

CHAIR—Are the industrial relations issues between the TAFE and university sectors causing problems for you?

Ms Harris—Do you mean in terms of the working conditions?

CHAIR—Different rates of pay and that sort of stuff, between university and VET sectors.

Ms Harris—We have not struck that essentially in the majority of cases. However, I think Robyn knows of the problems that are beginning to arise where there are different conditions on our particular campus at Ourimbah, so she might like to answer that.

Ms MacDonald—I have not been involved in depth on that—at the moment we are just looking at it. But there have been problems, like when we moved, say, building and construction over to the Ourimbah campus where we have support staff. Because the university is employing the admin people, our support staff were not as qualified—we are not qualified to apply for that position over there. I have had to find another position there. They are employing. So, yes, there are worries. They have their own maintenance section, so when we look at combining, as we are at the moment, we are going to have worries there. But that is a separate issue altogether, because it is also educational staff we have to bring together.

Mr Kretchmer—TAFE currently operates under something like 32 different awards for the variety of staff that we have connected with our organisation. That is not to say that we are experts in industrial relations because of that. But, with the way in which the universities work, we find there is no difficulty in staff working in universities at the moment. We even have the university staff working in with TAFE. But to bring the two together, in terms of the question that you are asking, we would need to be looking at having not necessarily similar working conditions. What we are talking about here is the delivery of a product, and the customer, the student, is the person you are wanting to look at first. The question then is how we deliver that within a two by two model or within a seamless model. As to the TAFE component, it is the anywhere, anyhow, any time

concept of us being able to look after that component that is required to be delivered. Then the way in which the university would be delivering is something that could still be considered.

Ms Crawford—I would have to say, too, that we have had similar issues raised with our combining with the school system, such as the campus we have at Young that has the school and the TAFE sector together. Yes, they are real issues that have to be worked out. They have been worked out, but the thing is that working them out under the present structure is not always the most cost-effective method of trying to get it together, as it could be if awards and things were changed or could be changed.

CHAIR—When we were in Melbourne, the Vice-Chancellor of RMIT said that he felt that TAFEs were very good at training people for yesterday and training them for today, but not very good at training people for tomorrow. Essentially, he went on to elaborate, you have got rapidly emerging industries—sunrise industries, I think they call them: biotechnology, multimedia, technological things surrounding health—and there needed to be perhaps a funding mechanism which TAFEs could access quickly and very quickly establish training programs to meet emerging needs, so that industries evolving out of R&D were not being forced to say, ‘We have got to get out of here and get to South-East Asia or somewhere like that.’ Have you any views about that?

Ms Crawford—Our response now has been to develop a specialist centre such as the telecommunications centre that has been developed at Lidcombe which does really advanced technology, futuristic type of training, robotics and a whole range of things. We have a commitment to training up our staff—not only our association but the New South Wales TAFE, but we are speaking about our association—to training up return to industry programs, to have training programs all the time. It is true that TAFE has an ageing teaching staff. That is something that they are very conscious of.

CHAIR—I do not think it was a criticism of staff. It was more the equipment—

Ms Crawford—No, I am not saying that. It is a known fact that we have an ageing population.

Ms Harris—That does not mean that they cannot address—

Ms Crawford—That is true.

Ms Harris—I think the issue is that, if you are talking about the stock of facilities, it does take time to move an organisation to a new field, because you have got a stock of facilities that you are maintaining and to actually build new facilities there is a lead time of up to five years. What we have done recently is use our relationship with industry to address that. For example, with my college we have what is called the Toyota tertiary education program. We are one of the only colleges in Australia that has that. They

provide us with all their latest technology. We train their staff on our basic level courses and then they provide training, so it is a relationship between the two organisations to train both their staff and our staff. They provide us with the intellectual property that is their latest technology. They will not provide that to any other organisation. So what we have to do in keeping ahead of the game is ensure that particular relationship with industry is maintained.

Mr Kretchmer—It is fair to recognise that, if universities are to play a role, why shouldn't they be looking at the design, the research and the new directions. But TAFE also, in its own way, can do this. In 1981, there was no such thing as information technology. We have now got over 30,000 students enrolled and a major infrastructure within all of our organisations to deliver that. The connection, as Ardyce is saying, with industry itself, either in their own skills centres or us working in with industry, means that we are also picking up on the latest requirements that industry wants and helping to deliver that.

I think the word 'facilitation' is probably more important than 'teach'. We are not a training organisation. We are an organisation that supports the delivery of vocational education. If we can assist in the facilitation of that, whether it be in the workplace, or in a skills centre, or in a normal face-to-face program in a college, or in connection with a university, then those are the alliances that we should be pushing and should be working toward. That is the concept that we are looking at—an alliance relationship with the universities—rather than being subsumed by universities and finding that funding goes to one source and we get the—

CHAIR—So you do not feel that the current funding arrangements are constraining your ability to move quickly in the marketplace in establishing training programs in emerging industries? If there was a training innovation fund to which governments, the sector itself and industry contributed that you might access to quickly get a training program up and running, you do not feel that there is any need for any of that?

Mr Kretchmer—I would endorse it.

Ms Harris—The lead time is extremely long—as I said, it can take five years—so a fund that would give us a quicker access to getting facilities up and getting training programs would certainly be excellent.

Ms Crawford—Recognising that strategic alliances with industry are really critical.

Ms Harris—They often do have the facilities, to be honest, and we just need the intellectual—

Mr Kretchmer—In relation to your question about current funding, at the moment

we are chasing something like 12½ per cent of our total operating costs in New South Wales as a gap in what is actually being provided in the way of funding. We have moved into a commercial arena to get that money. But to move over into an American type of system, where you are sponsored by a particular foundation, would certainly be something that, personally, I would be interested in from a commercial point of view. Lidcombe College has got the Optus Centre. That funding is being provided by Optus. The high-tech equipment that is now located there is available to students and also to their staff. So that is a way—

CHAIR—Gippsland, for example, told us they have a \$20 million budget and that 54 per cent of their students are concessional. The Victorian government says these are concessional students. They lose half a million dollars a year off their operating budget because they are providing concessions. Is that a satisfactory way to be funding TAFEs? It just seems, from our point of view, that possibly that is compounding: you are taking students from low-income cohorts and you are compounding the problems you have because you are losing revenue because you are giving concessions to them. Is that a problem in New South Wales and have you any ideas about how it could be addressed?

Ms Crawford—At my college, Bankstown, 68 per cent of the student population come from a non-English speaking background and we have the largest—

Mr PYNE—Sixty-eight per cent?

Ms Crawford—Yes; which is representative of the community, which is 58 per cent. So 68 per cent have a non-English speaking background and, of the exemptions we grant, which is our income, we have, along with Granville, the highest percentage of exemptions because we give exemptions to the administrative fee. That has a big impact on our institute in terms of income. Also, because I then have to increase the amount of support that I give to those students, my operating costs are much greater than those of any other college because the amount of literacy and numeracy support that I have to give is increased. So, yes, those issues are real. Then there are some areas, particularly in Sydney and even in country areas, where the level of low-income families—

Ms MacDonald—A third at Gosford.

Ms Crawford—A third at Gosford were people enrolled from low-income backgrounds. Yes, it is a big issue, compounded by the fact that often that means other support to make the learning environment supportive to their training. The answers are really hard to find because the present formulas for funding student places do not take in allowances for those special institutes or colleges that have those specific needs. That is a funding issue that needs to be addressed.

Ms Harris—We talked about it at a conference last week. One of the issues that came up was whether the disadvantaged schools program could actually be duplicated, or

replicated, in TAFE. My college is in the area of highest unemployment and the highest NESB in Australia—the area of Fairfield, Cabramatta and Smithfield. You could not get a more disadvantaged population. It does not get any special treatment, whereas the local high schools and primary schools do get a particular—

CHAIR—That is something we are a little bit concerned about. There have been other TAFEs drawing relatively high income for cohorts who are doing better. It just seems that in areas like yours the problem is being compounded. So the question is: what could be recommended to the Commonwealth as a way of dealing with this? There may be some cross-subsidies, one to the other.

Mr Kretchmer—The cross-subsidy concept works. A large number of these people that we are talking about would receive Austudy, too. At the same time, they get an exemption from the cost of actually enrolling in the course. If part of that Austudy grant was recognised as going toward the actual administrative cost, at least all students would then be paying a base cost towards coming to TAFE. That would be a concept that could be looked at within the present structure that the government has got.

CHAIR—Some people have suggested to us that a deferred fee payment system, like a HECS system in TAFE, might be a solution. There are some problems we have identified with that, apart from the obvious political ones, but obviously it is an option. Students pay the fee up front, or they take it as a deferred payment. There are political problems with that, obviously. Also, employers seem to pay quite a few of the fees and they might take advantage of that. Is that something that you have given any thought to?

Ms Harris—Yes, we have. Currently, our administration charge is probably seen as being extremely reasonable—\$180 up to a maximum of \$540. The only thing that we have been asked to do through our students is to operate a loan system.

CHAIR—You do that internally?

Ms Harris—We do that internally. Our student association funds students to pay their administrative charges and then they pay it back to the student association. In terms of instalments, we have creative ways of allowing instalments, even though, technically, they are not allowed. It is certainly something that has been looked at in terms of the issues that have been raised even about articulation. For example, if students do an accounting course and effectively eliminate one year of their university HECS—

CHAIR—It is cheaper to do it—

Ms Harris—They have learnt that now, so we do get a fair number of people who do our accounting courses because they know that they will get a cheaper HECS. As was said by Mr Abbott the other day: if they know how to use the system, that is up to them to find out.

Mr PYNE—Do you think that it is fair to say that in the last 10 years the links with industry and the status of your courses in TAFE have grown substantially?

Ms Crawford—Yes.

Mr PYNE—Therefore there is really very much a defined TAFE sector now that serves the needs of a specific cohort in the community?

Mr Kretchmer—The connection was always there, except that there was an attitude that TAFE told industry what it had to learn.

Mr PYNE—That has changed around?

Mr Kretchmer—That is right. The whole concept of the national agenda that was pushed some years ago brought that around to another way so that we are now working much more responsibly with industry. There is a downside to that, in that a lot of the national curriculum that has been designed has been designed by national ITABs on which there are certain key players. Most of those key players are looking after their own key business requirements, as well. There are a vast number of the small businesses in Australia that are saying, 'We are not getting the kind of training that we want. Even though you have modularised it and broken it down into small parts, it is still becoming very difficult for you to actually give us what we want.' We are now finding that we are adapting to that group in the community within the local sector of the TAFE institutes to try and package courses that really meet their needs. That is our next step in moving to meet the needs of industry. Yes, we have gone through that paradigm of telling them, to now listening and trying to help small business.

Mr PYNE—There is an understanding, you think, amongst industry, in particular, for people who are linked specifically to your courses, that your certificates, diplomas and associate diplomas, once completed by your students, are exactly the sorts of qualifications that a lot of people in business and industry are looking for?

Ms Crawford—I think that our enrolments say, yes.

Ms Harris—Actually the NCVER employer satisfaction survey did show that the majority of employers were satisfied. However we do at times feel like the meat in the sandwich because we get a lot of industry coming to us saying, 'Who designed this course? This is not what we want.' And we say, 'Actually it was designed by the ITABs which have your representatives. Go and speak to them.' Then they will say, 'But we do not believe that they represent us.' So we have been at times caught with the actual ideas that are presented by certain sectors of the industry. Certainly, for my college, which is a large transport provider, the differences between the small businessman who is running his own mechanical engineering operation, and Toyota, is just extraordinary in terms of what they require and what they actually want in the curriculum. Sometimes it is extremely

hard to see that there is a concept of industry as being an homogenous group. It is not an homogenous group and there is a tremendous variety of needs. That is where we modify and do creative things on the site to make that work for industry.

Mr PYNE—Do you think that on the one side of the equation you are basically working much better with industry and that there is an understanding from them about the status of your associate diplomas and diplomas and certificates? Are you quite comfortable about how that is working, but you would like to see, perhaps, a better modulation with the ITABs in terms of the courses design, but that that is a problem that can be fixed? On the other side of the coin, do you think that people and students who come to TAFEs understand that when they finish their courses, whether the course be an associate diploma or certificate or diploma, this will help them to get employment?

Ms Harris—They are very meticulous often about finding out and they do make the right choices.

Mr PYNE—They choose—

Ms Harris—To be quite honest with you, it is their parents who make the choices most of the time, and they are extremely careful. They check out colleges and particular courses. For example, I have been at Ryde College and I have to tell you that the entire state wanted to come to Ryde College because of its reputation and its background. It was probably nothing to do in one sense with the curriculum because the curriculum is taught the same in every other college in the state that ran tourism and hospitality. But the parents wanted them to come to Ryde.

Mr PYNE—We have the same situation in South Australia with Regency Park and the chefs course. Given all that, why do you think there is this push—I noticed today that it has not been quite as strong, but it is certainly in Victoria when we were there recently—for TAFEs to be able to offer degree courses and to have this two by two arrangement? As we have talked about this morning, my attitude to it is that, if the students understand when they are doing a course that it is going to get them employment, or give them a better chance of employment, and industry is happy with the courses you are doing—and obviously you have a close connection with them if they are funding large sections of your TAFES—I cannot understand why it is that people are so caught up with the appellation of whether they have a degree, an associate diploma, a diploma or a certificate. I am just bemused, I suppose, that there is this sort of push for degrees.

I notice in your opening comments that you would prefer to keep the current system, but if they were going to change—

Ms Crawford—With improvements.

Mr PYNE—You would have this two by two model. But certainly other witnesses

have said that basically TAFE should be able to offer degrees in the same way as universities offer them. I just wonder why there is this push for degrees when obviously here in New South Wales people are pretty happy with the way the system is working.

Mr Kretchmer—To come back to what Heather said: about seven per cent of enrolments now coming into TAFE are people that have completed degrees. On our state statistics, 75 per cent are students who are actually coming in and wanting to get employment. There is a particular group coming for that reason. We are talking about something less than 20 per cent coming straight from school. The rest of the bulk of the population in TAFE New South Wales—and this will be similar across Australia—are there because of employment requirements, or retrenchment, and they are looking at retraining and moving into other areas.

I think there is a niche for each organisation to provide what it provides best. On our international markets, people ask us, 'Do you provide a degree? Do you provide a masters?' They want the bit of paper. That is not what the Australian community wants. We are looking at a manufacturing base with an information and a communication industry that is coming ahead to the year 2000. We do not need to provide a whole lot of academics and managers. We need to provide some of them. But we need to provide the bulk of the work force that fits the new kinds of industries that are going to emerge. It is fair, yes, that we do not know what the new industries are that are emerging, but we will be there looking for them as they come and, as we have seen them in the past, we will be there to find them in the future. It would be better off to find them with industry rather than with the university.

Ms Harris—According to our colleagues in Victoria, the push has often been about the issue of competitive framework. In fact, they have decided that, because of the competition, it is better to be able to offer degrees because you would pick up another market. It is the definition of the market that causes a bit of a problem. We do not see ourselves as being in that market. We do have a joint degree with Wollongong University, but we do that on the basis that there are certain modules that suit us and certain modules that suit them. I have been struck by the fact that the RMIT model, which we have analysed in depth, has picked up entirely the actual structure of a university.

One of the issues that came out of that is that it is very nice to be called a pro-vice chancellor, I suppose, instead of a college director. I wonder if it is not exactly the elitism of some of the people in the population who have caused so many students to aim for university when 55 per cent of them will not get in. We have had to sell TAFE so hard to schools because the school teachers sell university not TAFE. Our whole issue, in our relationship with the schools—which is extremely positive in New South Wales—has been about teaching school teachers that 55 per cent of their students will not go to university and 'Please give them the information about where to find the level of qualification that they need'.

Mr PYNE—I agree with that entirely.

Ms Crawford—We have addressed here that marketing is one of the issues that the TAFE sector needs to work on.

Ms Harris—I suppose our new arrangement in New South Wales, being part of the DSE sector now, has made that even more—

Mr PYNE—The truth is that there are horses for courses. In the past, people have been so caught up with sending people to university that, in fact, a lot of the horses have ended up in all sorts of trouble.

Ms Harris—We had an issue here the other day when Dr Boston pointed out that he will no longer pursue school teachers teaching vocational education; TAFE teachers will teach that sector in the schools. There is no point in pretending to industry that a person who has no industry background can provide the sort of level of qualification and expertise that they need. That is what we need to work towards, that cooperative arrangement.

Mr PYNE—That sounds very positive. Thanks.

CHAIR—The pro-vice chancellor of the University of Newcastle who is appearing after you, I think, would probably like to see you.

Ms Crawford—We were just a bit struck by the titles, I have to say.

Mr MAREK—In line with that, should there be regulation of education differentiating between university and TAFE? Should the market be regulated to stop one from overencroaching upon the other?

Ms Crawford—We see a great strength in the competitiveness, diversity, adaptability and the flexibility. We do not necessarily see that being able to adapt and fit the markets as a bad thing. I guess that is an argument against regulation into a fit or a structure that only allows one system to be in operation or a formalised highly structured pathway to be offered.

Mr Kretchmer—If you regulate it, are you restricting the user choice and the choice here as an individual to decide what level of training or what level of education they are really seeking? It depends on the kind of regulation that you are thinking of.

Ms Harris—It would depend on the model. We have looked at the Northern Territory. If you looked at location in Australia, you cannot deny that different models will have to apply because they just do not have the level of infrastructure nor do they have the level of population to maintain separate sectors. The working together model in

the Northern Territory, we think, has been ideal for that particular location.

Ms Crawford—Some of the other institutes in Australia have an operating budget the same size as my college. How can you say that a model will fit? Some of my smaller sections at Bankstown are the size of total colleges or total institutes in other areas of Australia.

Mr MAREK—How do you feel about the comment on TAFEs offering graduate or postgraduate courses and the watering down of the quality of that course because it was offered by TAFE instead of a university? How do you feel about somebody who has gone to the trouble of achieving an OP1 result at high school and has gone to university and done a degree course compared to somebody who has ended up with an OP25 result and could not get into university but went to TAFE: they both ended up doing the same degree course through two different institutions?

Ms Crawford—This might be something that we have to think about. We might get a paper back to you.

Mr MAREK—Let us start with the OP thing.

Mr Kretchmer—Can you define OP?

Mr MAREK—Students finish their final years of 11 and 12. Instead of gaining a very high achievement, or whatever, they end up with an OP score of between one and 30.

Ms Harris—You are talking about TER.

Mr Kretchmer—So it would be similar to our TER score.

Mr MAREK—Yes. It is a Queensland system, obviously.

Ms Crawford—Sorry.

Mr MAREK—A lot of universities work on the theory that they take from OP1 to OP12. If you do not achieve 12, some of the universities do not take much lower than that.

Ms Crawford—Although you would have to say that has changed.

Mr MAREK—Yes, it has changed because I know some universities that are taking as low as OP25.

Ms Crawford—We find it all the time because we enrol first. Our students enrol in our courses because that is ideally where they are suited for the level of their

achievement in their TER or their OP, or whatever. Then the universities lower their entry score and then, all of a sudden, we have lost our cohort of students. They have withdrawn because the universities have lowered their entry score, to get the students.

Mr MAREK—Just to get the students; to get the numbers up. Yes; that is right.

Ms Crawford—That is not about where the students are best placed in regard to their academic ability or their ability to achieve. It has nothing to do with that all. It is about funding, isn't it? Can you give us the question again?

Mr MAREK—That was the OP side of it. I was asking another question. On the one hand, you have someone who goes to the trouble of doing a masters in business, or whatever. They go to the trouble of getting an OP1 or a high TER score and they go to university. On the other hand, you have someone who could not make university because of poor numeracy and literacy skills. They go to TAFE—and TAFE has very good courses to upgrade people's numeracy and literacy skills—and they basically go straight in, being able to do the same course through TAFE. How do you feel about this situation?

There is an argument that a lot of people would have angst if they have done university courses and trudged on to get the good results and good marks and the course were to be offered through TAFE rather than a university. You would then have two people competing for a job, one with an MBA from TAFE and the other with an MBA from Harvard.

Ms Crawford—So is this about status of the qualifications, the credential, or is it about the capacity and the ability to do the job that is at hand?

Ms Harris—You are talking about the idea of duplication in the market. You are talking about people offering the same type of level. Again, we have not canvassed this in the association but we have personally looked at that as being an issue of: why would you duplicate in the market? If people have really got the expertise to offer the MBA at university level, it should be maintained in that sector. I do not believe that it is a question of TAFE needing to move into that area. It is a question of people wanting to move into that area because of the nature of some of the market that is out there, but I do not believe we should be.

Mr MAREK—I will give you another angle to the argument and that is funding.

Ms Harris—We live in a very tight funding market.

Mr MAREK—Yes, but if all of a sudden you were able to get funding because you could offer more courses, then all of a sudden—

Ms Harris—Then I do not think competition has really worked to its logical

conclusion. All you are doing is duplicating a market, not actually providing a very good framework for public—

Ms Crawford—Duplication can lead to market thinness, can't it?

Mr MAREK—I am just interested in it. Thank you.

Mr MOSSFIELD—You have clearly spelt out the relationship between TAFEs and universities, as you see it, two by two, which would be three by two if you are looking at trade courses and things like that, I would say.

Also, do you feel threatened at all by the universities? I have a statement here by another person who said that the pressures are strong for universities to move more formally into vocational training due to a reduction in per student funding in higher education and due to the universities' increasing reliance on private sources of revenue. Have you any comments on that statement? Do you feel threatened that universities may be encroaching on the vocational training area?

Ms Harris—We have expressed the view that there is a reason to keep the markets separate. Yes, we do feel that just because a person is looking for another market should not be a reason that they duplicate across the system. I really do feel sometimes that that emphasis on finding more students has rather ruined some of the arrangements that were intended for funding. It was meant to increase the levels of funding for particular areas so that there would be a greater rationalisation. But, in fact, if you are going to duplicate then you are doing the opposite of what you intended to achieve.

Ms Crawford—I can give you an example of that in, say, a country institute. Once a country institute of TAFE decides that it is moving out of an area such as vehicles or heavy vehicles or catering or something, then because of the competing forces in the area it is very unlikely that the courses would quickly be replaced should that market then fall away. If there is competition in a country area from other areas and the TAFE sector moves away from an established facility, it is very hard then for TAFE to re-establish that once the other market finds that they are not into this because it is not economically viable. The market is lost to that region. Whilst that happens a lot in the country areas, it is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to country either. It is the same with metropolitan areas.

Mr Kretchmer—Coming from the Commonwealth government's point of view, to me the thrust is to maintain alliances, and a good one would be in the aviation industry. Padstow College in New South Wales is a state centre. It provides trade; it provides a certificate; it provides the lower management courses. The University of New South Wales then provides a Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering. There is a very strong alliance already working between those two to help each other to meet the whole needs of the industry. That to me is the model that we should be trying to promote and to have happen. You

look at it then within the industry training sectors in Australia.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for taking the time to provide a submission and speak to it. Sometimes it can be a demoralising experience, fronting up to these committees. There are two things that I would like you to give further thought to and provide some supplementary information about. Firstly, there is this issue of fees that we were discussing earlier on and the discounting that clearly is necessary for low-income people. If you have any thoughts on how that might be addressed in an equitable way, please forward that information to the committee.

The second issue is one that you touched on but did not discuss, and that was schools and vocational education and training. Should schools be providing it, or TAFEs? I gather from what you have said that you think TAFEs ought to be providing it? If so, how should that work? How ought it be funded? What do we do about schools that have already got significant VET programs that are being offered? We have not got time to discuss it now, but if you could really expand on that for us we would appreciate that.

Ms Crawford—Is there a deadline?

CHAIR—If we could have something within three weeks, that would be good.

Ms Crawford—And sent to the secretariat?

CHAIR—Yes, by mid-April. That would be terrific, and the secretariat will distribute it to us. We would be very interested in what you think.

Ms Crawford—Okay. Just to conclude, we would be happy at any time to talk about such issues.

CHAIR—Probably we could come back to you. We found the enthusiasm in New South Wales for talking to our committee was not as high as it was in other parts of the country.

Mr Kretchmer—Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Ms Crawford—Can we just stress that the views of the association are not necessarily those of the New South Wales TAFE Commission!

CHAIR—We realise that. I have found in life if you are going to get run over by a truck you might as well get on the road and try to negotiate with the person!

[11.09 a.m.]

EASTCOTT, Professor Leslie Raymond, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle, 10 Chittaway Road, Ourimbah, New South Wales 2258

CHAIR—If you could provide us with a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission, that would be terrific.

Prof. Eastcott—We have presented a short paper for you here today that tries to deal conceptually with some of the issues that we think are emerging in regard to higher education. Dare I say that, in that very first term, when you start to look at the role of institutes of technology, TAFE colleges, you immediately come up with the problem of what is the correct term.

Personally, I prefer to refer to post-secondary education, and I do that deliberately. I think this paper reflects that because the time has come when we have to recognise, if I can use the terrible word, the concept of massification in post-secondary education. It is happening all over the world, and here in Australia we should not be surprised that it is starting to happen.

If I can plagiarise what I heard Roderick West say on the radio this morning as I was driving in, he was pointing out that since the 1950s to now, enrolment in higher education has gone from 40,000—which was probably about five per cent of the eligible population—up to around about 600,000, representing an involvement and getting pretty close to 45 to 50 per cent of the student population or the potential student population, and you have got a similar sort of growth happening in technical and further education as well. It is backed up by a complementary growth in adult and community education.

So the whole nature of an educated community is taking on a totally different emphasis and style to what it might have been 20 to 25 years ago, and it reflects itself in an increasing enrolment pattern both at the technical and further education and vocational education side of things. It starts to challenge the boundaries that have been drawn up in the past in terms of the different providers of post-secondary education and so on.

It causes you to ask different sorts of questions. For example, when there was five per cent of the student population going into higher education, the question of entry standards was paramount. Now these days, in many people's minds, entry standards are still paramount but, as you get more and more people going in, if you are going to maintain standards, then exit standards become paramount, and what you have to do in your organisation is work towards making sure that students who may have a lower entry still reach the appropriate quality goal to exit at the other end.

That creates all sorts of different sub-organisations within institutions to look after

students, to look after their welfare, to modify the nature of teaching—which was fairly simple, quite frankly, if you took in only the top five per cent of the student population and so on. That is at the university level. But it has rearranged the relationship between TAFE and universities as well because you get more and more people coming through TAFE and then looking for further progression of their educational opportunity. It seems to be one of the unusual characteristics of education that, the more you have of it, the more you want. When the avenues are opened up, people then seem to want to move on and take the further opportunities that come with that, and of course the changing nature of employee expectations is causing that.

The other characteristics, of course, that are starting to occur—and it has probably been referred to in many other reports—is that in the past higher education has tended to be looked upon as a hierarchal thing where you moved on and upwards. That concept is changing, and it is changing in two ways. First of all, there are many people in university who are now looking to alternate opportunities in technical and further education. For example, more and more of the students enrolling in technical and further education these days already have a university qualification. I understand at the Hunter Institute of Technology, which is the institute I have the closest relationship with, more than a third of their students already have a higher education qualification which seems to suggest that even the way the community is looking at education is changing, that a university degree is not necessarily the ultimate achievement. For many it might be the penultimate achievement, in actual fact, as they add a direct vocational skills orientation to what is happening.

The gist of this paper is that we are saying that these sorts of changes cause you to have to think in different ways about lots of things. For example, first of all, you have to think differently about the nature of the boundaries between institutions of different types. As I have already implied, in the past we have tended to think hierarchically. We still tend to think in terms of big black squares around TAFE, which is there, and university, which is here, and adult and community education, which is somewhere else, but I think we have to start looking at the way in which those boundaries blur. This paper suggests that we are not doing it very well at the moment.

There is a lot of rhetoric about cross-credit transfer, for example, but in fact it might be possible to interpret cross-credit transfer as a way of maintaining the boundaries between the institutions, maintaining your existing systems, rather than facilitating the flow of students from one to the other. This paper suggests that this has a negative effect on curriculum development and that the nature of education now requires the development of curriculum where you have relationships in curriculum design across your educational boundaries.

There are lots of elements that flow into curriculum development that lead us to ask reasonable questions as to why we duplicate what is sometimes done in TAFE in higher education, for example. If it is possible to provide credit, does that mean that we

actually have two separate institutions doing the same thing, in part? And if we do, why? Would it not have been better to have had programs operating in TAFE and university which are complementary.

If universities in their 100 level subjects, say, in accountancy, are teaching basic skills and TAFE institutions are teaching basic skills, why are they both teaching them? Are there more cost-effective ways of doing it? Are there more economic ways of doing it? Does TAFE have the comparative advantage when it comes to teaching basic skills—I suspect they do—whereas the universities may well have the comparative advantage when it comes to teaching generic skills of analysis, critical skills and so on? Should universities be spending more time on that and less on basic skills? To do that, however, you have to break down the nature of that relationship that seems to exist, at least in New South Wales, I hasten to add, where everything is very carefully controlled and monitored through the system.

We do have a personal interest in this at the University of Newcastle in that we have an unusual facility at the Central Coast Campus, which is located at Ourimbah, about an hour up the Pacific Highway. It is very unusual for New South Wales, not necessarily unusual for the rest of Australia; New South Wales, I am sure you will discover over time, tends to be very conservative in its educational provision at the post-secondary level. What we have done there is put on the one campus the University of Newcastle, the Hunter Institute of Technology and the Central Coast Community College—but we have done more than put them on the one campus.

There are a number of models that exist and there are some others around which I would call co-location models, where you have three institutions operating on the one campus and maybe using computing facilities and library facilities in common. We have gone one step further than that: we have an integrated single management of that campus. On the capital facilities side, for example, we have one set of maintenance officers and one set of policies. We only have one set of buildings and we timetable our classes into that one set of buildings so that, for example, a classroom might have a university class in it in one hour and in the next hour it might be TAFE students.

We have one library, we have one set of computer laboratories, we have one set of student amenities, we have one set of science laboratories, and so on. At the beginning of each year or each semester, as the case may be, we have a timetable committee made up of users from all sections on that campus who timetable in terms of needs rather than in terms of the different sectors.

From an economic viewpoint, that has had a very interesting effect. I have done an analysis—I am afraid I did not bring it with me, but I could provide you with a copy, if you like—which shows, for example, that on the Central Coast Campus, if we had built a co-located operation—that is, if we had built a TAFE and a university on the campus—it would have cost us in excess of \$95 million. We built the joint integrated model, which

fulfils the same educational plan that we had for TAFE and university, for \$55 million. In other words, we generated about \$45 million in capital savings by developing an integrated model.

If we had only gone that far, that would have been wonderful, but we have been able to take it further and we are starting to develop educational programs of the sort that I talked about before. For example, we have the Bachelor of Social Science Welfare Studies, where the academics at the university responsible for designing that degree are working hand in hand with the social welfare staff from Hunter Institute of Technology and from the educational services consortium of TAFE to design a program which means that there is no repetition between what happens in the TAFE Associate Diplomas in Welfare and the university's Bachelor of Social Science. One will flow into the other. There will be overlap at the first year, but there will not be a requirement to repeat subjects, to repeat content, for the university to redo the basic practical skills that have already been dealt with within the TAFE level program.

Similarly, we have a very substantial hospitality management sector within TAFE on that campus. We have a major in hospitality within the university's Bachelor of Business degree. That hospitality management major was designed in collaboration, with six or seven people sitting around a table—some from the educational services consortium, some from the TAFE teaching staff, some from the university staff. In fact, significant parts of that program will be taught by the TAFE staff on that campus to university students, because they are the best people to teach, in particular, the basic skills components of the major.

So it is possible, but to make it possible, as we imply here, you have to attack some of the territoriality, some of the preservation of territories, that exists today. There are some other requirements of what we are doing that are suggested here. For example, we note that acquiring basic skills is an essential part of professional education, but there are a lot of professional associations which at the moment do not recognise TAFE qualifications towards professional accreditation. It is suggested that there could be some readjustments to some of that if you get the sort of relationship we are talking about in education.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Professor Eastcott. Mr Pyne would probably like to start asking questions.

Mr PYNE—Professor Eastcott, I have listened very carefully to your submission and it has been very interesting. Do you think that in the future the relationship between TAFEs and universities should be more divided than it is becoming? In your submission you seem to suggest that it should be perhaps more closely integrated. But there is an attitude, which is an old attitude, that perhaps the integration of the two sectors is not in the best interests of the university sector or of the TAFE sector and that there should be two very separate sectors that do their own jobs very well.

The previous people who appeared before us, from the TAFE association, believed that TAFE was offering, in certificates, associate diplomas and diplomas, exactly what it should be offering, that in its closeness to industry it had a very specific market which it was servicing and that universities should do the same. The University of Newcastle is quite an old university in terms of its long history and high standing. Don't you think that there is a potential to eat away at the very core of why universities exist if universities blur the lines between TAFEs and universities?

Prof. Eastcott—First of all, if I dare trot out the old chestnuts, universities exist for teaching, they exist for research and they exist for service.

Mr PYNE—And for learning—

Prof. Eastcott—Yes.

Mr PYNE—per se?

Prof. Eastcott—Per se. I think where they differ from TAFEs is pretty much as I implied earlier, in terms of one being concerned essentially with developing the specific contemporary industry skills that are required, whereas universities really are about—and perhaps ought to be more about—pure and applied research in its various forms. I am not talking about thousands of university students peering all the time into microscopes type of research.

Having said that, I do not think that that necessarily drives the two apart. I am suggesting that there are people within TAFEs who are doing things that have some elements of what universities are doing, and very certainly there are university people teaching things that are also taught in TAFEs. In terms of the blurring, I am asking: should that sort of blurring exist; is that a cost effective way to go about education? I am also saying that if you continue with clearly separate institutions without the establishment of a more effective relationship between the two in terms of things like cross credit, you tend to build walls, you tend to build divisions and you tend to lose the opportunities which come with thinking about education as not a series of discrete activities but as a continuum of learning and a continuum of development.

I also think that there are lots of other things, as I have already implied, that TAFEs and universities ought to be doing together. The University of Newcastle is quite an old—for Australia—and prestigious institution, there is absolutely no doubt about that, but they are in the middle of joint activities with Hunter institute in providing English language programs for overseas students and they are in the middle of joint marketing activities with the Hunter Institute of Technology in providing a single Hunter-Central Coast face for marketing for international fee paying students, and so on. So I think that the future predicts a coming together rather than a staying separate.

What you have reported to me does not surprise me, particularly in the New South Wales setting, because what I am suggesting proposes a change from the status quo. Change, I would imagine, is not something that a TAFE sector that has gone through at least five changes that I can think of in the last decade is going to particularly welcome.

Mr PYNE—Do you think that the word ‘degree’ connotes anything other than simply getting some training in order to be able to have a better job?

Prof. Eastcott—I think it does, yes.

Mr PYNE—Therefore, if you are at university and you do a degree, over hundreds of years hasn’t a perception been built up that people who have a degree from a university have somehow had a wider section of learning about society, about why they are at university and about what they can do in terms of philosophy, et cetera, as opposed to people who have certificates, associate diplomas and diplomas and who have therefore done some vocational education and training?

Prof. Eastcott—In the general sense, yes. In fact, that is what I was saying earlier when I was talking about generic skills, critical analysis skills and liberal thinking—with a little l—and so on. That is what I was on about.

Mr PYNE—Yes, a good liberal degree.

Prof. Eastcott—Yes, a good liberal degree, and in essence I was making the point that I think that in many ways some of the liberal nature of that degree is lost by the necessity for universities to do certain things in which they do not really have the comparative advantage. In actual fact, TAFEs have the comparative advantage, and that is why I am suggesting that universities and TAFEs should get together to identify that to make sure it is best located where it can best be done.

Mr PYNE—Wouldn’t it be better for people to understand that just because your piece of paper is called an associate diploma or a diploma that in no way means that you have any less a qualification in terms of the job which that associate diploma or diploma is for than a person who has a degree in arts and who probably does not have the qualifications to do the job that you have the qualifications for?

Prof. Eastcott—Somebody must have told you which fuse to light, because I have just finished saying to our new group of students into the university part of Central Coast Campus that if there was one thing that I would like them to learn over the period of time at the university in university study it would be that they have as much to learn from those they regard as disadvantaged as they do from those they regard as advantaged. Indeed, as far as a university is concerned, I believe that their education really is all about that as much as it is about the content that comes within that—and you do not learn that essentially by learning basic skills.

Mr PYNE—I agree with you.

CHAIR—Professor, does the fact that you have an integrated campus diminish your capacity in your VET courses of responding quickly to the needs of industry? I am just being an agent provocateur, but it sounds like it is becoming a monolithic structure that might have a bit of difficulty in responding quickly to the needs of the workplace.

Prof. Eastcott—No. We are lucky in that we are not large in terms of universities and TAFE institutions. We do not see that at all. In fact, on the TAFE side, for example, we have a very close relationship in hospitality with the local clubs and hotels in terms of our design. But, equally so, with the university hospitality program, we already feed in with a graduate certificate, essentially, to the Crown Plaza at Terrigal, which is Holiday Inn. We are trying to develop a number of those programs and we are making sure that industry relationships are there. This is in part, also, an answer to the earlier question.

It shows up in other very interesting ways. For example, despite the concern that some people have that TAFE might denigrate the university operation, we have had a food technology operation in place at the Central Coast for three years. We already have 19 PhD or masters by research students in that program. I think—and do not hold me exactly to these numbers—that something like three are overseas students paying full fees; something like two are funded by government scholarship, and the remainder are funded by industry support, industry projects. The potential is there at the postgraduate research level to work on postgraduate research in association with industry at the university level.

The problem that you have to work with—and we have an advantage, I believe, at the Central Coast—is that you have to work with a frame of reference. You have to work with the frame of mind of the people in your organisation. It may well be that the major problem higher education has as a whole, in terms of its relationships with industry, is that it does not have enough people who have this perception of the importance of the relationship between what they do and the users of what they do. While there is an important role for fundamental research in universities, there is also an important role for applied research in universities. We have to get the balance of the two correct.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I was interested in what you have been saying about the way you have been able to cooperate on a regional basis. In the area that I come from in western Sydney, we have got a similar set-up there at Nirimba. You mentioned Ourimbah but that was not—

Prof. Eastcott—That is why we called ourselves Central Coast Campus: to get away from this Ourimbah-Nirimba problem.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Okay. We will have high schools, TAFEs and universities all on the one campus. To what extent are federal and state governments assisting in this regional cooperation? Obviously it is necessary because you can then respond to the

industry needs of your area and to the student needs. Is there sufficient assistance there? Could we, as a committee, make any recommendations that would make that role any easier for you—say, cooperation?

Prof. Eastcott—Without being specific, I suspect that the one recommendation that would help incredibly is the one recommendation none of us would find very easy to get through in our lifetimes. One of the biggest problems we have found in terms of our operation has been the relationship between state and federal government but, more importantly, the relationship between the bureaucracies at the state and federal levels. You are operating in a system which is partially funded by the New South Wales state government through the TAFE system—or at least the funds are filtered through the New South Wales state government to the system—and the rest of it, the university, is operated on a federal funding basis.

Without wishing to bore you too much, some of the problems we had come, for example, when we were building buildings which are joint usage buildings. Bureaucracies required us to identify which money paid for which building. We still go through this role. When people come into the space they ask, ‘Which is the TAFE building and which is the university?’ We say, ‘These are all Central Coast Campus buildings.’ In essence, there have been operational problems but, with persistence and the support of different individuals, we have been able to achieve that.

At our last graduation ceremony I was interested to find that we have some students now on that campus who came to the campus in adult and continuing education for short courses—two- or three-day type things—and they suddenly discovered that they were better educated than they believed they were because they had not had, for a variety of reasons, what is now regarded as an appropriate secondary education. So they enrolled in the TAFE programs, they completed the TAFE programs, and they have now graduated with their degree.

So they have been able, in an area where there was no provision of higher education locally, to open their eyes to the value of education and progress through the system as it is presently structured without moving from the area and without all the necessities of jumping from institution to institution across boundaries because the boundaries that are there are only lightly pencilled in.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Would you support that formal structure of moving from school to TAFE to university by, say, two by two?

Prof. Eastcott—One of the other things that we have found, and we talk about it quite regularly, is that the appropriate way to go through post-secondary education is to think in terms of multiple entry and exit points. We have tended to think in terms of operating our programs. There are a number of points at which you can enter and there are a number of points that you can exit.

Incidentally, in our particular programs, we have students who come in to university programs, who are qualified to come to university programs, but find they cannot hack it. What happens to a university student when they cannot hack it normally is that they get thrown on the scrap heap, and who knows where they go from there? They disappear out of the system. Often the reason they cannot hack it is because they have not had to think too hard through all of secondary school and, suddenly, they have a university lecturer telling them, 'We do not want to know what content you have got; we want to know what you think about,' and that is a real cultural change problem. But they still find the TAFE programs with maximum class sizes of 30 very comfortable places to be.

So we have students who cannot succeed in university not ending up on the educational scrap heap but going back and starting at a different level where the educational provision is more appropriate for what their needs are at that time.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Then coming back in later on.

Prof. Eastcott—Then coming back into the system later on. We have not been doing it for long enough now to have any hard data on it yet, but we suspect that it is being successful in saving a number of students who otherwise would have gone.

Mr MAREK—Just reading your submission and looking at this collaboration between sectors, and taking on board what you were saying before, it says here that the current split in functions between the two sectors is uncoordinated, wasteful and engenders mistrust between administrators, TAFE and students. What do you—

Prof. Eastcott—Let me just get the right one—

Mr MAREK—Things like mistrust between the administrators, TAFE and students.

Prof. Eastcott—Yes, absolutely no doubt about that.

Mr MAREK—Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Prof. Eastcott—Sure. I am very happy to elaborate on it. It relates in part to territoriality—

Mr MAREK—Between TAFE and university.

Prof. Eastcott—Between TAFE and university, for example—not within the integrated operation that we are talking about at the moment, but we have had that problem. Essentially it is between TAFE and universities, and it goes across the whole thing. I mean to say that we are going to come into a relationship with universities. They

have got only one thing in their minds—they want to put us down, they want to subjugate us, they want to make sure that they prevail. That is a statement that has been made to me quite regularly. Similarly, university staff are not all quite as little ‘I’ liberal thinkers as you might believe they should be after the nature of their education.

You will see the same sort of denigration of TAFE staff who do not really have our values—which, to an extent, is probably true. But denigrating them because of that rather than accepting them as people having a different set of values—which is why I made the comment about lighting the fuse earlier on—I think leads to the sorts of statements that are made about mistrust between staff and students.

Before we had our first joint graduation, we were quite disappointed that there were a number of students who did not want to be in a graduation where there were TAFE students graduating with diplomas. I have to admit that for me this is a problem because it is against my philosophy of egalitarianism in education.

I believe the lack of coordination is changing somewhat. Even credit transfer systems are pretty ad hoc sorts of things. If you want to try a test, pick an associate diploma offered by New South Wales and then randomly pick a university, ring up a department and ask what credit you will get for that diploma. Some will be able to give you a good, powerful answer; some of them will give you the answer, ‘Well, it will all depend.’ Then you know you are into a negotiation process of some interest, but that has been the nature of things. This paper is suggesting it does not have to be the nature of things. Of course, the wastefulness goes back to our proposal that maybe there are things that are being done twice in organisations, particularly at the basic skills level.

CHAIR—So are you saying that that should be formalised, so you know with confidence that if you do an associate diploma at a particular institution, then you will get one year’s credit or whatever?

Prof. Eastcott—Yes. Not necessarily Australia-wide, but at least with certain universities.

CHAIR—I am happy with that. Thank you very much, Professor Eastcott.

Prof. Eastcott—Thank you very much for inviting me.

CHAIR—As you say, what you are doing is unique in many ways. I think RMIT comes close, but they have still got a lot of administrative duplication within the one institution. But they are headed in your direction.

Mr PYNE—It is now the largest employer in Newcastle. The University of Newcastle is now the largest employer.

Prof. Eastcott—Yes, I believe that is the case with the demise of BHP. The university and the area health service rank very closely. Can I also just comment very quickly that the Northern Territory university, you will find, is an integrated model, I am sure.

CHAIR—We have not spoken to them, nor have we heard from them.

Prof. Eastcott—They are integrated perhaps for the same reason that the central coast is. Both have populations of 270,000 in an era where there is not a great deal of extra money coming for post-secondary education, so that becomes that sort of solution.

[11.45 a.m.]

FLOWERS, Ms Susan Adele, 6 Erola Circle, Lindfield, New South Wales 2070

CHAIR—Welcome. Could you give us a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission? Then we will a chat about it.

Ms Flowers—I am a teacher at Randwick TAFE, which is one of the campuses of the Sydney Institute of Technology.

CHAIR—Would you like to speak to your submission?

Ms Flowers—Yes. I am basically here to represent the interests of the students, firstly, and the staff, secondly, of Randwick. We have been concerned about the changes in education and, in fact, we would like to see a continuance of what we are offering at Randwick for the future.

What we are offering at the moment are HSC type of courses. We are offering the Certificate of General Education, which is the same level as year 10. We are offering tertiary preparation certificates, as well as ESL—English as a second language—and languages, et cetera. I am actually in the Humanities section.

I put in a submission because I am particularly concerned that we maintain the courses as they stand for our students. Many of our students are disadvantaged, and I feel that they deserve a second chance. Many of the students have either been ejected from school situations or have not fitted in to school situations, or else they are mature age students. Many—most of them, actually—are working to support themselves in part-time employment, and therefore a TAFE situation suits them ideally. I believe that our students deserve a second chance and, for most of them, this is their last chance at getting an education and, for mature age students changing their career, at gaining a Higher School Certificate.

In the past, the Leaving Certificate and the School Certificate were the bottom line for obtaining employment. These days, that has changed. Now the bottom line for all employment opportunities is the Higher School Certificate. If we lock out these disadvantaged students from their last chance at turning their lives around, I feel that the whole community will suffer as a result. Many of these students are on the edges of society. We do have homeless students attending. Therefore, it is often their last chance at education that can turn their whole life around.

I feel that at Randwick we are doing a very good job. I myself have had two students in the top 10 of the state. My subject is Geography; and, in my staff room, there has been a top 10 in the state in Biology and Chemistry, as well.

CHAIR—This is for the HSC?

Ms Flowers—The HSC in particular. We feel that, despite our disadvantaged students, we do have students who do succeed and who have done very well. Therefore, we feel that what we are doing is very valuable and we would like to see it continue.

CHAIR—That is fantastic. It is interesting that you work in the Humanities. You have told us that you teach Geography.

Ms Flowers—Yes, I am a geographer.

CHAIR—It is interesting. We have been all over the country talking to TAFEs and so on. One of the concerns, I suppose, that the committee has been looking at as a broader philosophical issue in society is whether the increasing emphasis on vocational education and training is happening at the expense of learning and knowledge in the Humanities, Fine Arts, languages and so on. As universities seem increasingly to be moving to offer VET of one form or another, that perhaps is distracting them from those other issues.

Ms Flowers—From other aspects, the humanities.

CHAIR—The way government has financed post-secondary education is probably contributing to it. I am glad you came along, because we spoke to the National Union of Students and their representatives, who were very thoughtful and articulate people, but I could not help feeling that they were representing a very much polarised end of the student spectrum. We have not had the opportunity to actually hear from the typical student. I can understand this: when I was a student, the last thing I wanted to do was to front up to something like this.

There are a number of issues—and I mention them in no particular order—but one of them is students paying fees. Areas such as Gippsland, Bankstown and Granville are obviously drawing students from a very low-income, disadvantaged cohort. Then they are required to offer loans to students to help them pay their administrative fees—which, by our standards, are probably modest—but it is a lot of money if you are really battling. In Gippsland, for example, we were told that they have to offer half a million dollars in concessions per year, out of a \$20 million operating budget. So that compounds the problems that the institute has in offering VET to an already disadvantaged group. There are campuses in other areas, without naming them, which have students who can afford not only to pay those fees but also probably, in some cases, to pay more. How does the fee issue affect your institute campus in terms of concessions, disadvantage and so on? And is there a way it should be dealt with?

Ms Flowers—I actually put out a survey. I have got a copy of it for each of you. I got 101 replies to my little survey. I made it up myself from some of the issues that I had actually brought up. Then I sat down yesterday and collated some of the information.

Talking about fees, one of the questions that I put in was, 'If your present course cost double the amount, would you still have enrolled at Randwick?' I found the answer was very interesting, in that 71 out of the 101 said yes. At the moment they are probably paying between \$120 and \$150. So 71 out of 100 said that, if it were doubled, they would actually be prepared to pay; 28 said no, and two were unsure.

However, if you have a look at question 11 on the other side, 'Are you working and studying at the same time, and in what type of employment?' 32 said that they had a part-time job, two said that they had a full-time job, and five had family responsibilities. A large number of them are actually supporting themselves with a part-time job, and they can only do that because their TAFE program includes both evening and daytime programs. Many of them are in fact supporting themselves at the same time. It surprised me that 71 said that they could pay double. Perhaps my question could have included a range of amounts. Anyway, that was the question that I gave them.

CHAIR—With the campus that you work at, I gather from what you have said that it is predominantly offering second chance opportunities.

Ms Flowers—Yes, it does. It does offer trade courses as well.

CHAIR—It seems a little different from most of the others that we have heard from. We have met a couple that are offering HSC type courses and some more socially orientated programs, but most of them are basically focused on the marketplace employers and are offering specific training programs. Is Randwick different in that sense?

Ms Flowers—No, not necessarily. Both Ultimo and North Sydney also offer HSC courses. No, we are not necessarily different. It is perhaps that Randwick has a higher percentage of this type of student.

CHAIR—There is a whole issue about schools and vocational education and training. We had the association of TAFE managers here earlier today. In a passing comment, they more or less said that schools should not be offering VET but that TAFEs ought to be offering it. I have some sympathy for that view but, in order to do that, schools would have to have the resources to purchase TAFE services for their students. The sorts of students that you are dealing with are, presumably, frequently ones that went out at Year 10.

Ms Flowers—Yes; especially prior to Year 10. We are actually getting a younger group all the time of students that have not fitted in to the normal school situation. They come in to our CGE, which is the Certificate of General Education, the equivalent of Year 10 level. They come in and, from there, they proceed to what we call stage 1, which is the equivalent of Year 11 and then go on to do the HSC. From that point of view, we are offering a program similar to the schools' one, in terms of doing our Certificate of General Education and then going on to do the HSC.

CHAIR—Is it desirable for schools to be offering VET themselves? Would that be more likely to retain some of those students in the secondary education sector?

Ms Flowers—They may retain some of these students, if some of the more practical courses are offered. A lot of our students are ones who do not fit in to the normal school situation. That is why we are ending up with some quite young ones coming through.

CHAIR—How young are we talking about?

Ms Flowers—They are 14 or 15.

CHAIR—Do they cope all right in an institute setting?

Ms Flowers—It is only this year that we have had the very young ones come in, so I do not know. It has its positives and its negatives. Actually, in the CGE level, we have had parents begging us to take their children in because they just do not fit in to any other situation. The CGE coordinator was telling me that she had at least two parents come to her just recently, begging to have their children put into TAFE. These were very young children, 14 and 15.

Mr MOSSFIELD—It would seem as though the survey is more directed at school children rather than mature age students. I like the mature age students; I feel mature myself!

Ms Flowers—Yes, I know.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I am of quite mature age myself; I am over 18! You refer to the fact that you are catering for unemployed who are trying to upgrade their education. Could you give me some background on the numbers of people in that area? Is it an environment where I could go in and be comfortable? Or would I be surrounded by people that are not of mature age?

CHAIR—You have a good point there. What if you are 35 or 40 and you want to get some training?

Ms Flowers—We do have a number. They are not actually in my classes at the moment, but I have had mature age students. The majority of them fall, I would say, into the 17 to 18 age group. The other thing is that most of them have fitted in very well. They have almost taken on the role of being the father and the mother figure. They have actually fitted in surprisingly well amongst these much younger students. Many of these students are now, for one reason or another, very motivated and they want to do well. You do get a percentage who are not so motivated and are quite immature, but there are lot of them that are very motivated and very keen to perform. It is not as though they are in

there disrupting the classes or anything like that. I would say that, in most cases, it has been like a mother/father relationship. The older ones have fitted in, in that sort of a role.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I am interested to know what demand there is, amongst people that may have been retrenched, to go back into education and upgrade their skills.

Ms Flowers—I would say it is a fairly small percentage. I actually do not have figures, being a classroom teacher. You would have to ask my Head of Studies or the Senior Teacher. I do not have access to those types of figures.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Is there any relationship with universities at all? Do any of these people progress through?

Ms Flowers—Yes. Actually, quite a few progress to university. A couple of my geographers from last year have because they did two-unit and three-unit geography and they did very, very well. They actually got into Sydney University. In fact, in my survey, 35 out of the lot wanted to go on to further education, and the majority wanted to go on to university. I would say that is the aim of the majority of them. We do have quite a lot of students that do. Many go into the Institute of Technology. They want to get into journalism or specific courses—not trade. Many of them want to go into accounting and business management and things like that, and yes, they do get there. From the students that I have had contact with, yes.

Mr MAREK—Do you hear of many students or people complaining that, say, they are going from TAFE to university or whatever, and that they will not have credits accepted for the work they have done? Have you ever heard of that?

Ms Flowers—No, I have not, because usually they get into the university primarily on their HSC results. With the tertiary preparation certificate, I know that a large percentage of them last year actually were accepted to university. In fact, we were surprised in some cases that they had been accepted for university because we had not even expected that they would have had a chance, but many of them actually got in, from both the TPC and the HSC.

I had a student who came back to see me yesterday who had left about two years ago, and she is down at Wollongong University. I know students of mine have gone to New England University. So, many of them actually do not end up in Sydney; they end up at other universities doing different courses.

CHAIR—How many of the students would be homeless, or an extremely marginalised group of kids?

Ms Flowers—Out of this survey that I did, I only had one that admitted that they were homeless, and this was 101 students.

CHAIR—How many students at the campus, roughly?

Ms Flowers—I can only talk for my section. We have roughly about 220 students.

CHAIR—That is in the humanities section?

Ms Flowers—The humanities HSC section.

CHAIR—I presume you are aware that there is obviously more than one in your section that might be homeless, but it is just not something they would be open about.

Ms Flowers—Often how you tell is that some of them smell but, besides that, you usually come across them in the bathrooms when they are using the bathroom to wash themselves and the rest, and they are using the soap from the container. That is usually how you find out.

CHAIR—How do those kids get on?

Ms Flowers—Some not so well. Sometimes they drop out—they start and they drop out. Some do continue on.

CHAIR—Do you have any relationship with the schools in terms of promoting what the institute is offering to secondary students?

Ms Flowers—There has been some promotion but on a very small scale, and really it has been up to individual teachers. With career education for women, the CEW course, I know that Cathy has actually gone to the local schools and put notices there advertising the career education for women course, which is another very, very valuable course for women who have never had any education. It gets them started. They come in to the TAFE, they have self-esteem building exercises, and they teach them about making up a resume and going for interviews and the rest, and it gets them started. Really, that has been the only way that I know of in terms of promoting TAFE in that role.

There have been ads in the major papers, but nothing that I have seen in the local papers. In fact, that is one of my disappointments about TAFE, that they have not really promoted us enough. I felt that we should have had, last year, for example, representation in the local shopping centre. We could have had a booth there for people to come and get information on our different courses. In my opinion, every week there should be an article on Randwick TAFE in the local paper highlighting students doing different activities. I believe TAFE has not promoted itself enough in the local communities. I believe that promotion and marketing are a large reason why we are not drawing the number of students that we should be drawing.

CHAIR—That is a decision for the institute itself, obviously.

Ms Flowers—These are institute matters. They are not from our level. These are much broader issues.

CHAIR—This is just a personal view. I am quite attracted to the idea of TAFEs, apart from their specific VET activities, offering second-chance opportunities, not just in VET but also in opening the key to the university sector through HSC. But, in some states, if you had a 15-year-old who had a drug problem at school or was expelled from three different schools and all that sort of stuff, you could not get them in. TAFEs would not be allowed to take them on, and certainly they do not offer those sorts of courses. You obviously feel that it is something that they should be offering—perhaps not every TAFE, but some.

Ms Flowers—I believe that it is something that they should be offering. That is where that Certificate of General Education course is so important. These are the ones who are really failing in the school system or have been thrown out of the school system, and they really are quite difficult characters. When you take a CGE class, it is really hard work. But, on the other hand, to see some of those students turn around from rabbiting around on the streets and suddenly deciding, ‘Yes, I’ll do the HSC; I’ll go on’, is really quite a change, and I think it is very valuable.

CHAIR—Perhaps you might provide us with a formal prospectus of the institute. Would that be all right?

Ms Flowers—Yes, that is fine. Yes, I can do that in writing later on for you.

CHAIR—If you would not mind.

Ms Flowers—Yes.

CHAIR—It is a pity the institute itself did not take the initiative to provide us with all this instead of you as a highly motivated and concerned member of the community.

Ms Flowers—Yes, I know. In fact, when I went to see my senior head teacher to say that I had been asked to come in here, he did not even know that the committee existed.

CHAIR—We wrote to, what, 300? We wrote directly to every TAFE and institute.

Ms Flowers—It has not filtered down to—

CHAIR—We wrote directly to every individual we thought might have an interest in this. We advertised, of course.

Ms Flowers—That is how I picked it up. I saw it in the *North Shore Times*. That is exactly how I picked it up, and so I thought, ‘I will write a letter and put the view from the grassroots’, type of thing. But, as I said, my senior head teacher had never heard of it and he happened to be the federation representative.

CHAIR—It just seems that you are filling a gap in the market.

Ms Flowers—Yes, we are.

CHAIR—Particularly with the new requirements on the common youth allowance, you could expect that the demand is likely to increase somewhat.

Ms Flowers—I think it will considerably increase, especially drawing students into the Certificate of General Education, that lower level. Yes, I think it will.

CHAIR—Are there other institutes of which you are aware offering similar programs?

Ms Flowers—Other institutes?

CHAIR—Or TAFEs—Certificate of General Education, and taking on these kinds of kids.

Ms Flowers—Yes, taking on this younger group. I know Bankstown TAFE did because I used to work there. I was a part-time teacher before I was full-time. I used to work at Bankstown. Ultimo does; Randwick does; probably St George. Most of the TAFEs do offer a CGE—not all of them, but most of them.

CHAIR—What would you like us to recommend to the government that would assist your students, because you said you came here to represent your students. What should we be recommending to the Commonwealth?

Ms Flowers—A continuation of courses like the CGE and HSC, so that they can continue to get that last chance.

CHAIR—That should be offered throughout the country, obviously, not just—

Ms Flowers—Throughout the country, yes, definitely.

CHAIR—Educational institutions, whether they are universities or TAFEs, are clearly looking increasingly for ways of increasing their revenue or certainly of maintaining it. What financial incentives are there at the moment for institutes to offer the kind of programs you are? I suspect there are not many. What incentives could be offered? If you are taking in students who have been excluded from secondary schools, for

whatever reason, should there be an additional payment that comes from Commonwealth and/or state governments to provide for the education that you offer those kids?

Ms Flowers—Yes, because we are taking on partially the role of some of the schools. I cannot see our courses being financially viable in terms of bringing in large amounts of money. I can see, after I had seen this, that perhaps fees could rise a bit to help fund the TAFE, but I still feel it is going to have to be basically funded by government.

CHAIR—Some institutes, in fact quite a few, offer loans to their students to help them pay—

Ms Flowers—I think that is quite a good option where students have perhaps had their second chance—maybe third time around type of students. Every student should get that second or last chance. But if they are going to muck around in their first two years, or three years if they start at CGE, then perhaps second time around they could be offered a loan that they would have to pay back. That would give the students that are there more incentive to stay on, because they would know that if they do not do their best this time, they will not get another chance.

Mr MAREK—Did you mention the HECS regime?

CHAIR—No, we are talking about the loans within the institution to the students.

Ms Flowers—As long as at the first instance they are funded by the government that is fine. But I think students also need an incentive, because there does seem to be a drop-out rate amongst them and there is a bit of a perception amongst some of them that they can say, ‘I will fool around this year and next year I will work my insides out.’ But they need to know that this is their second chance and their last chance and that, after this, they will have to fund their education themselves.

CHAIR—The fees in TAFEs are obviously quite modest in comparison to university fees, but \$100 is still a lot of money to a low-income person.

Ms Flowers—Yes.

CHAIR—Is there a place for some sort of deferred payment scheme? West, in his discussion paper preceding his final report, recommended that the whole post-secondary education sector have a HECS style of program. Some people have come along and said, ‘Yes, we think that ought to happen.’ Others have been quite opposed to it—education unions, students, for example.

I am not suggesting for one minute that we would be recommending this. There are number of issues. One is that employers quite often pay the fees anyway, so employers

might then take advantage of something. The second thing is that the students have to pay up-front fees in TAFEs, which they do not have to do in universities, and perhaps a deferred payment scheme offers them an alternative. If I was going into the education sector today and I had the choice of paying now or paying later, I think I would rather pay later. But how do you think the students would feel about that? At the moment they have got to pay up front or borrow the money from the institution. Would offering them a third option of an income dependent—

Ms Flowers—I think it would be quite a good option for some of them to pay later. I would not like to see us go entirely down the way of the American system, where for all further education they have to take out massive loans, because I find that is crippling on them later on and it also restricts their career path to a certain extent. So I would not like to see us go down that road, but I can see that other options of payment for some students would be very valuable.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I have some difficulty with the concept there of people who would be going to university with the expectation that they would finish up in reasonably well paid jobs, as distinct from these people, who are not actually even at TAFE level at this stage, being burdened with a payment that has to be paid. I am assuming they would not move into highly paid jobs initially.

Ms Flowers—You might be waiting for the money for a long time.

CHAIR—That is right.

Ms Flowers—Many of them still may come out of TAFE and be unemployed again.

CHAIR—Nationally, the employment rate is about 70 per cent, but some have close to 100 per cent and some have as low as 30 per cent. But yes, Frank is right. If you had a HECS style program where they have to reach a minimum level of income before they start repaying it—

Ms Flowers—Yes, that would be fairer.

CHAIR—I try to put myself in the shoes of the student, and I think to myself, ‘I’ve got no money at all—

Ms Flowers—‘But I want further education; I want to train. How do I do it?’

CHAIR—And I front up to TAFE and I am told that the fee is \$500 for the year, which is a huge amount of money. I am then forced, effectively, either to borrow, scrimp or whatever from everybody or to borrow money from institutions.

Ms Flowers—This is why many of the students have part-time jobs.

CHAIR—Alternatively, you could pay that \$500 a year when you end up with a job and when your income reaches a certain level.

Ms Flowers—Yes, that would be reasonable.

CHAIR—Compared with the university sums, they are much smaller sums of money obviously.

Ms Flowers—These are much smaller. You are looking at hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.

CHAIR—But we would not want to be in a situation where, if there were a deferred payment scheme, we had employers who could afford to pay the \$1,000 a year or whatever transferring their current liability on to a student.

Ms Flowers—That would not be fair either.

CHAIR—I suspect some of them would want to do it, though.

Ms Flowers—Yes.

CHAIR—Is there anything else you want to mention?

Mr MOSSFELD—Did we cover the employment outcomes, any record of people going directly into employment from your institute?

Ms Flowers—I would say that most have gone into some form of training or education.

CHAIR—You are really providing a bridging program, aren't you?

Ms Flowers—We are at that in between stage. A lot go on to university and a lot go into other training institutes. I cannot really help you very much with that. I would need overall global figures for the institute, and I do not have those.

CHAIR—Do you think any of the students that you teach would be prepared to provide us with some of their views?

Ms Flowers—Yes, I am sure some of them would.

CHAIR—Would you ask them if they are interested?

Ms Flowers—Yes. They were all happy enough to fill out my little survey.

CHAIR—Yes, that was very good. And the published results?

Ms Flowers—Not exactly published.

CHAIR—Can we get the results?

Ms Flowers—Yes, you can. I will write them out for you.

CHAIR—It is not embarrassing to you?

Ms Flowers—No, not at all. Actually, I have them all there.

CHAIR—I do not want to embarrass you. You start to think like a politician after a while in this job, and in question 2 you asked:

If your present course was to cost double the amount would you still have enrolled at Randwick?

I can imagine the people running the institute getting hold of that and saying, ‘She is calling for a doubling of the cost.’

Ms Flowers—I know, but I am not. It was just one of those things to gauge where the students were exactly at. That is all it was; it was not a formal thing at all.

CHAIR—If the institute increases its fees, you will take the blame for it.

Ms Flowers—I know.

CHAIR—They will say, ‘Blame Ms Flowers.’ It would be great if we could have the results, and if you could just say to the students that if any of them would like to put in a view, it would be very well received. They just have to write us a note. It does not matter whether it is three lines or 30 pages. Every now and again somebody says something to you which changes the way you think.

Ms Flowers—Yes.

CHAIR—Thank you for doing that. If you think of anything else you want to say, just send it on.

Proceedings suspended from 12.20 p.m. to 1.32 p.m.

ANDREWS, Mrs Jan, Director, Education Planning and Development, New South Wales College of Nursing, Locked Back 5, Glebe, New South Wales

McMILLAN, Professor Margaret Anna, Chairperson, Australian Council of Deans of Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, New South Wales

CHAIR—Welcome. Would you like to speak to your submission?

Mrs Andrews—Thank you. Perhaps I will speak first. I am speaking on behalf of a professional organisation that educates some 6,000 nurses a year, both first and second level nurses, and other health professionals across Australia. We have had a very active interest in the progression of education across the whole education sector, both vocational and tertiary education over the years. Essentially, our submission supports the very substantial work that TAFE has done over many years, particularly in competency based curricula development and recognition of prior learning principles as a result of the training agenda.

We feel that it has provided a benchmark for the proliferation of programs that have come on line as a result of entry into the workplace of the many private educational providers following the deregulation and competition that has occurred more recently. However we do feel that TAFE has to have a very substantial role in progressing articulation and credit transfer if we are really going to promote the career pathing and flexible work practices which are very essential in the current environment.

However we see one of the biggest problems at the moment with the TAFE sector, particularly in relation to the community services and health work force, is that there is no reciprocity between the states in terms of preparation of our second level workers, in particular. Our enrolled nurses are educated in TAFE across Australia at different levels, and quite often their education is very individually focused, according to local demands from industry. So it has been somewhat ad hoc in its development. This has made it very difficult for us to look at the holistic preparation of a second level worker and the ability to articulate and provide credit transfer to the registered nurse program which, of course, now occurs in the university sector right across Australia.

We also have some issue with the preparation of the many other workers in community services and health. This is a huge industry. Many of these workers are trained at the vocational education level, and many of them do not have any formal education training across welfare and community services.

There has been an enormous growth in all sorts of programs at all sorts of levels to meet individual needs of customers. While we acknowledge that the new recognition

framework certainly supports the notion of customisation of courses, we feel that this has been somewhat economically driven and, as a result, programs are evolving to meet very local workplace needs and are not in the best interests of their workers themselves in terms of their own career pathing. It makes it somewhat difficult to really progress the principles of the new framework in terms of articulation and credit transfer, so that is becoming quite a big issue. We feel very strongly that there needs to be collaboration in a broader sense with industry, within the framework and with the particular professional groups, regardless of whether it is welfare, or social work, or nursing, or whatever group it is if we are really going to achieve that credit transfer and articulation.

We feel very strongly that there should be very close collaboration between the TAFE sector and the universities in terms of articulation between our two levels of practitioner. That could be said for many of the other professional groups who are educated both at TAFE and at university level.

We also feel very strongly that TAFE needs to be adequately funded because their role as a benchmarker across the country and their provision of equity and access to vocational education are very significant. That is certainly the case in terms of the enrolled nurse education. That is why we chose to put the enrolled nurse education in TAFE because it did give access for country participants, as well as city participants. TAFE's role in terms of equity and access and benchmarking is very important, so we feel very strongly that it should be adequately funded to be able to achieve those roles.

CHAIR—Anything else to add?

Prof. McMillan—Our views are consistent with those that Jan has expressed on behalf of the profession. Our interest goes just a little further. At the time of the review of nurse education in 1994 there were some 32,000 nurses at different levels who were undertaking some form of university education. Ultimately, of course, they are responsible for some of the health personnel that are trained in TAFE. So we have an interest in articulating with that group. They are registered nurses, and RNs and ENs are articulating, not only in relation to their practice, but also in relation to their education. We would like to see the same reciprocity and mutual recognition across Australia—that is currently problematic—for enrolled nurses moving between the states.

Probably the area where we differ slightly from Jan is in our commitment to the enrolled nurse preparation being in TAFE and the registered nurse education staying in the university sector. We would want to see a greater level of collaboration in any course development initiatives and, perhaps, enhancement of the potential for enrolled nurses to move into the higher education sector and get credit for their prior learning. So much of what we are saying is similar.

CHAIR—What is it about registered nurse training that you feel makes it inappropriate to be provided in the TAFE sector, as distinct from the university sector?

Prof. McMillan—In contemporary health practices, the things that are becoming more complex relate to technology in particular, but also to a higher order level of critical thinking and problem solving. Both Jan and I have worked on similar projects in relation to analyses of the contemporary scope of nursing practice, not only what nurses do but how they do it, and different expressions related to context specific activities, things being different, for example, in the rural sector, but also really quite complex health care practices now developing within the metropolitan areas. We have evidence that there are those higher order abilities of critical thinking, assessment and decision making, but also the capacity to deal with the technology that is markedly different between those two levels of carer.

There is evidence of a quite dramatic shift towards more resource management roles, but also dealing with the enormity in relation to technology these days, the interventions, is quite marked. There is a quite clear differentiation between the two levels of carer now. We think that more appropriately occurs in the higher education sector for registered nurses.

CHAIR—Significant other parts of the economy that are involved in the management of complex technological issues—multimedia is one, I guess—seem to have an alternative view that they want everything in TAFEs because they are more focused on people performing tasks in the marketplace.

Mrs Andrews—I think that is more to do with the management of the complex technology. When we are talking about complex technology, a very big and significant difference for us is that there is a human being and a lot of variables involved in managing any particular context of practice or clinical situation. This is our issue in terms of levelling, in terms of the mapping of all the competencies across the whole industry that is happening now in community services and health. We are finding that the same is happening in child care, in welfare, in all of the sectors in the community services and health industry. Our concern in terms of the level of practitioner is directly related to the dependency of the client and the variables that result as a result of interacting with clients.

Our industry is very technology driven, and there is a role for a person to manage and maintain technology in the operating theatre for example. Someone else is managing the client situation. The technologist is just managing the complex technology, so they could be educated in a very narrow, prescriptive field. That is the difference. Also, as registered nurses, we are managing other people and an increasing variety of health care workers, particularly in mental health and community services with the de-institutionalisation, the rapid discharge, of patients from hospitals. So it is about supervision and delegation of roles and other functions to other health care workers and it requires a much higher order of skills.

Prof. McMillan—It is about dealing with multiple stimuli. It is about technology, and more sophisticated technology, but it is not just about dealing with the technology.

We have evidence now that it is this need to deal with the multiple stimuli that gives the greater complexity in responsibilities to the registered nurse.

CHAIR—Do you have any thoughts about TAFEs providing re-entry training for nurses who have been out of the work force and want to go back into it?

Prof. McMillan—That can be dealt with by multiple providers, the College of Nursing being one. I do not know that TAFE is the appropriate provider there, though there is nothing to suggest that that could not happen, in concert perhaps with the College of Nursing or with the university. There is nothing to suggest that the two cannot do it together.

Mrs Andrews—New South Wales TAFE and the College of Nursing are doing a joint exercise at the moment in the re-entry of enrolled nurses. We are doing this in a two-pronged approach. One is to upgrade the skills of these people and to allow them to articulate to the level 4 certificate, which the enrolled nurse who was not educated in TAFE could not do. So we are already in a project in New South Wales. But this is our issue—different things are happening in different states.

I do not believe, professionally, that the registered nurse returning to the work force should be reprepared by anyone other than the professional bodies, either universities or the professional bodies who have done this. Traditionally, the New South Wales College of Nursing has run most of the refresher programs in New South Wales ever since we had DEET funding way back in 1985 when we transferred nurse education. We have literally put thousands and thousands of nurses back into the work force, and we do that every year.

CHAIR—Registered nurses?

Mrs Andrews—Yes. We also run enrolled nurse refresher programs because we also run continuing professional education for enrolled nurses. But TAFE also runs enrolled nurse refresher programs. That is quite appropriate because they educate enrolled nurses in New South Wales.

Prof. McMillan—There is nothing to suggest that a university could not do that with a hospital or with any health care facility.

Mrs Andrews—That is right, and that happens now. I believe firmly that people who provide the initial education for that practitioner should be the people who are involved in the re-entry programs.

CHAIR—What TER do you require to get into a nursing degree these days?

Prof. McMillan—I can only give you the example of my context. We have an

average of 66 and it ranges from 53 to 99. We believe that we need somebody with a reasonable TER because what nurses do requires that level of critical thinking.

CHAIR—Are all of the places being filled?

Prof. McMillan—Our experience is a good one. I think that is different, according to the context, because we probably have not taken into account the changing demographics in different areas. I am most familiar with the Central Coast where there is a growing population of young people, but in some areas there are diminishing numbers of youngsters now. We could probably do some more work in relation to work force planning.

CHAIR—You are the Chairperson of the Australian Council of Deans of Nursing.

Prof. McMillan—Yes.

CHAIR—Can you tell me how many unfilled undergraduate places you have in nursing in Australia at the moment?

Prof. McMillan—I can tell you that people say they have filled their places. Some would regard their numbers as soft. That means that they may have gone to a third round.

CHAIR—I'll put it another way: is nursing undersubscribed?

Prof. McMillan—No. Nursing is facing a potential shortfall in terms of the numbers that they need in the work force, but that relates more to the numbers of people who work on a casual basis. Fifty-three per cent of the nursing work force is casualised. I do not think that our work force retention rates reflect the demand at particular ages and stages, especially of women's careers. The profiles in universities have changed. That is, they have diminished the numbers in particular courses. There are fewer places in universities now and I think HECS has impacted on the numbers of people who choose nursing.

CHAIR—Does that mean that all of the undergraduate places in Australian universities for nursing are filled?

Prof. McMillan—I believe so. That may change at the census date. I would take great care—

CHAIR—Thank you.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Your submission states that a professional body should be responsible for licensing and issuing of credentials at all levels of nursing operation. What are the potential advantages of this arrangement?

Mrs Andrews—We are a regulated work force and we are essentially looking at protection of the public. That is essentially the bottom line in terms of safe practice. If we develop our competency standards, which our profession has, at both entry and advanced level, and we are benchmarking practice against that, then we feel that we should have ownership of the regulation of that profession in terms of performance.

Prof. McMillan—Just to clarify that, the regulatory boards actually have the responsibility for ensuring competence and safety in practice. The professional bodies assume a level of responsibility for ongoing education, particularly within the specialisations. So they develop, along with the regulatory bodies, the standards for practice. They say then that they will credential. I do not know that that is any different from other groups.

Mrs Andrews—Mr Mossfield, when you said ‘credential’, I was thinking regulation, but you are talking about the term ‘credential’.

Mr MOSSFIELD—The credential of the nurses, yes. Do you find that there is good cooperation between TAFEs and universities relating to how you see nurses being educated?

Prof. McMillan—We certainly have a reasonable level of interaction between the two groups. We are well known to each other. We think that there could be a greater emphasis in relation to course development in terms of sitting on advisory committees and so on. I would not say that the relationship is an unhealthy one. It might be a little bit more separatist than is desirable.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Is there any sort of move by either TAFE or universities into the role of each other, like—

Prof. McMillan—There are examples.

Mr MOSSFIELD—a TAFE wanting to move into the registered nurse area or universities wanting to take over some of the role of enrolled nurses?

Prof. McMillan—No.

Mr MOSSFIELD—So it is recognised that each group has a particular role to play in the industry.

Prof. McMillan—Yes. Ten per cent of the student nurse population has had prior experience and maybe the qualification of EN.

Mrs Andrews—That is enrolled nurse.

Prof. McMillan—Of necessity, we watch very closely what goes into the TAFE EN courses. Not very many places actually give credit for that qualification. They are allowed entry on the basis of that but, because we have only got a three-year program, you can appreciate that there is quite an amount to do in a three-year program. I think we could go some way towards exploring the potential for some credit transfer.

Mr MOSSFIELD—What about private providers outside of the universities and TAFEs? Is that within the industry?

Prof. McMillan—With regard to co-location of public and private providers for health care services, I would think that that is going to become a feature, particularly in relation to the development of graduate specialist education.

Mrs Andrews—Under the new recognition framework where all trainers will be accredited training providers, then that will happen. Particularly in Community Services and Health, we are working now at mapping all the competency standards across the whole industry. We are going to see a lot of provision of programs within that training package for Community Services and Health provided by all sorts of people.

Certainly at the postgraduate level, our college has been working for many years. We offer 28 specialty graduate certificate programs and we have worked very hard to ensure that they are shaped in a way that articulates with the university program, so they are half of a graduate diploma. They are set up and accredited professionally by the profession. We work individually with the universities to attain that credit transfer. So we are not unlike the college of law, the college of accountants, or any of the other professional bodies, in providing ongoing professional education to our particular cohort of practitioners, but with a view to them being able to articulate back into the university sector for formal award courses if they so desire. That is not unlike any of the other professions at that level.

Prof. McMillan—There is an unwillingness on the part of a majority of nurses to pay beyond a certain level for their continuing and further education. The college and the Department of Health work very well together—and I can only speak for New South Wales—in providing courses that nurses see are not only valuable but that have fees that are set within a reasonable limit. We are finding in universities that there is a reluctance to pay at the level of cost neutrality. We have to get creative about how we work with the health sector—and you know that it is stretched for dollars too—and with the colleges of nursing to provide that sort of service at a reasonable price.

Mrs Andrews—I believe that TAFE has, as I said in my initial statement, a very major role in providing a benchmark for the proliferation of private providers that are going to come into the market, because it does have very good systems in place. It has a long history in the development of competency based education and training. If we do not have a fairly significant major provider across the country providing that benchmark, we

will have some difficulty in achieving that consistency and mutual recognition principles across the country with the private providers. There is some anxiety about the proliferation of private providers in this environment, understandably.

Prof. McMillan—I would like to make one point that might explain my hesitancy at answering your question about filling places. I watched those figures very carefully, but in my own institution, for example, I watched the profile in a way that provides a greater level of analysis of part- and full-time enrolments. Somebody who, for all intents and purposes, at the beginning of the year appears to be a whole body can translate into a part-time enrolment by 31 March and that actually colours things. We may have bodies progressing through but, when we do the sums in relation to payment from DEETYA, we get a very different profile. So we have to take great care about the level of analysis and we have to benchmark those at the same time, annually, because we can get misrepresentation in regard to figures.

Mr PYNE—Is specialisation in nursing now done in hospitals or in the universities—for example, midwifery and so on?

Prof. McMillan—In regard to midwifery, for example, I have 64 midwives progressing through, in a collaborative venture with the local area health services. That is an enormously successful venture. I have managed to keep mine in the profile for DEETYA sponsored places, but other universities and health sectors have not been as successful at doing that, and that is dependent on the university's decision. I believe that midwifery should stay there as a graduate activity. In fact, we visit with the ministers for health and education twice a year when we meet in Canberra. They do not disagree with that but they say that they will not change policy to necessarily accommodate that. I think that people at that level really do need to look at that policy.

Specialisations other than midwifery are managed in a whole variety of ways. The College of Nursing is probably, in New South Wales and across Australia, the major provider for graduate certificate fee-paying initiatives in regard to a range of courses. How many courses would be involved?

Mrs Andrews—There are 28 specialty programs. We put over 6,000 people through postgraduate professional education per year. Not all of those do formal courses, but some 2,000 would. We also work collaboratively with area health services right across Australia. We are running critical care courses in Darwin and Alice Springs and oncology courses in Townsville, and peri-operative courses in Toowoomba. So we are working collaboratively with health services right across the country, but in a model that will allow articulation of those programs. At the moment, we are finding that about 10 per cent of graduate nurses who have undertaken our courses choose to use those credit transfer mechanisms to go on to university.

Prof. McMillan—We give credit for those courses. For example, there are nine

courses within the Hunter Area Health Service which are accredited by the college. We work with them collaboratively on the development of that. Then some of those people will progress maybe to further specialisation at graduate diploma or masters level.

Other initiatives have emerged. For example, with the Baptist Community Services, we have a university wide collaboration with them for a whole range of initiatives, but the most successful one is in relation to aged care and nursing where we have 100 people enrolled in a graduate certificate course across New South Wales. It is an excellent response to a more flexible mode of delivery.

We go out to these people but we are also becoming much more information literate and using a whole range of media to work with these people. Similarly, with Aboriginal health, rural health and so on, people are getting much more flexible and innovative in how they manage that. I think there are interesting developments. There is, however, a shortfall in nurses who are needed to work in areas such as coronary care, critical care and the operating theatre.

Mrs Andrews—Again, as Margaret alluded to before, 49 per cent of that work force now has postgraduate qualifications in the speciality of intensive care nursing, but the retention rate is 28 per cent. So our biggest problem is keeping people in the work force. They are burning out in these areas.

Mr PYNE—Why is that?

Mrs Andrews—It is a female work force—having children and so on.

Mr PYNE—Having children and staying home and things like that? Do they come back into the work force later?

Mrs Andrews—Yes, some do. Certainly, this state is working with a new policy of flexible work practices and, of course, the shorter we get of staff, the more flexible those work practices become in terms of accommodating them.

Mr PYNE—Just as a matter of interest—it is not really germane to our inquiry—would it be 20 years, 15 years, during which a lot of the women would go out of and then come back into the work force?

Prof. McMillan—It is hard to tell. Fifty per cent of our student population is classified as mature age; therefore, they can be anywhere between 21 and 50 years old, but rarely in excess of that. Depending on when they enter, it colours their participation in the work force. It is becoming problematic because of the casualisation. The nature of work has changed and it is a pretty demanding environment.

Mrs Andrews—Two years ago, from 2,300 returning refreshers, the mean age for

time out of the work force was 9.4 years. So that is the last piece of research we did.

Mr PYNE—That basically covers infancy.

Mrs Andrews—Yes.

Mr PYNE—Up to five years, probably, for a couple of children. That is just as a matter of interest.

Prof. McMillan—There are different age demographics for different groups of people. Mental health, for example, has an ageing population of registered nurses—similarly midwifery. So, obviously, that whole band of people is going to move out and that is going to colour patterns of employment.

Mrs Andrews—The critical care environment has more men, but there is still only such a small percentage of men in the workplace, anyway, that it is not that significant. The youngest work force at the moment are in neo-natal intensive care and intensive care. They are by far younger than the rest of our work force.

Prof. McMillan—Capacity to pay fees is problematic. If you track the amount of money that these women earn, they do not have as great a capacity to pay as some other professional groups. I believe that there is an impact. We will have to reflect on this, I guess, after about five years to see what the very real impact of the imposition of HECS is. I am not making a statement about my values or my views on HECS. We will have to watch that very carefully.

CHAIR—How much is the HECS repayment for a three-year nursing degree?

Prof. McMillan—They are in the third band and we fought very hard to retain them in that lowest band. I think the expectation is about \$750 per subject and they do eight subjects a year over three years.

CHAIR—So it is \$6,000 a year?

Prof. McMillan—No, it is not that much—\$3,000, I thought.

Mr PYNE—I thought it was about \$3,500 a year, between \$3,200 and \$3,500.

Prof. McMillan—I thought it was about \$3,300, yes. When I say \$750, that is what we charge as a fee-paying course. I thought that was equivalent to HECS per subject.

Mrs Andrews—In the postgraduate area, I have just done a survey of Australian universities in regard to our own fee- charging mechanisms and it has varied from about \$800 to something like \$2,400 a subject. But that is in the fee-paying area, so there has

been quite a wide discrepancy across universities and subjects. That is looking at all sorts of speciality programs. Also, at postgraduate level, there are a lot of generic postgraduate masters, like rural health and public health, that nurses enrol in, which are not necessarily just postgraduate nursing programs.

The TAFE postgraduate specialty programs that they are developing for enrolled nurses are also a fee-paying issue for enrolled nurses in the same way, because TAFE has developed specialty mental health and aged care modules for graduates of their own programs. That is also an issue in terms of payment for those.

CHAIR—There seems to be a demand for an expansion of enrolled nurse training in the TAFE sector. The Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry told us when we were over there that they had to import 500 nurses last year to meet demand, predominantly in the private sector and also in subspecialty areas. Is that something that you support?

Prof. McMillan—I think we have to seriously look at the practice of nurses in the different contexts of care. I think that there is a role for an expansion of the enrolled nurse numbers and the scope of the practice. I think we need to analyse that very carefully and be very careful about the maintenance of standards in particular areas, but I think it is a viable option. In New South Wales, it is one that is supported by the Chief Nursing Officer. I think what we have to be fairly careful about then is the management of that work force. We need to think about that in terms of how we prepare registered nurses to look after those people—a large number of ENs with lower-order skills for example.

Mrs Andrews—I think that is actually so, particularly in the area of the growth in the aged population and the changing context in which we are actually managing health services. There are a lot of community based health services that were originally institutionally based services. That leads to more autonomy and self-direction of the people undertaking the care. It has impact on the scope of practice of both the registered nurse and the other health care workers that they are supervising. With another hat on, in terms of my interest in aged care, I would just love to see more enrolled nurses working in the context of aged care. They are very suited and the level of practice and their scope and skills are ideal, but we are really very hard pushed to get a work force with those qualifications into aged care at the moment in New South Wales.

CHAIR—Why is that the case?

Mrs Andrews—Traditionally, we just have not had a work force of the size to support that but more than anything else it is financially driven in terms of the aged care sector. Essentially, that has been a service that is not related directly to health but to community services. The aged care facilities have not been a health model but rather in a community model and so we have this debate about care. In nursing, our philosophy about care is that when the client can direct that care then they can be supported by personal

carers, but when the client can no longer plan and implement that care then it becomes nursing care. At that point, it comes to the role of the registered nurse to plan and implement that care. They may not be delivering it but, again, they will be delegating and supervising other health care workers that are. Ideally we would prefer that there was a bigger mix of enrolled nurses in that mix of carer than we have actually got in the work force today.

CHAIR—Do you mean more enrolled nurses and fewer carers?

Mrs Andrews—Fewer assistants in nursing and carers and so on.

CHAIR—Is that because the aged care sector by and large is not prepared to pay the higher cost associated with an enrolled nurse?

Mrs Andrews—With formal education. We have 11,782 assistants in nursing working in New South Wales nursing homes today. We have just run a pilot program to educate them in a care support certificate level 3 as a result of our assistant in nursing review three years ago and in light of the new framework. They are absolutely hungry for this education. There are a lot of wonderful carers out there that have not have the opportunity to have formal education. That course is being provided by TAFE and by a whole range of private providers but the project has been managed by the profession and the unions and so on in a collaborative venture. Again, there is emphasis in this new mapping of the competencies to move that direct care down another level for economic reasons.

From the consumers' point of view, we have great concerns about that because we think that, when you get into a care relationship, that is a higher-order skill than a level 2. Secondly, we have concerns from the providers' point of view in terms of their own career opportunities and structure and acknowledgment of their worth and so on. As a profession we are addressing those issues with the ITAB—Industry Training Advisory Board—at the moment in the alignment and levelling of the competency standards.

Prof. McMillan—One complicating variable in increasing the numbers of ENs is that many of them progress to university education having met the requirements as a mature age student and also then having the advantage of a nursing qualification. There is a fair amount of potential wastage there although they generally work during their university course, as do 80 per cent of the students, as either assistants in nursing or enrolled nurses.

Mr MOSSFIELD—In the nursing home sector, are there any regulations relating to the standard of carers?

Mrs Andrews—New South Wales is the only state now that absolutely requires that a registered nurse is on duty for every shift, but that is the minimum requirement. This has been mainly driven by industry standards, by regulation, Now, of course, with the

whole new aged care reform, there is a new accreditation process. The emphasis on that will be the quality of the staff to achieve the outcomes and this is the debate we are having between the profession and the providers in saying that, in order to achieve your outcome standards, you are going to have to have a level of quality in the staff that you are utilising in that facility.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Is that the only regulation: that you have one registered nurse on each shift?

Mrs Andrews—Yes.

Mr MOSSFIELD—There are no regulations relating to other people that might be doing that?

Mrs Andrews—No, and it is really devaluing the care that we are giving to our aged population.

CHAIR—The trouble is nobody wants to pay for it.

Mrs Andrews—That is right. That is the bottom line.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for your submission and contribution. That is very useful. If there is anything else that you think of that you would like to subsequently send in, please do not hesitate to do so. We are already across this issue of vocational education and training and enrolled nurses and the demand and supply problem there.

Mrs Andrews—Thank you very much.

Prof. McMillan—Thank you.

[2.13 p.m.]

**CONYNGHAM, Professor Barry, Vice-Chancellor, Southern Cross University,
Military Road, East Lismore, New South Wales 2480**

**GRIMSHAW, Mr Warren, Executive Director, Coffs Harbour Education Campus,
Southern Cross University, Hogbin Drive, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales 2457**

**PHELPS, Mr Lionel, Chair, Board of Governors, Coffs Harbour Education Campus,
and Deputy Chancellor, Southern Cross University, Military Road, Lismore, New
South Wales 2480**

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Mr Phelps, for providing your submission and being prepared to come along and talk about it. My name is Brendan Nelson and I represent the Sydney metropolitan seat of Bradfield for the Liberal Party. On my left is Frank Mossfield who represents the seat of Greenway for the Labor Party in the western suburbs of Sydney. On the far end, Mr Christopher Pyne is the Liberal Party member for the Adelaide metropolitan seat of Sturt and Chris has a longstanding interest in education issues. Mr Marek, who is not here at the moment, is the National Party member for the Central Queensland seat of Capricornia. After you have given us a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission, we will have a chat about it.

Mr Phelps—I am a retired educationalist. I was a regional director of education for the north coast region of New South Wales. In retirement, I am deputy chancellor of the Southern Cross University and previously deputy chancellor of UNE, but I also chair the governing body at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus, which as you will gather is a partnership between Southern Cross University department of school education and the institute of TAFE—those two are combined.

This is our fourth year of operation and the point I was making in my submission regarded the overlapping of the roles. At Coffs what we have tried to do—and hopefully have done—is show that indeed the roles are complementary. Through the articulation of programs and the running of joint degrees, we feel as though we are making the most of each of the areas that TAFEs can offer and what best the university can offer. Implicit in that is that we retain the integrity of each institution's awards, the admission standards. We are not a community college; we are a partnership and, hopefully, showing how both the TAFE and the university can work together for the benefit of students.

CHAIR—Do either of you want to add something to this?

Prof. Conyngham—Not specifically. I was prepared to talk to my letter to you and answer any questions.

CHAIR—Yes. Do that then.

Prof. Conyngham—My perspective is from a Southern Cross University perspective and, while the check involvement in that partnership is crucial for the university, it is only part of the university and, indeed, only part of our attitude towards TAFE and technical and further education generally. Presumably you have my letter in front of you?

CHAIR—Yes.

Prof. Conyngham—So, rather than just read it out, I would be happy to just speak to it and then take any questions. As it says, like all vice-chancellors, I have to point out to you, I alone am not the author of this letter. This is a document prepared by members of the university; that is probably why it is so beautifully laid out.

There are really two issues that we wish to point out to the committee, the first being that the distinction that has existed in tertiary education between TAFE, the universities, and now other providers, is one slice of the way of looking at the issue. But then there is the other way which we have tried to raise here—that is, you look at the clients or the students that are potentially available to TAFE and, more particularly, the relationship that brings out in relation to the future for universities as they relate to TAFE and as they might either overlap, cooperate with or compete with the TAFE and other further education providers.

Since this letter was written, things are becoming clearer in the way the universities—and, presumably, in this state at least, TAFE—are changing towards a more independent, market-driven, competitive environment. So I think that our proposals here, if anything, are perhaps solidified a little bit as the last six months or so have indicated what I would see as a trend towards a freeing up of the constraints upon both TAFEs and universities—and, indeed, all providers. That is the main point to make, that the provision of post-secondary education itself is changing, and that the characteristic that we would observe would be that characteristic is more competitive. So this notion that there are two kinds of potential students or individuals, therefore, becomes almost more appropriate to bring out.

We believe that the need to preserve the qualities of the higher education system as represented by the universities and to preserve the qualities of the VET sector are probably even more necessary now than they were when we wrote this letter. We would see that as being to not confuse, if you like, the prime purpose of universities, as we would articulate it, from the prime purpose of the VET sector.

This is not a qualitative distinction I am making here; do not get me wrong. I am not putting forward a view that says universities are qualitatively different. One of the great attributes—and I am sure other people have said this to you—of the Australian post-secondary system is that we do have a TAFE system, a VET sector incorporating the TAFE system, and a university sector. While they compete, they partner and they even

overlap, as we know, but there are some essences there that are worth holding on to.

I do not want to go into the characteristics; I am not a TAFE-bred person, but it certainly seems to me that one of the strong things that vocational and further education does is deal with the here and now. There is a word, which is starting to fall out of use a little bit, that relates to the idea of competency. We would see competency translating into meaning that people are job prepared, and the interaction that TAFE needs to make with the specific attributes and skills required of jobs, whatever they are, is something they appear to be very committed to and do very well. Also, they tend to be, if you like, somewhat response driven in the sense that they look and see what is required and they proceed to train and educate people to respond to that. I think that role comes out in those paragraphs.

The AQF has been a bone of contention for universities, as you know. It seems to me that that has resolved itself a little bit in the last two years in that the AQF does attempt to have some method of distinguishing in terms of awards that are given by universities and by the VET sector with some recognition of the need for overlap. Where we believe the difference should be preserved—and most universities will not disagree with it—is in the degree giving area. You could say, ‘Well, why should universities be given a monopoly on giving degrees?’

I hope I do not need to run the argument for you, but the argument would be that the tradition of universities is based on self-accreditation, though I do not like the word ‘self-accreditation’. I think the universities’ accreditation system works on the basis of peer review based on scholarly traditions. We do not self-accredit; we accredit across the scholarly mechanisms that have evolved literally over centuries to create the fact that if you get a degree from something called a university, certainly in this country, you are accessing those traditions of scholarship and the connection with research. The term ‘degree’ is useful in referencing that.

There is this distinction that we make which is what we call front-end loading, which may be a term you have not come across before. That is a rather crude way of saying that, until relatively recently, let us say the 1980s, universities had obtained their students predominantly from the secondary education system and hence the image of the front-end loading. In other words, students were literally passed through the K to 12 system of education in each state. There might have been some exceptions to that but, essentially, the bulk of people going into universities were people who had just concluded the highest level of their schooling and went straight into university to obtain degrees and other awards.

We believe that that is where the distinction is most clearly articulated between TAFE and universities because traditionally—and I think it is still true to say—a number of students, if they did not go into university, went into the technical and further education area straight from school. They were front-end loaded into that program.

What you now see is a very strong phenomenon, represented very much by the Southern Cross University, of education as considerably separated from high school. That has taken hold and so-called lifelong learning, or relearning, or re-educating processes have come into being in our society. As I said, I am sure you are very aware of those trends.

For instance, at Southern Cross University, our direct entry from school is about 40 per cent. Sixty per cent of our students come from non-direct entry from school. It is somewhat confusing because that can be just one year out of school. In other words, the way we define the difference between a school leaver and a non-school leaver can be only one year. But, by and large, we are accepting mature age students, we are accepting people who are coming back who have had one job or one profession and who are retraining, and we are accepting people who are moving from one job area to another.

Maybe I should I just stop there and ask whether there are any questions or comments about the fact that we believe the distinction between the VET sector and TAFE, in particular, and the universities is worthy of preservation. We rather boldly recommend that it be preserved. As a sign of that separation, we are great advocates of articulation between the university sector and the VET sector.

I have a little bit of extra knowledge having been chairman of the AVCC's credit transfer committee for a number of years. That committee deals with articulation of qualifications from one sector to the other. Something that I hope has been pointed out to you, or will be pointed out to you during your hearings, is that the credit transfer committee had commissioned research which demonstrates something that is not often taken into account, which is the movement from universities into TAFE. Presumably that has been signalled to you. Therefore, in that recommendation we are saying we believe the qualities of the TAFE system and the university system vis-a-vis school leavers and near school leavers is a very good argument for more or less keeping the two systems separate but connected by articulation. There will always be overlap and there will no doubt be some duplication possibilities.

I can give you another bit of jargon. We talk in terms of capabilities rather than competencies. I do not know if you are familiar with this concept. It is not an original one. It is the idea that universities should train their graduates to be capable of learning. Therefore, there is a certain amount of generalised learning that is involved in any degree whether it be in ancient history or in law,; there is some extrapolation from that learning process that can be applied to any body of knowledge. I am not sure what TAFE people say, but certainly the TAFE people I have talked to are more concerned with competency and skill acquisition, and therefore there is that distinction.

CHAIR—Yes, TAFE training is training for a particular task or a set of tasks, whereas the university sector is about the inculcation of values and understanding of the best traditions of the past in terms of the particular thing that you are learning. It is also

about personal development and research, giving people the capability to lead the institutions of society, I suppose.

Mr PYNE—Professor Conyngham, I found your exposition very refreshing. I am also delighted that a vice-chancellor of a university understands the difference between TAFEs and universities and why both should be strong but both should be doing different things. Given that you understand that so clearly and have articulated it so clearly, why do you think that there are some institutions around Australia, for example, RMIT in Melbourne, that are so determined to bend over backwards to try to blur entirely the differences between universities and TAFEs? Some institutions want to take them into one institution and have TAFEs offering degrees and universities offering certificates, et cetera. That is what is happening elsewhere.

Prof. Conyngham—The partial answer to your question lies in our second set of propositions because it is more complicated than what I have just articulated. What I have articulated is the simple model, which is school leavers, and once we get into other kinds of students one can see the RMIT view being much more cogently argued. So the reason why some universities want to blur the system is that, in relation to latter learners, there may be a very useful purpose in blurring it.

To come back to another aspect of your question, I believe there is nothing incompatible with the notion of a university housing VET sector activity if they are set up to do it. I have no problem with universities providing VET level courses. Southern Cross, for instance, supplies VET level courses in the hospitality area because at the time we created those courses no-one else was doing it in the way that was required by the industry. Often, industry requires it. That is okay. I keep sliding into my second argument.

So my simple answer to you is the clarity is much easier to articulate if you just keep your eye on school leavers. It gets a hell of a lot more difficult to articulate—and to some extent we need a more flexible approach to the difference between TAFE, or VET sector, and universities—when we get to latter life learning.

Mr PYNE—Some of the people who have presented evidence to the committee have said that there is a propensity now, obviously, for TAFE students, upon completion of their TAFE courses, to move into the university sector. Also, there are university trained people who are now going back to TAFEs.

Prof. Conyngham—That is true. Surveys we have done—

Mr PYNE—In fact, the first witnesses today said seven per cent of the people in TAFEs are university graduates who have gone back to do TAFE courses.

Prof. Conyngham—The AVCC's research statistics go as high as 15 per cent.

Mr PYNE—Well, it is a significant figure.

CHAIR—I think they said that seven times more people go from university to TAFE than go the other way.

Prof. Conyngham—That might be. Anyway, whatever the numbers are.

Mr PYNE—Anyhow, there are substantial numbers and this is being used as an argument in some cases for saying that, if university students are needing to go back to TAFEs to get jobs, that means that TAFEs should be able to offer degrees and universities should be able to offer certificates. In fact, the argument is stronger that TAFEs should be able to offer degrees and that those people would not have to go back to TAFEs if they had got the training they needed when they were at universities.

I would say to that—and I would be interested in your comment—that all that means is that there are people who are doing basic liberal degrees at universities, which is good for them and good for society and good for the university, who find that in order to be able to get employment they might need to get specialist training in vocational education courses. That does not necessarily mean that TAFEs should be offering degrees but that TAFEs are offering a good product which is attractive to people. There is nothing to be lost by somebody having a BA or a Bsc or whatever and having vocational education as well. It should not be regarded as changing the status of either institution. That is what I would say to that.

Prof. Conyngham—I think you are right. It also comes back to this business of there being a distinction. I could give you a million examples. As you know, I come out of the performing arts and the arts world generally. Art schools are traditionally now, but not always, part of the university philosophy, and most people would not have any problem with that. But, if you want to develop a technically capable sculptor, it is a hell of a lot easier, and it is better, to send them across the road, as we did at Wollongong, to the TAFE college to learn how to weld. The idea of having to create a welding program at a university is unnecessary. My answer would be that the attributes of both sectors—

Mr PYNE—Are complementary.

Prof. Conyngham—Exactly, that is the word. There are grey areas. The greyest area of all, the one I am sure you have encountered already, is IT and computer skills. There are lots of TAFE courses now available for computer skills that are seen as, to use those two words again, competency training. It is the ability to program or the ability to understand existing programs, et cetera.

There is a lot of overlap, in my perception, in the computing area. However, interestingly enough, almost at the other end of the spectrum, with due respect to the chair, nobody is advocating that certain areas of medical training should be done in a

TAFE, although I guess, theoretically, some of the activities are very much about competency and about performing particular tasks at the very highest technical level. But there are historical problems, aren't there? We seem to have to deal with the historical situation that we believe it is better that medical graduates are produced entirely within a university context, whereas we are a bit equivocal about computer training. We believe, at the other end of the spectrum, that it is perfectly normal that welding and other kinds of engineering skills are learnt in a TAFE and not in a university.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I listened carefully to what you have been saying. If I picked it up right, you were suggesting that universities could move into the vocational training area to some degree.

Prof. Conyngham—Yes, that is what I think, but in a certain area.

Mr MOSSFIELD—Do you see movement the other way, where TAFEs could—

Prof. Conyngham—I guess it does sound self-serving. What we are saying in our second argument is that we believe that in the latter life area of education there is another imperative. It is the notion of the one-stop shop. We have now dealt—and I do not know whether you want me to give you this—with, I think, 26 organisational companies. I think it is now much greater than that. One of Southern Cross's niche activities, the same as with Deakin and a couple of other universities, is to get very heavily involved with industry education, which is education in the workplace at university level.

What happens, of course, is that you get sucked into doing the full package. Companies want all their educational needs met. We are making an argument here that in certain cases universities should either be able to contract and package the VET sector material or, in some cases, if necessary, create it. You will say, 'Why doesn't the same argument apply to the VET sector?' I guess I would argue that creating the infrastructure, the research in intelligence and academic infrastructure for a university degree-giving organisation is actually more difficult to do than in certain specific cases, within a university context, creating, if you like, the VET sector capabilities.

In the second part of our paper we are saying that we believe there should be at least some flexibilities for universities to enter into partnerships and even create—with whoever can supply the appropriate level of education—something that would be normally seen as VET activity. Those are the arguments in recommendation 2.

Mr MOSSFIELD—With regard to the partnerships that you have referred to here, we have had a number of examples of those—the Department of School Education, TAFE and the university. I think that is a good move, particularly on a regional basis. You can respond to industry and to student needs in your area. What assistance do you get from governments to develop that sort of package? Is there anything preventing this happening?

Prof. Conyngham—I do not know whether you are familiar with the CIP scheme—the Commonwealth industry partnership scheme—which was recently discontinued by the government. We did not actually object to the discontinuation of it. Basically, it was colloquially known as the 60-40 scheme, whereby the university system was allocated specific, funded HECS places on a 60 per cent basis, on the understanding that 40 per cent of the funding would come from an industry partner. That has been phased out. You can find out the rationale from the minister's papers, but essentially the rationale was that there are now other ways to do that through full fee and through other changes to the university act.

With regard to what assistance we get from the government, we can apply our ordinary government load to industry, and we do. In fact, we have created a degree, which is called a Bachelor of Management and Professional Studies, which is only offered through an industry partnership situation. I have a list here; we offer it in various ways to Ansett, BT and various other companies around the country. This is a degree which is focused on industry or company based education, delivered by distance into a workplace. But they are full degrees, usually in the human resource development, tourism, management area, although we are branching out into finance and environmental law.

We are assisted by the government in being able to apply HECS to that. We do charge; I am assured that it is legal under the act. The act permits us to charge industry for employees doing degree courses. So we can add value in that manner. To some extent, that is why the 60-40 scheme has been replaced by a much more flexible system. For instance, we have got about 100 students at Ansett in a special tourism program. They will put additional funding into it to enhance the quality of the education and they will also pay us some development costs by way of increasing revenue to the university.

Mr Phelps—You picked up about the partnership between the education departments. Indeed, CHEC has an interesting history in that there was always the token request from DEETYA—if that is a fair way of describing it—when they were providing funding for new capital works with universities, and I assume the same was the case through TAFE before the ANTA days. They looked at coordinating any new building projects. That was the germ of what happened at Coffs, I suppose—taking the opportunity where the university needed additional facilities, as did TAFE and School Ed., as it happens. Both the state government and DEETYA provided the means of bringing that opportunity to a head.

This is another aspect, apart from industry, where we are working together to take whatever opportunities do arise through natural growth, although, again, it is a little more difficult now with the specific Commonwealth funding grants. They still exist, but most of the capital funding is built into university grants, and I am not sure about the situation with TAFE. I think it is important to note that, apart from taking every opportunity to coordinate the provision of physical facilities which enable this sort of thing to happen between the partners as has happened at Coffs, perhaps there needs to be some mechanism

to govern the territory. The waters have become muddy. What I am hearing from Barry convinces me that what we have done is the right way to go.

There is a need for a structure, in some formal way—no matter how infrequently it might occur, as long as there is some requirement that it does occur—that gets people together for coordination purposes. I do not think it is a matter of overlapping; it is duplication which I think is hard to justify.

Prof. Conyngham—The thing that we need to be reminded of is that CHEC is a significant part of Southern Cross's opportunities and activities. The Northern Institute of TAFE—which is the TAFE that rather beautifully and neatly coincides with Southern Cross's declared region, which is from Port Macquarie to the border of New South Wales—services 20-something colleges. So the interesting thing that has come from the CHEC experience is that, while we have some very particular things we can do at CHEC that really rely on the cohabitation and the ability to work together, it also has a kind of hothouse effect, in that once we create courses that work, in terms of conjunction between the TAFE area and the university area, we can spread them throughout the entire region, in theory, because a lot of the courses are available through the other colleges of the Northern Institute.

Mr Phelps—An excellent example of that is the Bachelor of Information Systems, which developed between the North Coast Institute of TAFE and Southern Cross at CHEC, but now Hunter Institute of TAFE students are feeding into that. A number of the degrees having been developed in this hothouse, as Barry calls it, we are meeting a demand for articulation from TAFE students throughout the state. If we have got flexible delivery of the courses, that can happen.

Mr Grimshaw—I would like to make a general comment. I am also a member of the New South Wales TAFE Board and chair of the Australian Qualifications Board, so I have a reservoir of background around the TAFE issues. At the moment I am president of the Board of Studies of New South Wales, so the school dimension also comes in. I want to reinforce a few things that Barry said which are important.

Universities have their mission, which we should reinforce strongly, and TAFE has its mission, which we should reinforce. But that is not to say that at the margin the universities should not be involved in undertaking programs which meet the needs of the community and do so. In fact, the whole qualifications framework is predicated around universities offering diplomas and advanced diplomas and TAFE also offering diplomas and advanced diplomas. So I do not see that there is a fundamental conflict in the fact that the universities get into the vocational education sector within the context of the AQF, which is specifically provided for and endorsed by all ministers.

Therefore, there is a clear legality and moral support for the sort of position that Barry has adopted. No-one would want to discourage that because, if the universities have

the expertise in certain areas, why not offer a program which meets the needs of the community? TAFE has the opportunity also of offering diploma and advanced diploma programs and, if they are structured in a particular way, can articulate those programs into a university education which ultimately leads to the degree.

On balance—and this may not be shared; I am talking as an individual in this instance and not reflective of the TAFE board view—it is my personal view that it would be unfortunate if TAFE were to enter into the degree granting framework, firstly, because of the reasons that Barry enunciated about having to establish the research support and the credibility in terms of the offering of the degree and, secondly, because it would lead ultimately to a re-establishment of the binary system where the mission of TAFE could be dissipated in the ways in which it presently meets the needs of the vocational education sector. I do not think we would want that, that suddenly we would have colleges of advanced education emerging out of the existing TAFEs and losing their fundamental purpose.

Those two issues rather suggest to me that TAFE should offer up to advanced diploma level, and increasingly are doing so, which really is close to a higher education provision that is fairly close to a degree level. With the articulation arrangements we now have in place with Southern Cross University, it does not take a great deal to move from diploma and advanced diploma to degree. Therefore, for TAFE to expend resources in the establishment of the infrastructure necessary to deliver degrees would not necessarily be the best long-term outcome for the country.

The AQF is predicated on the fact that the universities are the degree granting institutions in Australia as endorsed by all ministers, and the TAFE, concurrently with universities, can offer diploma and advanced diploma programs. Universities may also choose under the AQF to offer certificate level programs. In that instance they would be offering them as university only qualifications, or, if they chose to, they could offer them under the AQF banner which is meeting the basic competencies for a certificate level program. That is a choice of the universities. The board, at its meeting tomorrow, will be giving attention to those sorts of issues.

So far as Coffs is concerned, that really is a manifestation of what we are about—that is, that TAFE has its mission; the university has its basic mission; the school component, the senior college, has its mission; but there is a lot of interaction in the context of each of those missions where they happen to coincide, where advantage derives from those missions coinciding. That happens across the board—in a number of programs, in the use of buildings, and in the use of human resources which has all the best resources not confined to a university—there are some excellent human resources in the high schools and in TAFE—and vice versa. In other words, there are some excellent TAFE people who can contribute handsomely to university programs and also to school programs.

The sort of mix that we are developing in building on the strengths of the partners and not trying to compromise the TAFE into offering degree programs or to militate against what the university is trying to do is really the strength of the sort of enterprise that Lionel Phelps's submission is attempting to capture. I just wanted to reinforce those few points from another perspective.

CHAIR—I have a couple of questions. In view of the close articulation between the TAFE sector and university with your campus, how do you deal with capital funding issues? Because the different sectors are funded in different ways, how do you rationalise administration, finance and day-to-day management?

Mr Grimshaw—Perhaps I can lead off and others will follow. The capital funding for CHEC is provided by the Commonwealth through the Southern Cross University, and Southern Cross University makes the decisions on how it allocates its capital funds. The TAFE component is funded through the TAFE Commission or the department of education and training in more recent times. That can be either state funding or funding provided through the ANTA agreement in terms of capital growth. In the latest instance, the capital developments, that was the way it happened. With the school, there are Commonwealth contributions, as you know, to school education, but the school is fundamentally state supported; therefore the capital funds would come through the school.

In discussion with West, he raised the issue of there being some other common funding, but I do not see that the present funding arrangements really hinder in any way the sort of development that we are planning there, because you need to justify it across the board. To have separate funding pools will not necessarily enhance the objectives that we are aiming to achieve.

Mr Phelps—In stage 2, which we have just completed, each of the partners had needs within Coffs. The trick was to get them working together and to combine it into the one project, with the partners agreeing on their contributions to the project. We just managed it in that way. Again, the partners have control of their own funds, but we agree as a partnership on just how we will fund the particular combined project.

Prof. Conyngham—In this case, the particular paranoia is for university autonomy. As you know, the tradition in the country is that, while we are state organisations in one sense, universities are traditionally and fiercely independent and autonomous. But this does work very well, because we receive either capital rolling funds or special capital funds from the normal Commonwealth processes and we can allocate those, as we have to, responsibly. But, in this case, the responsibility involves partnership and we get much better impact for our funds in that context.

There are problems. We are still addressing issues, for instance, of what happens in the ongoing process. Universities, as I am sure you all know, and TAFE—I guess all organisations—want to change their capital configurations. Strategically there may be

reasons why you want to change your capital—by that I mean you may want to knock a wall down, or move something, or take something out of one building and put it into another. This is traditionally how universities respond strategically to certain things. How that is going to be done in the partnership will be an interesting challenge for us. But we have already done that in a way—

Mr Phelps—We have knocked down some small walls.

Prof. Conyngham—Yes, and we have had a move. For instance, the component of Southern Cross's investment in stage 1 involves staff being located in one building, and with the acquisition of stage 2 we actually moved some of our accommodations from one building to another. That was done by negotiation. So it is possible. There is a fair bit of preciousness, frankly, about how far one could go. I would like to see more deregulation about how universities can use their resources, particularly their infrastructure resources—I prefer that term rather than capital—because the future of education, by most predictions, is going to involve a very high component of non-material infrastructure, which is a fancy way of saying the whole IT infrastructure, the network and all that stuff.

There is the ability for us to partner. I was recently told I could not do something because the Southern Cross was not a carrier. At the moment, I gather, there are very few carriers permitted under the federal communications legislation, but in our region for the Southern Cross to become a carrier and compete with Telecom and Optus would advantage the region. I could present a case to you that that would happen. Whether Southern Cross is able to ever become a provider, I do not know, but if you are really interested in the ability to be flexibly responsive to the needs of a modern fast moving economy—and I think of some of the issues about how universities and TAFEs can react in using their capital resources—it could be quite interesting to see further deregulation.

Mr Phelps—There is very little capacity for the Commonwealth within DEETYA even to coordinate the different streams of funding. We have to do that just by coordinating the cash flows—most of it is Commonwealth money in the end. We have to do the coordinating for our buildings.

CHAIR—Should there be a single funding authority? I presume that is the ideal?

Mr Phelps—Certainly, in my view, there should be some provision for coordination funding.

Mr Grimshaw—I would not be supportive of a single funding authority. I think that can create confusion. We do not all have Coffs Harbour right across the country, so therefore I think there needs to be an environment where the needs are examined by each of the sectors and once that decision is made they come together in a consistent and coherent way.

Prof. Conyngham—As you probably have detected, I am a great pluralist. It is a form of competitiveness. It is rather good if governments have to compete to invest in education. I think that it will advantage our society if there is some separation of sources because you will get a better answer if you have at least two people arguing over the best way to do something, rather than if there is just one authority saying that it is to be done.

CHAIR—The last thing I wanted to ask you is about credit transfers. Should there be a nationally transparent and understandable way of informing students and prospective students about where and how they will get credit transfers? It seems to be quite a nebulous and uncertain concept at the moment.

Prof. Conyngham—I am not sure if the credit transfer agency of the AVCC is giving evidence to this committee—

CHAIR—Yes, next week.

Prof. Conyngham—I have ceased being chair of it. Is Tony Hayden giving evidence?

CHAIR—I do not know the name.

Prof. Conyngham—Tony Hayden is the secretary to the credit transfer committee of the AVCC. For a while, under the previous government, the AVCC had created a company which was for this very purpose: to move towards a national accreditation agency. The company was set up, Minister Crean gave some funds to develop this and, frankly, it did not work because the customer base were those people in TAFE and in universities, or those people wishing to be so. The universities and TAFE looked after their own articulation arrangements, albeit in a chaotic free market way, and they did it for free. That was why the agency failed. We were asked to look at the feasibility of setting up the agency, and it was self-funding and fee paying. In other words, you would spend so many dollars getting a credit transfer evaluation.

You are obviously talking to someone who believes quite strongly in the need for some sort of common database. There are organisations existing. Once again, I do not know who is giving testimony to you. There is a wonderful organisation called OZJAC—please do not ask me to decipher the acronym—based in Melbourne. It is a database organisation set up to try to do this. OZJAC has national aspirations to feed all the qualifying accredited material into a database and they have done quite well in some states, Victoria being one. Do you know about OZJAC?

CHAIR—No. We will find out.

Prof. Conyngham—I think that the game has changed. With the new situation in higher education and what looks like a new, more deregulated system and a freeing up of

the university's abilities to charge for things, the notion of a credit evaluation being charged for now is much more likely to actually work. Let me just put it to you simply: if I am an accredited agency and you come to me and say, 'I have done these various courses at GMH,' or 'I have done this course at TAFE,' and I say, 'That will get you into Southern Cross or Sydney University or Queensland University,' I save you HECS. I save the government money, and I save you money, because you do not have to do those courses.

Credit transfers—and the other one you know about which is the more complicated version of that which is recognition of prior learning—are really things that are now going to have a place because they are going to save resources. Why get someone to do a course if they already know the content?

CHAIR—We have to finish there, I am afraid. Thank you very much for a very detailed submission and for taking the trouble to come and talk to us. That is very good of you.

Prof. Conyngham—Thank you.

[3.09 p.m.]

MACKENZIE, Professor Brian, Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Locked Bag 1, Richmond, New South Wales 2753

CHAIR—Welcome. Do you have any comment on the capacity in which you appear before the committee? And could you please give us a five- to 10-minute precis of your submission?

Prof. Mackenzie—I will be happy to. I am the Acting President of the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury and my substantive position is that of Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs. I am also the elected Chair of the Academic Board at UWS Hawkesbury, and it was in that capacity that I sent you the submission that I did back in November 1997.

The submission specifically canvassed issues to do with the relationship between TAFE and university, and the level of professional education that they both offered and the appropriate relationship between them. I should explain or perhaps confess that this submission was entirely a spin-off of a submission I had made previously to the West inquiry in response, largely, to widely publicised comments from the chairman of that committee questioning the appropriateness of university teaching in professions such as accountancy, hospitality and nursing.

I took it as my role and my submission to the West inquiry to clarify what, from our perspective in Hawkesbury, were the complementary and nicely articulated but not terribly much overlapping roles of universities and TAFE institutes in professional education of those sorts and those disciplines, specifically, and in others.

When I was invited by this committee to make a submission to this inquiry on the role of TAFE, it occurred to me at the time that I should emphasise that same material and those same issues of relationships between the universities and TAFEs that I had not terribly long previously been dealing with in making my submission to the West inquiry. Having sat here through the last few minutes of your discussions with the representatives from the Coffs Harbour education precinct I realised—I had not realised beforehand—that there was nobody here representing our Nirimba education precinct. The University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury and the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, and both state and Catholic high schools come together in sharing the precinct there. It is a bit of a shame that we do not have that kind of representation here today. I would be happy to say a few words about that also, if you like.

CHAIR—In fact, the interest shown by New South Wales, and TAFE sector in particular, has been disturbingly disappointing, particularly in contrast to the rest of the country. Please feel free to give us a view.

Prof. Mackenzie—I will be happy to say a word or two about it, perhaps mostly in answer to questions—although I can come up with a few observations ahead of time. That of course was not part of my submission. My submission concentrated entirely on the relationship between university and TAFE, as did the other submission from the University of Western Sydney, from our vice-chancellor, Professor Deryck Schreuder, who has of course departed for other pastures.

The two submissions have a difference in emphasis but not—we came to agree after looking at each other's; we wrote them independently—in their basic thrust. The submission from Professor Schreuder, which was largely drafted by Professor Duke, the deputy vice-chancellor and member president at Nepean, concentrates on the similarities between TAFE and the university sectors. They are both moving increasingly down the path of lifelong education, of professional education, education of the whole person and so on.

My submission, by contrast, focused on, if you will, the distance between them, while they are still on that path, with the university being somewhat ahead of the TAFE sector, and I think it will continue to be for a considerable period. My submission emphasised general skills, problem solving abilities, strategic planning skills, the viewing of issues in the professions in a broader context and the specific skill based teaching that is so excellently done by TAFE.

I gave examples of these, and the areas of hospitality and building, as I recall, contrasting the kind of teaching that we do with the university programs in hospitality and in building with the programs which are offered next door in TAFE colleges in the same areas. I concluded by saying that the difference between university and TAFE level teaching in professional areas lies not in the subject matter of the disciplines that are taught—it would be a mistake to try to find differences in this subject matter—but lies instead in the approach to the teaching and learning and practising of those disciplines themselves.

The TAFE areas, I suggested, emphasise more, although not utterly, concrete skills and more specific practical applications that are absolutely vital to a successful practice as practitioners in the areas, whether in the building, hospitality or accounting areas or what have you, whereas the university emphasised a wider context for the practice of these disciplines and the ability to see the problems in the context of a broader corporate, managerial or national perspective and the increasing ability to be able to manipulate the concepts and the disciplines in the area for the sake of broader or bigger picture type issues than the more specifically limited technical skills emphasised by TAFE.

In some cases I am aware that my distinction between the two might be sharper than is altogether appropriate and, in some cases, it is probably less sharper than is altogether appropriate. There is a spread of teaching matters or teaching manners in both university and TAFE. In some cases they are closer together and in some they are further

apart. I do believe that that kind of distinction is a pretty fair representation of the difference between the central trends of each. The TAFE colleges are more appropriately and more effectively focused on relatively concrete specific high level technical skills and university courses are more, although never fully, focused on more abstract problem solving and strategic issues in the same discipline areas.

That is the way that I would summarise the difference between the TAFE approach and the university approach to teaching in particular professional disciplines in my submission. I would be happy to go on more about that or, if you prefer, I would be happy to talk with you more about some of the other very interesting things I have heard you talking about to do with education precincts, credit transfer, access to the Internet through Aarnet and so on.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. It is a bit hard to know exactly where to start. In your submission you talked about the incorporation of TAFEs. Do you feel that they need more autonomy? Are they being constrained in some way at the moment?

Prof. Mackenzie—I have never fully understood the way the TAFEs operate. They seem to have a huge lumbering bureaucracy but, nevertheless, seem to be incredibly flexible on the ground. I am sure it is easy to resolve these apparent contradictions if you understand them better. They have always given me the impression that they do rather better than you would expect, given the levels of hierarchy that they have within them. I am afraid I am not in much of a position to say how they should be incorporated or what sorts of linkages they should have between their own various perks.

I do know that I am extremely happy with the economy that individual TAFE colleges seem to have and the view of our institute within western Sydney to be engaging in relatively autonomous and very productive relationships with the university. One of the features of Australian universities that I have always valued is that we have, within our constantly shrinking budget base, of course, a very great autonomy to be developing our own relationships with other institutions or international linkages by our ways of getting out and doing the job. There is a greater freedom than universities have in other countries, in my experience.

I find that in the TAFE sector, which I would expect to be far more constrained, it is not quite the same but there is a comparable level of autonomy and capacity for grasping the nettle and moving into interesting projects. We are able to work very closely and very flexibly and rapidly with the TAFE colleges that are co-located with us on each of our two campuses of the University of Western Sydney and Hawkesbury.

We have a number of agreements with the TAFE colleges which we are extremely pleased with and which we see as being very productive and leading to more of the same in the future. I would be happy to talk about those, if you like, but I am not quite sure what the thrust of your question is.

CHAIR—In your submission you talked about the flexibility and capacity of TAFEs to move perhaps more quickly in the marketplace. I am interested to know whether you had anything else to add to that.

Prof. Mackenzie—I am not sure that that is what I said. What did I say?

CHAIR—You talked about the incorporation of TAFEs. You felt that if they were incorporated more they would have more autonomy.

Prof. Mackenzie—No, that was not me.

CHAIR—I have the wrong thing.

Mr PYNE—That may have been Professor Schreuder's submission. One follows the other.

CHAIR—I see.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I like to be able to have things fairly well pigeonholed—that is what I have been told—so would you agree with what the previous group told us, that the diploma and advanced diploma are really the demarcation line between the two bodies, or do you see any sort of broader demarcation line than that?

Prof. Mackenzie—I was not here when they said that, so I cannot put it into context, but certainly that is the demarcation line at the moment. Frankly, I would have difficulty seeing that as a line drawn in the sand for ever more—and lines drawn in the sand tend not to be.

Mr PYNE—Others draw in the sand.

Prof. Mackenzie—That is right, yes. I could well see some changes in there for the future, but I would not want to commit myself to any particular vision as to what those changes might be.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I thought that possibly in the context of what we have been talking about, the relationship between the two education precincts, there needs to be some recognition that one group has one particular role and the other has the other, which a lot of people have covered fairly effectively for us. I was just wondering, as far as the appropriate certificate or diploma is concerned, whether you would see that as the appropriate dividing line between the precincts?

Prof. Mackenzie—I think it is the appropriate dividing line that is occurring at the present time—

Mr MOSSFIELD—But not necessarily.

Prof. Mackenzie—but I would not want to state that that was for all eternity. It is very clear that TAFE institutes are teaching at a much more conceptually sophisticated level than they did 30 years ago, for instance. It is entirely appropriate that, if they continue with that kind of development, they could be offering accreditation or qualifications of a higher level in another 30 years from now.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I was interested to hear your views on that, because it looked as though some people were suggesting that that sort of thing should be set in concrete and that TAFE should not move out of what they are doing now and universities should not move.

Prof. Mackenzie—I really do not think it should be set in concrete, but I think there should be considerable exploration or requests for justification of any attempts by either to go beyond that current divide. I think the current divide is only temporary, but it is useful for the time being.

Mr MOSSFIELD—I was also interested in your building and construction comments relating to UC where the university would pick up the post-trade education roles and take the building and construction profession into that higher area of Bachelor of Building. Do you see that also developing in other trade areas, such as in the electrical trade or in the engineering trade?

Prof. Mackenzie—It well could, but I have no experience in those areas. We do not teach them at university level in my particular branch of the University of Western Sydney, and so I do not have the experience with them to be able to say for sure. I think the distinction between the skilled trades based and plus level of TAFE and the more conceptually abstract level of the university teaching is extremely well shown in the building and construction area. The TAFE certificate can quite nicely equip you to get a job as a foreman, as a manager of a small building firm or whatever, whereas many of our people go out to be project managers, to be managers of procurement for large corporations or whatever. They have the overall familiarity with the methods and techniques and the way the buildings are made. But, frankly, I would rather get somebody with TAFE qualifications to actually build them. Our people would probably do rather better at getting several built in the same place or in the appropriate relationship to each other and on time.

Mr PYNE—Professor Mackenzie, in your submission you seem to very confidently state that UWS Hawkesbury is very confident in its relationship with TAFE and that the courses that it offers it does conceptually validly and well. You state that TAFE:

. . . differs fundamentally from the extremely valuable but conceptually more basic skills-based

learning properly emphasised by TAFE.

You seem to have a pretty clear idea in your mind about what it is that TAFE does well and what it is that universities do well.

Prof. Mackenzie—That is correct, Mr Pyne. As I said earlier, in some cases the distinction I drew would probably not fit quite as well; in some cases the distance between the two sectors would be even broader than I have drawn it. But I think that is a pretty reasonable overall description.

Mr PYNE—Yes, so you see that TAFEs are doing what they are doing well basically because they are skills based in vocational education and training and that universities like the Hawkesbury UWS are offering courses that perhaps are not in the same vein as the old university style courses of hundreds of years ago in terms of construction and hospitality, but are as valid today because of the changing nature of our society, and that they have a certain level above just skills based training that TAFEs offer?

Prof. Mackenzie—I should make it clear that we offer some courses at UWS Hawkesbury which are not traditional courses but are not specifically professionally or occupationally based as well. As far as we are teaching in some of the same subject areas as TAFE, that is a kind of distinction I would see as appropriate.

Mr PYNE—Yes. I agree with that distinction. The push amongst some TAFE colleges and organisations around Australia would be for TAFEs to be able to offer degrees. Do you see that as undermining your reasonably clear view of what you are doing and what TAFEs are doing?

Prof. Mackenzie—I would not see it as undermining that view. I would see it as unwise if that view was to be taken as a valid one. It is appropriate and necessary for the kind of teaching which I have ascribed for TAFE and universities to do. At the present time, and for the foreseeable future, I would see TAFEs and universities as being better equipped to deal with their own sorts of things than to deal with the others.

Keeping in mind though the context—as I stated at the beginning before you came in—I also fully agree with the position taken by Professor Schreuder in his submission. It implies that the distinctions that I have drawn are basically snapshots of a particular period in time. Both universities and TAFE colleges are moving increasingly down the road of whole of life education, professional education, educating the whole person, lifelong learning and so on. I think that the universities continue to be further down that road of whole person teaching rather than specific context based teachings than TAFE. They have been for a long time and will continue to be for quite some time. But they are both moving also. I would not want to be freezing them into one particular point.

Mr PYNE—Do you think that there is an inherent distinction between universities and TAFEs that means that there will not be a time when TAFEs can offer exactly the same sorts of courses as universities, and as well as universities, and vice-versa?

Prof. Mackenzie—I think that, if you get to that point, there is no point in having a distinction between the sectors.

Mr PYNE—Yes.

Prof. Mackenzie—The nature of what each of them offers might well change over time and become more abstract and conceptually complex, more dealing with management of things and less dealing with doing the actual jobs, that being a great deal of what we used to teach people to do in technical colleges and by pressing buttons, for instance. I am very happy with the notion that that sort of thing will continue and that the increasing complexification of the things we teach will continue both in universities and TAFE. The distinction I have drawn is valid at a descriptive level at the present point in time. It is valid as a statement of the kind of relationship between TAFE and university for some time in the past and probably some time in the future, while recognising that both are going to continue to move down the road.

Mr PYNE—Do you think that, within the sector of the 36 universities, there should be or is growing a distinction between different types of universities and what they do? For example, are there universities that concentrate more on research and less on undergraduate and graduate training learning and are there universities that concentrate more on learning as opposed to research? Do you think there should be any sort of distinction made between those universities or should the 36 just be allowed to find their own equilibrium?

Prof. Mackenzie—I think that this is getting pretty far away from TAFE. It is a matter in which I also have some opinions and I am happy to share them with you.

Mr PYNE—Yes, I admit that it is getting a bit far away from TAFE, but it would help the committee in terms of our final report to know what the distinctions are that make universities and that make TAFEs.

CHAIR—I think it is quite relevant.

Prof. Mackenzie—My view there is what I would like to characterise as a hard-edged economic rationalist one. That is that we should not be prescribing that these universities are research universities and those ones are teaching universities. We should compare what kind of research output we get in terms of reasonable indicators like publications and high quality reference journals and relate that to the kind of funding they have.

I have come to my present university from the University of Tasmania where I spent over 20 years. These two universities are very different in many respects, but both are alike in not being part of the so-called group of eight and both missed out when the research quantum was first set up. So the funding that they get for research is at a significantly lower level than some of the self-proclaimed research universities have. However, I believe that there is a clear indication that, if you look at the number of publications per \$1,000 of funding, you will find a higher level of productivity in many of the less highly funded and newer universities than in some of the older ones.

I recall doing some analysis at the University of Tasmania a few years ago and it was particularly evident then that we were set to overhaul one or two of the members of the group of eight. However, the University of Tasmania went into a bit of a spin after that and did not do so. But the difference between the two types, despite an extremely different funding level, in actual performance was extremely low. I do think that there will quite properly be differences arising between the universities as to how much research concentration different ones have, but it is far more appropriate for this to be seen on a continuum rather than to be seen as a classification of these being research universities and those not.

I recall some ARC data from a couple of years ago looking at areas of excellence in the various ARC research areas. Almost every university in the country qualified as a centre of excellence in at least one area and no university qualified as a centre of excellence in all of them. Continuing to fund the universities differentially on the kinds of success they have had while letting those who were further behind work harder to try to catch up more is a reasonable way for us to continue to go, rather than to try to buttress the very real but only partial difference between universities in an artificial way by setting up boundaries between them and saying, 'These ones will be funded for research and those ones won't.' That is a recipe for not getting the greatest value for money out of the research dollar, frankly.

CHAIR—The whole issue of the TAFE sector basically looks at assessment on a competency based skills assessment and the universities traditionally have had a graded assessment program. Does closer articulation in any way threaten either sector in terms of the way they seek to assess students?

Prof. Mackenzie—It depends upon how the articulation is handled. At our university we have a number of articulation programs with the TAFE colleges we are co-located with and these work extremely well. We have students coming into university after doing the TAFE certificate in accounting and they have extremely valuable technical skills to provide them with an excellent basis for understanding some of the principles of accounting, how accounting procedures and principles relate to auditing requirements, what the strategic decisions are that are dependent upon accounting methods, why different accounting methods are useful for different kinds of corporations and so on. They can learn those sorts of things better if they already have a firm grounding in the more

technical procedures which are taught in the TAFE certificate course.

Therefore, I do not see the articulation between those procedures, or between those courses, as threatening to either one of them. The students are best off, frankly, if they have both. But those who get only one or the other are nevertheless well equipped for activity in particular sectors.

Mr MOSSFIELD—It was put to us earlier in the day that the progression from school could be two years of TAFE and then two years of university. Is there any value in that, or do you feel as though students could go straight to university as they do now?

Prof. Mackenzie—There could be very great value in combining TAFE and university courses in a student's education. This is part of the principle behind the articulation arrangements we have, an advanced articulation program for students coming out of the TAFE diploma in accounting, and we are about to set the same sort of thing up in our old hospitality programs. Getting that kind of dual experience starting off with the relatively more concrete technical skills and using those as a base for the more abstract problem solving and strategic skills is an excellent form of education in those areas where it works. There are many things that are taught at TAFE that are not taught in the same subject area at university, and vice versa.

I do not know that a TAFE course in ancient history would do much good as preparation for university study. Likewise, I do not know that a TAFE course in sheet metal welding would do much good in preparation for the same sort of thing at university. Each tends to be taught only in one sector to a far greater extent than those skills are used in the other one. I think it is important to have both of them teaching their own things and doing them well, but in the areas where they do have overlap of content it does the students a lot of good to be able to have some experience of both teaching and learning styles.

CHAIR—How do you deal with the anomalies between the funding of the two sectors in terms of articulating the two? Obviously, the governmental funding of each sector is different. Then, in the higher education sector you have the higher education contribution scheme and in the TAFE sector, of course, you have up-front fees, which are smaller. Is this a problem?

Prof. Mackenzie—It is a problem in that, despite the difficulties we have been having increasingly over the past years, universities are still funded at a very higher level than the TAFE institutes are. This makes the interoperability of the courses sometimes a bit more complex, but it is not something which has ever stopped us in getting the articulation programs going. We accept, and our partners in TAFE accept, that the university is funded for research purposes as well as for teaching, and that the teaching purposes themselves require more in the way of preparation beyond the technical preparation for the subjects so that the overall teaching loads are formally lighter but more

intensive and so on.

CHAIR—Are there any other questions?

Prof. Mackenzie—Do you want to talk about the education precinct at all? Since you were talking with the people at Coffs Harbour, it caught my attention. I would be happy to shed a bit of contrast, if you want to.

Mr PYNE—This is the UWS precinct with TAFEs and so on?

Prof. Mackenzie—Yes, that is right. At the old HMAS *Nirimba* site we have formed a precinct with the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE and with both state and Catholic high schools.

CHAIR—Okay, give us a burst.

Prof. Mackenzie—The basic difference there between us and Coffs Harbour is that we do not have a formal joint venture; we do not have a formal corporation or any kind of formal entity that represents the joint operations. What we have is a very limited amount of community title to some land but not to any of the capital works which are found on the land. So the university owns all of its buildings, TAFE owns all of its own, and the schools own theirs.

What we have by way of cooperation is, basically, expanding upon or building upon the base of co-location we have got, as well as a great deal of cooperation and goodwill that has seen us able to get together really quite closely over the past couple of years so that we are able to have articulation agreements between the university and TAFE rather more easily than perhaps we would have them anywhere else. We were able to set up a program whereby we will be inviting students in grade 12 at the local high schools who have fairly decent marks to take university subjects, which they can then cash in for course credit if they come to UWS Hawkesbury the following year. I do not know just what arrangements are envisaged for the relationship between the high schools and TAFE, but I know it is something which is under active consideration.

We have found that the model of having the four institutions in the three sectors maintain their own separate identity, but on the basis of goodwill and being right next door to each other, sharing facilities and sharing educational projects, works extremely well. For example, we share swimming pools, lecture theatres and all of that sort of thing, and there are very good relationships between the institutions in making these available to each other.

There are certainly some savings in capital cost by sharing those things, but the primary educational purpose is for the benefits that can accrue to the students, and through them to the institutions serving the students, by having these projects and programs that

can combine the perspectives and the opportunities available through each. We think this has already begun to work very well through university and TAFE cooperation and, as the high schools are coming on stream now, we think it will work even better as all three levels start to get intertwined.

CHAIR—Very good.

Prof. Mackenzie—At the same time we also think that one of the things that has made it successful is the extent to which we have been able to maintain our own identities both as institutions and in terms of the facilities and the capital we have on the land and so on, so that we do not get into squabbles on the basis of the very different kinds of patterns of use we would have.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Professor Mackenzie; I appreciate that. Professor Schreuder also had a submission which was under the same umbrella as yours. I am sorry about that.

Prof. Mackenzie—That is quite all right. I did look over his and, as I said to Mr Rees earlier, I spoke with the principal drafter of it, Professor Duke, and we agreed that, although they had a different emphasis, there was nothing inconsistent between the two, so he was happy for me to come and represent the university at this hearing. But I did fail to pick up the point you are making specifically in regard to Professor Schreuder's submission—trying to find some trace of it in my own!

CHAIR—All right. Thank you very much, Professor Mackenzie.

[3.41 p.m.]

WELLSMORE, Mr Jim, 9/140 Crimea Road, Marsfield, New South Wales 2122

CHAIR—Welcome. Would you like to say anything about the capacity in which you are appearing before the committee? Could you then give us a five- to 10-minute precis of the submission and then we will discuss it.

Mr Wellsmore—I am appearing in an individual capacity. I am employed as a full-time research officer for the representative student organisation, the Students Council, at Macquarie University, which is in the north-western suburbs of Sydney. I am very grateful to be given the opportunity to appear before you.

My presumption is that there are things I covered in my submission that perhaps were not covered by others. I did make the point, and I would stress again, that my experience with higher education is with universities, not with the TAFE sector, so there may be some things I might say that people from TAFE and VET would take exception to. I am sensitive to the possibility that there is some kind of tension between the two sectors. I am not trying to push the boat of universities at the expense of the further education, TAFE and VET, sectors at all. Certainly we can move beyond the distinctions, which I think are rather artificial in this era, between those two areas of post-school education and training.

My point of view comes from an observation of what has happened in higher education in the last 10 years at least and of the kinds of mechanisms that have been used to drive change within higher education, and a concern that those kinds of mechanisms might be brought to bear in increasing the overlap perhaps or the interaction between TAFE and VET, on the one hand, and universities, on the other. It may be that I am overly cynical; it may be that I am ideologically disposed; I would probably confess to both. But certainly I think the notion, which perhaps not many people own up to but which is certainly there in terms of people's attitudes and perceptions, of competition between the two sectors of post-school education is an issue which probably gets in the way of the more important academic and educational questions.

I am aware, for example, of some of the discussion in Victoria about the possibility of change to the formal relationship between the two sectors of post-school education and training. There is quite a bit of rhetoric, in the public domain at least, about guarding people's respective turfs, as it were. TAFE is saying, 'No, we can go it alone. We don't want be forced in with universities,' and universities are saying, 'Of course we can do it much better because we are bigger and better,' and so on. The point I have really tried to draw out in my written submission is the difficulties that competition at a number of different levels has for education as a process, but also the problems that it has in really trying to deliver the kinds of outcomes that people claim they want when they try and introduce change.

For example, in the university system, the idea stemming from the changes introduced by then Minister Dawkins about a decade ago was to create a kind of uniform university sector, where each institution would basically be given the same type of funding, the same type of student load and the same mixture of research and teaching activities in order that they could compete with one another and thus reach world's best practice, or whatever it was going to be, but certainly to deliver better educational and, as he saw it and as many have seen it, better economic outcomes for Australia.

I have drawn on some work by an academic at the University of Melbourne, Simon Marginson, in my written submission. He makes the point rather well that the unified national system, in name, is really anything but in terms of the kinds of outcomes that it has delivered at the institutional level; that competition necessarily involves winners, on the one hand, and losers, on the other; and that by placing the universities, some of which were formerly known as colleges of advanced education, in direct competition with each other, what has in fact happened is that a sort of hierarchy has become entrenched. If it is the case that people are looking to see a greater articulation, or integration even, of all areas of post-school education and training, then my submission would be that direct competition between the existing TAFE-VET sector and the existing university sector is probably not going to be very productive at all.

I think I made some reference in the written submission to the system in the United States and, in a sense, to a kind of Americanisation of higher education that we have seen. Whereas once upon a time people in Australia could more or less rely on universities delivering, I believe, a fairly high and certainly uniform standard and quality, now there is very much seen to be a very entrenched hierarchy that exists. In the American system we have this enormous spectrum of institutions. Everybody knows of the Harvards and so on, the Ivy Leaguers at one end, stretching all the way down, through a whole lot of middle-of-the-road institutions or those regarded as middle of the road in terms of public perception and notions about the quality that they might produce, to the 'back of the cornflakes box' kinds of degree granting institutions.

I am sure we will not see post-school education descend to quite those levels in this country. Nevertheless, it is the case, I think—certainly Dr Marginson makes this point and, as somebody who works within the sector of higher education, I have to agree with him—that competition has, if anything, actually entrenched the position of the older, more established institutions, those which, it perhaps might have been expected, would have been forced to actually lift their game by being faced with competition from a whole bunch of new universities or restructured universities. If we are talking about competition, we are effectively talking about competition in the marketplace; it is an economic form of competition.

If anything, the sandstones have seen their market position improved because 10 years ago there was a certain number of universities and the sandstones had a certain position but they were competing within a smaller market as universities. Now there is a

much broader spectrum of universities, a much larger group of universities, and thus perceptions have come into play about there being a spread of quality and status—Sydney University on the one hand and Charles Sturt and UWS and others, including Southern Cross, at the other end. Relatively speaking, Sydney University, UWS, Monash, Melbourne or Adelaide have probably seen their position reinforced. Those institutions now look like a much better deal to students or other institutions or to people who might want to invest money, such as public benefactors.

Going back to where we started with competition, to the extent that it exists between TAFE and VET on the one hand and universities on the other, if competition is to be formalised in funding mechanisms and so on, my great concern is that, rather than actually improving the lot of TAFE and VET as a whole, we are going to end up in a situation where we will be looking at any greater differentiation of institutions. In fact, it will not get any easier for TAFE and VET to compete with some universities. In fact, many of the universities which now fall into the middle or bottom ranking are themselves going to find it even harder still because there will be winners and there will be losers. Those that are now perhaps falling into the middle in terms of universities may well find that if they are not a winner by definition, they are a loser. If TAFE is to compete directly on an economic basis with higher education, the group of eight, the sandstones, the Ivy League institutions in Australia, will actually be winners at the expense of just about everybody else. That probably covers it. That is a precis, I guess.

Mr PYNE—Are you saying that before the amalgamations of institutions into universities—CAEs, et cetera, becoming universities—there was a group of eight universities, sandstone universities, and a group of other universities which were not regarded as part of the sandstone but still had that university tag on them; and now there are still the same eight if not enhanced in their position because the other ones have been put into the same category as all the new CAEs that have become universities.

Take Flinders University, for example. Are you saying that, before, everyone knew that Adelaide University was a sandstone university and Flinders University was the other university in South Australia offering a very high quality medical course, for example, that was very much sought after by people who wanted to do practical training as opposed to the more conservative Adelaide University medical course; whereas now, because there is Adelaide, USA and Flinders, Flinders is sort of regarded in the same class as the USA as opposed to the same class as Adelaide University? So it has actually worked against the interests of universities like Flinders and in the interests of the University of Adelaide. Is that what you are suggesting?

Mr Wellmore—Pretty much. Not to malign the University of South Australia or to say—

Mr PYNE—I am not maligning them either.

Mr Wellmore—I graduated from Flinders University, so I am quite familiar with the cultural cringe that was present there during the 1980s and I suspect perhaps still is. I am not here to deny the claims of the old South Australian Institute of Technology to become a university, but in terms of perceptions those perceptions are very important to the way that markets work. Effectively, we are talking about student markets and student demand, the ability of some institutions to translate perceptions about status into a greater economic position and, ultimately, the way that current policy is heading, the ability to charge higher fees to more students. If you take that specific case, Flinders has probably been thrown back into the ruck to some extent.

Mr PYNE—I can see your point. What do you think government should do about the overlap between TAFEs and universities?

Mr Wellmore—I think the first issue is the issue of funding. It is one of the few things that I would take some heart from in terms of the West committee's interim report, at least, with the notion that post-school education should be treated pretty much as a whole in order to be funded pretty much as a whole.

Mr PYNE—Do you mean per student? What do you mean by 'funded as a whole'?

Mr Wellmore—Whatever the funding model is going to be, it ought to be applied—

Mr PYNE—Uniformly across the sector.

Mr Wellmore—Yes. Personally, I am more familiar with the per student model of allocated operating grants. I think that works quite well. TAFE people might disagree with me on the applicability of that. If a single model were to be applied uniformly, that would be getting somewhere in that direction.

Mr PYNE—Are you saying that you would get \$11,200 per student whether you were at university or at TAFE? Would there be no differentiation between the types of students and what they were studying?

Mr Wellmore—In practice, that differentiation does occur anyway through the way in which students pay for their education through HECS. There is an enormous differentiation now in the proportion of total course costs that students are paying in universities through HECS. From the figures that West came up with, it ranges I think from in the vicinity of 85 per cent to 90 per cent for agriculture and law down to the low 20 per cent in some high tech and highly capital intensive areas. In practice, that differentiation occurs anyway. I am not in a position to really work the numbers right here, but TAFE equally teaches a range of students a range of types of courses or programs.

If you say to TAFE and VET, 'At the end of the day, you probably don't need \$11,200; you probably need \$9,800,' that may not be such a difficulty in principle. From my way of thinking, the model that is applied to universities did, until the 1996 federal budget, have some significant advantages in that it allowed the possibility for many students to defray the initial up-front costs of education. Say you enrolled in a diploma at a university. People who enrolled to upgrade their teaching qualifications to a Dip. Ed. were able to do that on a HECS liable basis. The changes since the 1996 budget have significantly altered the mathematics of that and the actual benefit that individual students get from that.

On the flip side of that, whilst universities are looking to compete with TAFE for groups of students and are looking to capture niche markets, because they are able to identify those students as potentially fee-paying students and put them into fee-paying courses on top of funded loads, TAFE and VET are in many cases forced into a kind of a counterthrust—

Mr PYNE—Towards offering degrees and things like that?

Mr Wellmore—Yes.

Mr PYNE—So do you think TAFEs should be allowed to offer degrees?

Mr Wellmore—Does it reveal one's bias, my having come out of the university sector? I do not know. For me, probably not. If universities were in a position to expand their offerings of TAFE VET type programs, diplomas and so on, and that could be done in a way which did not necessarily threaten the viability of some TAFE institutions, then I would argue that TAFEs are not really going to be in a position to match, in educational terms, what universities are able to do. But, again, it goes back to the issue of funding. The same argument was made 10 years ago with universities and CAEs and whether Sturt College of Education or whatever could be turned into a university.

In research, there are years and years sometimes of endeavour and expertise and corporate memory which go into some of the things that universities can do, but the bottom line is that if the TAFE sector is to be funded in a similar way to universities, then why not? That is the bottom line. Whether TAFE is going to be funded for research, that is a whole different thing. It is clear that the formula for the central allocation of research money in higher education has been to favour the older, more established institutions. If you had a similar formula applied again, or extended, you would still see a lot of institutions out there that theoretically could be funded for research but in practice saw very little of that research. You are still seeing the vast bulk of the ARC grants and so on going to the top eight, nine or 10 institutions. Most universities do not really get much of a sniff of that.

On the other hand, with the way in which university teaching and research is

funded and the way in which those activities are organised, there actually is an enormous amount of research activity going on in universities from academics basically funding themselves, if you like. They allocate their time to teaching and then they give some to research and some to other activities and out of that comes an ongoing research effort. As I say, if that sort of management of time and that kind of management of funding was available to TAFE VET, you could well find a similar kind of research effort being mounted out of that sector.

It is probably not for me to say. There are others much better qualified than I am to theorise about the educational, the academic, outcomes of that. As for the simple question about whether they can do it, if the political decision was taken to fund them appropriately, then yes, they probably could. But—

CHAIR—Concerning the issue of fees in TAFEs, some institutions take students from predominantly low income areas, and in some cases it is 60 to 70 per cent. We were told at Gippsland TAFE that 54 per cent of their students are concessional students and they lose \$500,000 a year off the top of an operating budget of \$20 million. The institutes will provide internal loans to students who have trouble meeting fees.

I have two questions. Firstly, is there a place for some kind of deferred payment scheme in the TAFE sector as there is with the HECS program in the higher education sector? Secondly, should governments deal with this problem? The problems are compounded for TAFEs that are providing VET services in low income areas because they have got a lot of concessional students. Have you got any thoughts on those things?

Mr Wellmore—Yes, sure, I have. I certainly have. To be honest, I come from a background of believing passionately in the full and adequate provision of post-school education from the public purse. So I approach the issue of HECS as someone who marched in the streets in 1988 and 1989. Having said that, it is quite clear that there are a number of advantages to HECS, or an income contingent scheme, over other forms of fees.

I regard HECS, effectively, as a tuition fee which you can defer, although there is an interest penalty of 25 per cent. Still, that is vastly preferable. By way of digression, it is interesting to note that one of the claims that was made for HECS when it was introduced was that it would be used to fund significant growth in higher education. We have seen growth in the last 10 years, but the bulk of those additional students have not been from low income backgrounds. The advent of HECS and the advent of increased student loads at universities has just got more kids from middle-class backgrounds into universities.

I do not have a problem with kids from middle-class families going to university. It is just that HECS does have its limitations, even at that level. It has not actually overcome those socioeconomic barriers. But, if you were to go to any individual and say,

'Would you like to go to TAFE? You have a choice between a system where you pay the money up front or you pay a little more but you pay it down the track, maybe five years after you graduate,' you would probably find a lot of families would be opting for the HECS style scheme.

To go back to the start of your question with the specific example of Gippsland TAFE, it probably stems from much more complex issues than can really be dealt with just by arguments about student fees, user-pays or financing mechanisms. There are certain cultures that attach themselves to different types of post-school education. There are certain cultures which lead more naturally towards certain people going towards one or the other.

CHAIR—One person who had been the director of TAFE on the Gold Coast—I think it may have been the same woman—who then went to Gippsland made the observation that at the Gold Coast she could have been charging considerably higher fees to a much broader student population and raised more money to put into programs that the institute would run. In fact, in those sorts of areas the fees raised could be used to cross-subsidise TAFEs operating in much lower income areas such as the one that she then went to in Gippsland. Even this morning we heard from a person from the Randwick institute who actually surveyed students and found that 70 per cent said they would be happy to pay twice the fees they are paying to see the TAFE continue, if not prosper.

One of the problems that we have identified is that you have TAFEs operating with students from a low income cohort and TAFE's problems in providing training are compounded by the fact that their income is diminished because they have all these concessional students. On the other hand you have TAFEs in other areas that are drawing from a higher income group where there are very few concessionals. In fact, those students could probably pay more. Have you given any thought as to how governments could deal with what is an obvious inequity?

Mr Wellsmore—It is a matter of maldistribution, I suppose. It goes back to the issue of funding. To the extent that universities do attract students from low income backgrounds, they do not find that so much of a financial imposition because of the way they are funded, obviously. My view on this would be to return to some of the arguments that we raised all those years ago about HECS. If it is the case of there being unequal outcomes, that some people come out of a post-school education—in the case of HECS it is a university—with a great degree and a really well-paid job, that does not get away very much from the difficulty of some people being in a position to pay.

I do not know what the socioeconomic breakdown of the Gold Coast is. If people are saying that they are able to pay more—twice as much, or whatever—I accept that, if they are able, they may well be willing. The problem is that others are not. You come back to that problem you always have when you are designing public policy: where does the line get drawn? If we institute a system, as we already have in post-school education,

where paying some kind of fee in some way is an accepted and normal thing, you then have the difficulty of where exactly to draw the borders. It seems to me—and this is the argument, as I say, that I have sustained for 10 years—that, if we are seeing those kinds of inequities in terms of economic outcomes, that some people go to university and come out with great jobs and earn lots of money, then the other way of dealing with that is through the taxation system. If people are in fact coming out with great incomes, good luck to them—but they can be taxed appropriately.

There was a study a few years back in New Zealand which argued that, over the lifetime of a university graduate's income earning and thus taxation remitting to the government there, an individual would more than pay back the initial outlay on their university education. I am sure that argument could be applied to TAFE. The problem is: where do you draw the line and where do people start to fall through the cracks? For example, with the HECS system as it is now, there are people who are really in a position where, if they are going to study, they have to pay the HECS up front. The economics just work out that way.

If you are in the work force and you are earning more than the threshold—which is terribly far below average weekly earnings now; about \$21,000 is where it starts to cut in—you are pretty much forced to pay it up front, because if you do not you are going to get hit at tax time anyway. Any accountant will tell you, 'Better to pay it now and get the 25 per cent discount.' So there are those kinds of difficulties with implementing a system where one group of students is cross-subsidising another group of students.

CHAIR—Do you have any concerns about the closer articulation between the TAFE sector and the universities? Some people have suggested that the importance of universities for research, learning, personal development, inculcation of values and all that sort of stuff is going to be diminished because they are moving into a narrow, training based activity and that because the TAFEs, which do not have a history of research and high learning, are moving closer to the universities we might end up with a society in which everybody is trained and few are educated. Some people have put that to us.

Mr Wellmore—I am aware of those arguments. I do not really have any sympathy for them at all. I think the previous witness made the point about the different types of things that the different types of sectors, TAFE and universities, can actually inculcate in their students. That was also made quite clear in the report from the National Board of Employment, Education and Training—NBEET—that I quoted from in my written submission. There are different types of things, none of them necessarily more important or valuable than the other, that can come from each of those two sectors.

My concern is that if universities are in a position of chasing the dollar and that is why they are placing some kind of priority on developing TAFE level programs because they can charge up-front fees for those because, as is perhaps the example on the Gold Coast, people are willing and able to pay for the status of having a university at the

bottom of their diploma, then that is an issue that goes to the heart of the culture of universities. But that is an issue that universities are facing already in terms of postgraduate fee-paying students and overseas fee-paying students, so I do not think there is anything special in that sense about articulation between universities and TAFE.

CHAIR—As there are no further questions, thank you very much. Thank you for all the effort you went to.

Mr Wellmore—Thank you. I hope it made some sense.

CHAIR—It was very good.

Mr Wellmore—Thank you for the opportunity. I really appreciate it.

CHAIR—It was very good of you to take the time to provide such a detailed submission. It shows a high degree of motivation.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Pyne**):

That this subcommittee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Subcommittee adjourned at 4.16 p.m.