

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No.1) Bill 2005

Submission no: 1

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The Melbourne College of Divinity



10th March 2005

**EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND
EDUCATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
SUITE SG.52
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA
ACT 2600**

*Established by the Melbourne
College of Divinity Act (Victoria)
1910-1990
Affiliated with the University of
Melbourne 1993*

**Submission to the inquiry into the provisions of the Higher Education
Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No. 1) Bill 2005 relating to
the proposal to give Table B providers access to the Capital
Development Pool**

Churches

Anglican Church of
Australia
(Province of Victoria)
Baptist Union of Victoria
Churches of Christ
(Conference of Victoria
and Tasmania)
Presbyterian Church
of Victoria
Roman Catholic Church
in Victoria
(Melbourne Province)
The Uniting Church in Australia
(Synod of Victoria and Tasmania)

Dear Committee Members,

The Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD) supports the proposal to extend to Table B providers access to the Capital Development Pool.

The MCD is now in its 95th year of existence and will celebrate its Centenary in 2010. The College is the second oldest self-regulating Higher Education Provider in the State of Victoria, and the sixth oldest in Australia, and has to date awarded some 8000 degrees and diplomas. Currently the MCD offers three undergraduate awards in theology, two coursework and three masters' degrees, three doctoral degrees, and a variety of graduate diplomas and certificates. The MCD is a solid performer in the area of research, due in part to its reception of research funding from the Federal government since 2002. The MCD will be audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency in September this year as part of a process to examine quality assurance procedures in Universities and Colleges listed in Table A and Table B of the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Associated Teaching Institutions
Catholic Theological College
East Melbourne
Evangelical Theological Association
Parkville and Mulgrave
United Faculty of Theology Parkville
Yarra Theological Union
Box Hill

Journal

*Pacifica: Australasian
Theological Studies*

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CRICOS Provider 01037A
ABN 95 290 912 141

The College is in the process of meeting the requirements of the new National Governance Protocols by working with the Parliament of Victoria to amend the Melbourne College of Divinity Act 1910, through a Melbourne College of Divinity (Amendment) Bill, slated for presentation to Parliament in its Autumn session.

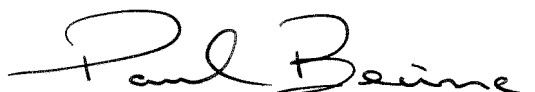
In line with its Vision and Mission Statements, the MCD attempts to keep its fees, paid upfront, to a minimum, so that any person who wishes may study at an institution with an international reputation for academically rigorous degrees in fields relating Divinity. Listed by the Australian Taxation Office as a not-for-profit charitable institution, the MCD's finances in any fiscal year show an extremely marginal profit. In short, while 'rich' in academic resources, the MCD has never had money to spare for capital development.

The expressed hope of the MCD is that it will be located in its own premises by its Centenary. To date, it has received no government funding, State or Federal, for any capital development project. In fact, an excellent opportunity to locate the Joint Theological Library, graduate studies centre and the central administration of the MCD, at the former Queen Elizabeth site in Carlton, adjacent to the University of Melbourne with which it is affiliated failed to eventuate because the MCD and its partners, the Uniting Church (Synod of Victoria and Tasmania) and the Australian Province of the Jesuit Order, could not meet the financial requirements stipulated by the State government for purchase of the site.

It is the sincere hope of the MCD and its governing body, the College, that the legislative amendment relating to extending the eligibility for capital development funding grants to Table B Higher Education Providers comes to fruition. If it does, the College would hope that a capital development project resulting in the MCD being permanently located in an appropriate site, after almost 100 years of changing rented premises, would eventuate.

In conclusion, the Melbourne College of Divinity wholeheartedly supports the Minister's initiative in proposing the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (2005 Measures No.1) Amendment Bill 2005.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Beirne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Paul Beirne
Dean