**AUSTRAILIAN SCHOOLS: PARTICIPATION AND FUNDING 1901 TO 2000**

**Gerald Burke** is a Professorial Fellow and Executive Director of the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, a joint centre of Monash University and the Australian Council for Educational Research. **Andrew Spaul** is a Reader in the Faculty of Education at Monash University specializing in history, politics and industrial relations in education. They have both been engaged in research in Australian education since the late 1960s.

**INTRODUCTION**

Education is not included as a Commonwealth power in the Constitution, and therefore it remains the responsibility of the States. However, the Commonwealth with its greater revenue base, especially after 1941, became involved in assisting with the funding of tertiary students and universities and then, notably from the 1960s, of the school system itself, in both public and private sectors. By the end of the century it provided over 40% of all public funds for education, had a dominant role in higher education and substantial influence and funding in vocational education and in schooling.

This article has a limited scope. It examines participation in education, particularly secondary schooling, in Australia during the twentieth century and the funding system that underpins it. This necessarily involves comment on the quality of the education system in relation to the needs of the students of all social backgrounds and the Australian economy and society. And it involves outlining some of the key changes that occurred in the twentieth century and the political and policy issues that underlay them.

Although the Australian colonies readily embraced and almost implemented universal education in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the challenges of secondary education, and the participation and destinations of adolescents in this stage of formal schooling, have dominated educational policies and planning during the entire twentieth century. Perhaps this was unavoidable because of the nature and position of secondary education in a modern democratic society. Of all the stages in schooling, secondary education is the most sensitive to both personal aspirations and societal demands. As the first national survey of secondary education (The Education of the Adolescent in Australia) observed in 1935: "Australian secondary education is still in the stage of transition. Perhaps it will never be in any other".

**Australian education in 1901**

In 1901 Australian education, except in Western Australia, was suffering from the financial effects of the long economic depression. But there was an abundance of schools and pupils. Some 15,000 of these pupils, from New South Wales' public schools, provided the choral accompaniment to the first Governor-General's signing of the new Oath of Allegiance in Centennial Park, Sydney on 1 January 1901.

Of the 9,353 schools with a total enrolment of 887,137 pupils, most were 'free' public (state) schools, and the bulk of these were one-teacher schools with enrolments of between 10 and 30 students. The 'peculiarity' of Australian education, noted Monroe's A Cyclopedia of Education in 1911, was the absolute centralised control by the State of each public education system, and "since local interest is fitful, the external equipment of the schools is usually of an inferior character". This international review also observed that it was "perhaps unfortunate" that an education constitutional power had not been included in "the act of federation" in 1900.

Compulsory attendance laws for children, generally for those between 6 and 13 years, were at last in place (Queensland having introduced its law in 1900), but they were not strictly enforced and, as well, remained out of reach of the most isolated communities and were inapplicable to Indigenous peoples. Schools were open at least 220 days a year, which was regarded as progressively high for a non-industrial society. Roman Catholic parish schools, established in the 1880s by the bishops to counteract the secular ('godless') public schools, and other private schools in towns and cities, appeared much more effective in maintaining regular attendance of pupils, attaining an average pupil attendance of 81% of their enrolments, compared with 70% for pupils in government schools.

Two free kindergartens had recently opened in Sydney, but no system yet provided school medical and related services. Nonetheless in 1901 Sydney and Hobart schoolboys were surveyed to find that for their ages they were taller than their English counterparts, but had smaller chests than European boys. Among the diverse range of secondary schools in the cities and the larger towns, only five were state-controlled institutions (four in New South Wales, one in Adelaide) but, like the private providers, namely endowed grammar schools and denominational religious schools, they attracted low and fluctuating enrolments from fee-paying secondary school students. Overall, the diffusion of popular education over the previous decades, as measured by national literacy rates (percentage of 5-14 year olds who could read and write), was 80% in 1901, an increase of some 4% from 1891; it would rise to the acceptable level of 90% in 1911.
There were 22,213 teachers working in Australian schools in 1901, two-thirds employed by State education departments. Nearly two-thirds of these teachers were women or girls; it had been a higher figure, but married women and many female pupil teachers in the public school systems had been systematically retrained as part of the economy measures in the 1890s. Most schoolteachers had never trained at a teachers' college, instead they had obtained certification in a State system by an apprenticeship as pupil-teacher. Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania did not have training institutions in 1901, while the Victorian Government only permitted the education department to reopen its college in Carlton in 1900 after a six years' recess.

Western Australia had established its first technical college the same year, thereby providing technical education of the 'central' technical model or the 'school of Mines/Arts' model in each of the new States. Except for New South Wales, none were under direct State control, but this would occur increasingly throughout the decade. Western Australia, and also Queensland, were without a university in 1901. Each other State had one small university located in the capital, which on 'modern' British lines closely regulated and administered various levels of public examinations for the schools, and offered higher studies for degrees in the liberal arts, the old and some of the new professions like engineering or dentistry, as well adjunct extension classes for adults. In 1901 there were 33 professors in the four Australian universities and some 2,500 undergraduate students, many of whom were part-time enrolles.

The promotion of such early specialisation in adolescents' education disturbed the new generation of departmental leaders in Victoria. The promotion of such early specialisation in adolescents' education disturbed the new generation of departmental leaders in Victoria.

The Australian Housing settlement to the start of the new century. (Feature Article)

The Australian Housing settlement to the start of the new century. (Feature Article)

A sporting life! (Feature Article)

A sporting life! (Feature Article)

Accounting for audiences in Australian museums (Feature Article)

Accounting for audiences in Australian museums (Feature Article)

Public funding of the arts in Australia - 1900 to 2000 (Feature Article)

Public funding of the arts in Australia - 1900 to 2000 (Feature Article)

The evolution of Australian industry (Feature Article)

The evolution of Australian industry (Feature Article)

Management of Australia's inland waters. Developing a reliable water resource in the early 1900s. (Feature Article)

Management of Australia's inland waters. Developing a reliable water resource in the early 1900s. (Feature Article)

Agriculture, the early years (Feature Article)

Agriculture, the early years (Feature Article)

Agricultural inventions (Feature Article)

Agricultural inventions (Feature Article)

Thinking 'green' in 1901 (Feature Article)

Thinking 'green' in 1901 (Feature Article)

Timber then and now (Feature Article)

Timber then and now (Feature Article)

A century of mining in Australia (Feature Article)

A century of mining in Australia (Feature Article)

Manufacturing from settlement to the start of the new century (Feature Article)

Manufacturing from settlement to the start of the new century (Feature Article)

The Australian Housing Stock: 1911 and 1996 (Feature Article)

The Australian Housing Stock: 1911 and 1996 (Feature Article)

The changing face of the retail industry: 1948 to 1992 (Feature Article)

The changing face of the retail industry: 1948 to 1992 (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

Australia's motor vehicle fleet since the 1920s (Feature Article)

Australia's motor vehicle fleet since the 1920s (Feature Article)

History of communications in Australia (Feature Article)

History of communications in Australia (Feature Article)

The pace of change in science and innovation (Feature Article)

The pace of change in science and innovation (Feature Article)

1901 in retrospect (Feature Article)

1901 in retrospect (Feature Article)

Accrual-based Government Finance Statistics (Feature Article)

Accrual-based Government Finance Statistics (Feature Article)

Taxation during the first 100 years of Federation (Feature Article)

Taxation during the first 100 years of Federation (Feature Article)

Prices in Australia at the beginning and end of the 20th century (Feature Article)

Prices in Australia at the beginning and end of the 20th century (Feature Article)

Price indexes and The New Tax System (Feature Article)

Price indexes and The New Tax System (Feature Article)

History of national accounts in Australia (Feature Article)

History of national accounts in Australia (Feature Article)

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century (Feature Article)

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century (Feature Article)

Measuring education in Australian Censuses - 1861 to 2001 (Feature Article)

Measuring education in Australian Censuses - 1861 to 2001 (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

Agricultural inventions (Feature Article)

Agricultural inventions (Feature Article)

Thinking ‘green’ in 1901 (Feature Article)

Thinking ‘green’ in 1901 (Feature Article)

Timber then and now (Feature Article)

Timber then and now (Feature Article)

A century of mining in Australia (Feature Article)

A century of mining in Australia (Feature Article)

Manufacturing from settlement to the start of the new century (Feature Article)

Manufacturing from settlement to the start of the new century (Feature Article)

The Australian Housing Stock: 1911 and 1996 (Feature Article)

The Australian Housing Stock: 1911 and 1996 (Feature Article)

The changing face of the retail industry: 1948 to 1992 (Feature Article)

The changing face of the retail industry: 1948 to 1992 (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

A history of road fatalities in Australia (Feature Article)

Australia’s motor vehicle fleet since the 1920s (Feature Article)

Australia’s motor vehicle fleet since the 1920s (Feature Article)

History of communications in Australia (Feature Article)

History of communications in Australia (Feature Article)

The pace of change in science and innovation (Feature Article)

The pace of change in science and innovation (Feature Article)

1901 in retrospect (Feature Article)

1901 in retrospect (Feature Article)

Accrual-based Government Finance Statistics (Feature Article)

Accrual-based Government Finance Statistics (Feature Article)

Taxation during the first 100 years of Federation (Feature Article)

Taxation during the first 100 years of Federation (Feature Article)

Prices in Australia at the beginning and end of the 20th century (Feature Article)

Prices in Australia at the beginning and end of the 20th century (Feature Article)

Price indexes and The New Tax System (Feature Article)

Price indexes and The New Tax System (Feature Article)

History of national accounts in Australia (Feature Article)

History of national accounts in Australia (Feature Article)
Public secondary education after the school leaving age was found to be the most inclusive in the multilateral or omnibus high school which developed during the 1920s in the larger country towns. These non-selective schools did attempt to meet some of the specific vocational needs of non-academic stream students, while extending an academic education for students who stayed even one year beyond the school leaving age. Indeed, within the State system the country high school became the dominant mode of secondary schooling in the period between World Wars I and II. In Victoria in 1928 only six (three selective) schools out of 60 high and intermediate high schools were in the Melbourne metropolitan area, while in South Australia the figure was four out of 24. In Sydney, where the public high school had developed more than in any other Australian city, only 48% of all State secondary students attended its metropolitan schools. Tasmania attempted genuine educational innovation in the late 1930s, when it introduced area schools that offered a pronounced bias in practical agriculture geared to local rural industries in the first two years of the secondary school curriculum. This type of schooling proved so popular with local communities that by 1942 fifteen area schools had been established across the State.

The fees question

The provision of secondary education was constantly the subject of debate about tuition fees. It was apparent that when fees were increased, extended or reintroduced, as in almost all States during the Depression, secondary school enrolments fell markedly.

There was both a psychological impact on families that secondary school appeared unaffordable, and a material impact as a result of the collapse of family incomes in the 1930s. The reintroduction of fees as a 1930s emergency measure came at a critical time because primary school enrolments, which had increased significantly in the mid-1920s, could not be matched by the anticipated expansion of secondary school enrolments and retention rates between 1931 and 1936. Thus many young Australians were cruelly denied access to an extended secondary education or the opportunity to complete it in this decade.

New South Wales, as the leading public provider of secondary education, was potentially the most vulnerable to the economic emergency of the 1930s. Its rapid expansion in the previous decade, which had seen State secondary school enrolments treble between 1917 and 1927 (but school accommodation barely doubling), continued during the first years of the Depression. The Government resisted pressure to reimpose fees, and as a result, while State secondary school enrolments fell in 1933 and 1934, they quickly returned to 1932 levels in 1936, and then evened out for the remainder of the decade as a result of the declining birthrate after 1927. The absence of fees in public high schools also had the effect of attracting students from private schools, whose overall enrolments collapsed by nearly 20% between 1930 and 1934, again as the result of the reduction in family incomes.

Nevertheless, the Depression took its toll on all secondary schooling opportunities, because in 1936 New South Wales' secondary education systems could not account for about 40% of children who had completed their primary schooling in 1934.

In South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, which reintroduced secondary school fees in the early 1930s, high school enrolments fell by 9-11% between 1933 and 1936. But the Victorian Government's decision to maintain free technical schooling resulted in an increase in these schools' enrolments by 21% in the same period. For the entire decade, Victorian high school enrolments increased by only 13%, compared with a 42% increase for the technical schools. Obviously the pre-vocational aspect of these schools encouraged families to invest in a system that promised some skill preparation for a revived industrial economy at the end of the 1930s. The overall impact of the 1930s Depression on Australian secondary schooling can be found in the results of a 1946 survey by ACER; it estimated that only 88% of the 13-14 year olds were at full-time school, 57% of 14-15 year olds, 27% of 15-16 year olds and 7% of 16-17 year olds. "Australia has far to go before it attains anything approaching secondary school for all" (Cunningham 1947, p. 344).

The beginnings of reform of State secondary education in this period did allow the elementary school to be reshaped into a primary school as a stage in formal education and not a terminus. The Australian primary school, as distinct from its 19th century antecedent, concentrated on the growth and experiences of the child as an individual personality. The emergence of public secondary education gave the primary school the space to implement the pedagogical and curriculum innovations that had been part of the 'New Education' movement at the turn of the century. Access to primary schooling in the remote areas also had been improved by the introduction of correspondence education around 1916, and the extension and retention of the one teacher school, even though it was four times as expensive per pupil to operate as an ordinary school. Departmental and party political adherence to the small school, except in NSW and Tasmania, seriously impeded the consolidation of these schools by use of road transport for outlying pupils. At the end of the 1930s some two-thirds of Australia's State schools still employed only one teacher, even though these primary schools attracted less than 15% of State school enrolments. The growth of a progressive primary school pedagogy was also inhibited by the poor quality of teacher pre-service training, and by shortages of books, materials and instructional equipment necessary to promote individual and social learning. These difficulties were to be accentuated by the Depression, wartime austerity and postwar shortages. Indeed it would not be until around 1960 that the Australian primary school fully embraced the progressive ideals of the 1900s.

The financial context in the late twentieth century

To take the discussion of schools and participation into the second half of the nineteenth century it is necessary to sketch the main features of educational finance.

In 2000 governments still provide the bulk of funds for education. Public primary and secondary schooling is provided without tuition fees. Small tuition fees have been charged in recent years for public vocational education and training after being removed in the 1970s. The Commonwealth abolished tuition fees in higher education in 1974 when it assumed responsibility for public funding for higher education, previously shared with the States. It began to reintroduce fees in the late 1980s, and in 1989 it brought in the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), which offers an income-contingent loan, later repayable through the tax system, to cover the fee. The fee was then about 20% of course costs. It has since been increased and now varies across courses. Fees covering the costs of tuition are charged for most postgraduate coursework degrees, for a very small proportion of the undergraduate degree courses taken by Australian students, and for overseas students at all levels of education.

Nearly all institutions in higher education and Technical and Further Education are owned by State and Territory Governments, though there are substantial numbers of private providers in Vocational Education and in English language provision. There are two private universities, Bond and Notre Dame, but they provide only a tiny fraction of higher education. The Australian Catholic University is funded by the Federal Government as a public institution.

The Commonwealth provides an important but minority share of the funds for publicly funded vocational education. The Commonwealth provides means tested grants for full-time students in schools and in tertiary education, for those aged 16 and over.

About 70% of school students are in government schools, about 20% in Catholic schools and about 10% in Other non-government
schools. Government schools are largely funded by State and Territory Governments from their own resources (which include Commonwealth financial assistance grants to the States and Territories). No tuition fees are charged, though many government schools seek contributions from parents for a range of materials and services. About 12% of spending on government schools in the States comes from the Commonwealth allocation specifically for government schools-as general funds for schools and for some specific-purpose equity programs and as capital grants for building. The Commonwealth did not provide any funds directly for government schools in the States before 1964.

In the late 1990s, on average about 54% of the spending of non-government schools was financed by government grants (Commonwealth 36%, States 18%) and 46% from private sources such as fees. The amount that a school received from governments depended on a measure of the school's resources (provided from its private income, especially fees which are around $2,500 per annum at a typical Catholic secondary school, but about $10,000 at the high fee Other non-government schools; there are an increasing number of Other non-government schools at the middle to lower fee range).

The economic context of the post-war period was one of full employment and relatively high rates of economic growth until the mid-1970s. The support for public expenditure on education remained strong and a rising share of the nation's resources were allocated to it. The expansion was most marked in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Outlays leapt by 1% of GDP in one year in the mid 1970s, a combination of the Whitlam Government's policies for higher education and schools and the continuing rising expenditures of the States.

The stagflation of the late 1970s and 1980s led to restrictions on public expenditure and efforts to make the education and training system more efficient. Table C7.1 provides an overview of the the overall size of public and private expenditure on education from the late 1940s, drawing on the pioneering estimates of Karmel (1962 and 1967) and Mathews (1968) and subsequent ABS data. The table shows that public expenditure as a share of Gross Domestic Product waxed until the late 1970s and then waned. Private funding has expanded notably in the last decade. Cash benefits for students expanded in the late 1980s following the introduction of a new system, which in particular extended to 16 and 17 year olds at school the types of student assistance available to tertiary students.

### C7.1 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, Australia - 1948-49 to 1997-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Outlays as percentage of GDP</th>
<th>Outlays as percentage of revised GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mathews 1968 (for data to 1963–64); Commonwealth Department of Education; ABS.

Over 60% of outlays on education are for schools. The changing size and distribution of school enrolments across government, Catholic and Other non-government schools is shown in Table C7.2 for the period since 1963, in which comprehensive Australian statistics on school enrolments have been compiled. Government schools enrolled nearly 80% of students in the mid 1970s, but since then all the growth in enrolments has been in non-government schools. Government enrolments in 1999 are at the level they were in 1974 and non-government enrolments are some 60% higher. The growth is especially in other non-government schools, which enrolled less than 5% of all students in the early 1960s but over 10% by 1999.

### C7.2 SCHOOL ENROLMENTS, By Type of School, Australia - 1963 to 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government '000</th>
<th>Catholic '000</th>
<th>Other non-government '000</th>
<th>All '000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1,752</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1,797</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2,111</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2,261</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2,215</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2,248</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schools, Australia (4221.0).
The growth in school enrolments in the 1960s was still driven by the postwar baby boom and was largely absorbed by the government systems, which alone had access to government funds. The demographic push eased with the sharp temporary decline in births in the early 1960s. The return of government funding for non-government schools from 1964 and its sharp increase in the 1970s were factors in the increase in their share of enrolments. For the low resource Catholic schools, Commonwealth capital grants were crucial in allowing them to expand their provision. The recurrent grants allowed them to do so with improving resource levels per student. The growing pattern of public recurrent funding of non-government schools is given in table C7.3.

C7.3 RECURRENT GRANTS PER STUDENT(a) TO NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, Commonwealth and Victorian Governments - 1967 to 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commonwealth Victoria</th>
<th>Commonwealth Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>2,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>3,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Supplementation for price increases may not be included in all data in this table.

Source: Commonwealth and State Departments, and independent and Catholic school sources.

As indicated, both the Commonwealth and the States provide recurrent support for non-government schools. However, as the States differ in their form of support, an example for Victoria is shown. In 1999 a high income non-government secondary school would have received the minimum amounts of $832 from the Commonwealth and $447 from the State, a total of $1,279 per student. Most Catholic system schools received close to the maximum or about $4,500 per student.

The years chosen for the table are of significance. The figure for 1973 shows the funding determined by the Gorton and McMahon Coalition Governments: there was a flat per capita grant varying only by level of education. The figures for 1976 are the legacy of Whitlam Labor Government: it expanded funding very greatly for low resource, mainly Catholic, schools. The figures for 1983 show the policy of the Fraser Government: to expand the funding of the high income non-government schools proportionately the most, but to increase the absolute funding of the low resource schools most of all.

The 1996 figures indicate the Hawke and Keating Governments' policies: in real terms they cut the grants to the high income non-government schools and increased them to the low income schools. The 1999 figures show the effects of the first years of the Howard Government: it has relatively increased its funding of the low resource schools. However, in 2000 it revised the method of making grants to non-government schools, except for the Catholic systems. Other private schools and systems from 2001 will receive grants based on the socioeconomic status of the areas in which the parents of their children reside, rather than the resource levels of the school. The total grants for non-government schools will be substantially increased and the increases on average will be largest among the high fee schools. The government funding of such schools will no longer be affected by the resources they acquire from fees or donations. A Liberal spokesman has referred to the new system as making 'an historic correction' in funding.

The introduction of government funding for non-government schools was not, at least initially, at the expense of funding for government schools. Table C7.4 summarises the growth in the government sector and the non-government sector (both Catholic and Other combined) in enrolments and expenditure per student. It also provides approximate estimates by the authors of the change in total recurrent expenditures and in expenditure per student in constant 1998 prices.

The table shows that, over the whole period from the 1974 expenditure per student has increased in real terms a little more in non-government than in government schools. In both sectors it more than doubled. The table shows the massive expansion in the resources in government schools in the late 1970s-an increase of nearly 40% in real resources per student in five years. It is in the period of the 1980s and especially the 1990s that the non-government schools increased their expenditures more rapidly than government schools. Overall, because of the rapid expansion of enrolments, the total expenditure of non-government schools has increased much more than in government schools.

C7.4 GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, Recurrent Expenditures(a) - 1974 to 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government schools</th>
<th>Non-government schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students '000 $ per student</td>
<td>Index of total expenditure(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td>3,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2,248</td>
<td>5,652</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Expenditure data from government and non-government schools differ in scope and there are changes in collection over time.
(b) At constant 1998 prices.

Source: Data from MCEETYA and DETYA: estimates by authors.
Another way of viewing the resources of schools is to focus on the major resource, teachers, Table C7.5 shows the changes that have occurred in the period from 1973 to 1999 in the ratios of students to teachers. In government schools the most rapid reduction in ratios was in the 1970s, but it also was rapid in Catholic schools. Government schools took advantage of a decline in primary school enrolments due to low births in the 1970s to reduce ratios in the 1980s and 1990s, but secondary ratios have altered little since the beginning of the 1980s. Catholic and Other non-government schools have continued to reduce the average ratios at both primary and secondary levels. At secondary level the ratios in Catholic schools which were nearly 40% higher than in government schools in 1973 were less than 10% higher in 1999. The ratios in Other non-government schools, which were higher than in government schools in the early 1980s at secondary level, are now once more lower.

### Table C7.5 RATIOS OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS TO TEACHERS, By Type and Level of Schooling, Australia - 1973 to 1999(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Definitional changes affect comparisons over time. Special school enrolments are included largely in Primary up to 1981. Student: teacher ratio is the ratio of the total number of school students to the total number of school teachers, including school principals, deputy principals, careers teachers etc. It is not a measure of class size.

Source: Schools, Australia (4221.0) and related earlier publications (ABS); Schooling in Australia: Statistical Profile No 1, 1987 (DEET).

It might also be noted that non-government schools with high levels of resources tend to spend a lower proportion of their funds on teachers than low resource non-government schools or government schools. The gap in expenditure between Catholic schools and Other non-government schools is proportionately larger than the gap in student teacher ratios shown in table C7.5.

### Secondary schooling for all

The period of the long economic boom, 1945-1970, fostered a transformation in secondary education in Australia. Before 1945 State secondary school provision was dysfunctional, and the so-called ‘ladders’ of educational opportunity were still missing rungs and feet. After 1945 State secondary education is defined by the magnitude and pace of its physical expansion and the genuine attempts to introduce from overseas practice a comprehensiveness in location, curriculum and culture, for at least the 12-15 years old cohort. Nevertheless, some high schools that were highly selective in scholastic and social composition were retained in all States. Special purpose schools like Victoria’s junior technical schools, or domestic arts schools, were also retained, and both extended the years of provision and offered a more general curriculum which made it easier for students to transfer between different types of schools in a secondary system.

This transformation in secondary schooling was driven by social demands for extended education. Industrialisation, immigration, full employment policies and new levels of urbanisation helped create a silent social revolution, where secondary education was ‘consumed’ for personal economic advancement. Families, “the depression or wartime generations”, were willing and economically able to support their children (especially boys) undertaking secondary schooling beyond the compulsory leaving age to improve their credentials and opportunities for non-manual and skilled manual employment. This demand can be seen in NSW government schools’ retention of students from year 7 to year 10: it increased from 13% in 1948 to 48% in 1958 to 72% in 1968.

State Governments in the immediate postwar years assisted the extension of State secondary education by abolishing entrance examinations at the end of primary school as well as all tuition fees, extending the school leaving age, and increasing the number of school scholarships and subsidies for school transport, especially in country areas. They also encouraged the liberalisation of the school curriculum for all but the last two years of the secondary school. More than anything else education departments and governments raised community expectations that secondary schooling for all adolescents was a desirable end in itself, and a direct means for students to obtain the skills and credentials to move into meaningful employment, training or higher education. This establishment of a favourable precondition for “the revolution in rising expectations” would resonate with State authorities, Roman Catholic school leaders and the school reform movement well into the 1960s. But as one observer wrote in 1962, “public secondary education … is still regarded by many as something of a new-comer” (Bassett 1963, p. 305).

Another disappointment, which was much more widespread, was with the inaction of the Federal Government. The Labor Government of the 1940s, which had introduced federal subsidies for disadvantaged university students as a wartime manpower control and as postwar reconstruction initiative, also contemplated a similar assistance scheme for low income secondary school students in the final two years of school. The defeat of Labor in 1949 sidelined this proposal and, while the Menzies Government continued and expanded the university scholarships scheme, ushered in the current era of State Aid to school education. The secondary schools scholarship did not provide significant support to students from working class backgrounds or in country high schools to complete their schooling because scholarship did not provide significant support to students from working class backgrounds or in country high schools to complete their schooling because

After 1945 State secondary education is defined by the magnitude and pace of its physical expansion and the genuine attempts to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most States reorganised their secondary school system on a comprehensive model. In doing so they not only reformed the middle years of the secondary school but anticipated the flow from there to senior years, so that a fully comprehensive secondary school would be ready to meet further demands. The pace and trajectory of these reforms in Australia can be seen in the ten or more years that it took NSW to reorganise its secondary education system. Known as the “Wyndham Scheme” after its Director-General of Education, the scheme brought to fruition many of the ideas that had been formally debated in NSW as early as 1933. Departmental...
New South Wales' planners had to accommodate serious opposition from within the State Government's ranks, from the social elite who had graduated from the State's selective schools, from teachers' industrial and professional associations, and from some elite private schools and university academics. Ultimately the reforms were accepted by the education community because they preserved aspects of the traditional system, while laying the template for the structure of today's secondary education in NSW. In contrast, the Queensland Government was able to dispense with its obsolete State secondary system within three years. Its Education Act 1964 raised the minimum school leaving age to 15, abolished the primary school scholarship examination and the university's control over most of the secondary school curriculum, and encouraged the growth of comprehensive State high schools.

Nevertheless, this transformative period of "secondary schooling for all" should not be identified with equality of educational opportunities through extended access to secondary education. The conservation of the all-pervasive academic curriculum, the persistence of external examinations, still largely based on competitive selection for university, and the role of the Commonwealth and States' financial aid to non-elite private schools, and especially for Roman Catholic schools, and especially for Roman Catholic schools and the better resourced private schools. It also added 'excellence' to its strategy for encouraging 'choice', not notion of choice in schooling to shift Commonwealth recurrent funds away from the States' public education systems, to both the poorer Catholic schools and the better resourced private schools. The Whitlam expansion of funds for both public and private education resuscitated Australia's dual education system. Subsequent reforms, while other States moved more slowly, if at all.

Secondary schooling underwent its most pronounced forms of modernisation in this period. Public examination reform both reflected this process and was affected by it, especially in the large number of students who remained at secondary school, where once their cohort would have exited full-time schooling at the end of Year 10. The notable reforms of this period included the abolition of external examinations except for the final year, a shift towards school-based examinations, including recognition of alternative curriculum pathways, and the introduction or extension of school system certification. Furthermore, the use of external assessment was modified by a mix of external and teacher-based school assessment, with much more emphasis on ongoing assessment and moderation of standards by teacher peers in conjunction with an examination by authorities. In the latter, Queensland hosted the most radical reforms, while other States moved more slowly, if at all.

The dismantling or partial dismantling of public examinations systems indicated a newfound trust by authorities in the professionalism of secondary school teachers. This had been assisted by the recognition that for the first time these teachers were adequately prepared professionally for teaching by the universities and the teachers' colleges, the latter now free of education department control. There was also a recognition that professional development time was available for teachers, subsidised by Commonwealth initiatives, and that teachers could develop curricula that were responsive to the range of abilities, interests and destinations of students. The Commonwealth Government, through its Schools Commission (established 1973) also initiated special national programs such as for education of girls, students of non-English speaking backgrounds and Indigenous secondary students.

To support students of low income families or those disadvantaged from communities, the Commonwealth Government directly funded a secondary allowances scheme for these groups (which replaced the scholarship scheme in 1974), though it was fairly small in value and confined to the lowest income groups and the disadvantaged schools program.

But above this, the Labor Government in 1974 abolished tuition fees at universities, advanced colleges and the new TAFE sector which, although controlled by the State and Territory Governments, was increasingly supported by the Commonwealth Government. These measures again made a psychological more than a material impression as many students had been exempt from fees, but nonetheless raised expectations in secondary education that a tertiary education was within the reach of many Australian families.

The decade 1968-78 is seen as the crucial period for laying the foundations for the eventual drive towards universal secondary education. But it also contained the fault lines that would eventually disrupt its advancement.

The Whitlam expansion of funds for both public and private education resuscitated Australia's dual education system. Subsequent funding policies helped the private secondary schools to survive to such an extent that they offered an attractive and affordable product to parents. Moreover, the Karmel Report (1973), which outlined the reforms and expansion of Commonwealth funding for schools, also recognised the 'individual rights' movement. Originally cast as the 'rights of the child' or the 'rights of the student' in education, it was appropriated by more conservative thought to become the 'rights of parents' to select the school of their choice for their children. The schools chosen would be subsidised by public funds. The Fraser Government (1975 to 1983) emphasised the notion of choice in schooling to shift Commonwealth recurrent funds away from the States' public education systems to both the poorer Catholic schools and the better resourced private schools. It also added 'excellence' to its strategy for encouraging 'choice', not only as a way of justifying the transfer of federal funds away from public education, but to re-establish the supremacy of the academic curriculum in secondary schooling.

During the same period, Commonwealth and State Governments also felt the first winds of reaction, or what J. K. Galbraith calls "the revolt of the rich" in affluent industrial societies. Taxpayers did not wish or expect to keep on paying for the maintenance, let alone the growth, of the modern welfare state, including public education systems.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the fiscal adjustments of governments to high inflation from the mid-1970s onwards produced an expansion of unemployment, particularly among youth. One of the official responses to this problem was the claim that the public secondary school curriculum was failing students, or that it was contributing to the problem. This questioning of the new functions of secondary education brought both a parental revolt, that in a period of uncertainty they were prepared to transfer their children from public to private institutions, and a student revolt, of students leaving schooling before they entered Year 12.
Table C7.6 presents apparent school retention rates: the numbers in Year 12 in a particular year as a percentage of the entrants to secondary school five or six years earlier, depending on the State. Transfers among schools can cause the apparent retention rate to exceed 100%, which it does on occasion for Other non-government schools. Retention, which had been increasing rapidly since the mid-1960s, declined for boys in government secondary schools between 1975 and 1982, though an offsetting factor was the strength of apprenticeships as a post school destination for boys in this period.

C7.6 APPARENT RETENTION TO YEAR 12, by Type of School, Australia - 1967 to 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Other non-government</th>
<th>All schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS and DETYA.

During the 1980s, State and Federal Labor Governments revived the Whitlam Government’s distributive justice stance to the continuing inequalities in secondary education, but without its commitment to investing heavily in public education. However, special Commonwealth programs to increase participation and equity strategies in public high schools, and a major extension of the student assistance scheme, helped stem the retreat from secondary education. The benefit level was increased and the income test on parents eased. The numbers receiving at least some assistance expanded rapidly from 145,000 in 1988, or about 40% of those aged 16 and over, to 235,000 in 1992 or about 55% of those aged 16 and over.

School retention began to rise again in the mid 1980s and continued rapidly to the early 1990s, fostered by the financial assistance and in the early 1990s by a severe recession that affected job prospects for school leavers. Retention rates peaked in 1992 at 77%-72% for boys and 82% for girls. The rates have since fallen to 72%-66% for boys and 79% for girls in 1999. The decline is most noticeable among boys and in the government sector.

In the 1960s the participation of females was considerably lower than for males. This is shown in table C7.7. By the mid 1970s there was little difference, and from the 1980s females have had distinctly higher rates of participation. This carries through into higher education.

C7.7 PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL, By Age(a) and Sex, Australia - 1964 to 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 15</th>
<th>Age 16</th>
<th>Age 17</th>
<th>Ages 18 and 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Persons aged over 18 are included in the 18-19 category for 1984 and earlier years.

Source: ABS and DETYA.

School participation should be seen in the context of overall participation in education and training. Table C7.8 shows that the proportion of 15 to 19 year olds in schools rose nearly 8 percentage points in the period 1984 to 1994. Participation in higher education rose 4 percentage points, but there was little change in participation in TAFE for this age group.

C7.8 EDUCATION PARTICIPATION RATES(a), Persons Aged 15-19 years, Australia - 1975 to 1997(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>TAFE</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Includes part-time enrolments.
(b) Changes in scope and definition affect comparisons over time.

Source: DETYA.
Major changes to senior school curricula, modelled on the middle school reforms of the earlier period, were left to the States' and Territories' education departments. Again the main targets were changes to assessment procedures, the broadening of the curriculum in the senior years and establishing alternative pathways to the traditional academic core of the secondary school. As in the past, the nature of these changes required intricate negotiations with private and public academic schools, examination authorities, universities, subject associations and parents (as voters) who had become increasingly anxious, not only that their economic world was changing too fast, but also that of secondary and post-secondary education. Again, as in earlier periods, curriculum and organisational reform for the secondary school in a new post-industrial society was overtaken by a wave of new enrolments in Years 11 and 12.

The many students who willingly and otherwise remain in the public systems have become the recipients or legatees of the substantial increase in resourcing of private school systems. As a consequence, student achievement levels in the final years of secondary schooling are still based on social geography rather than social equity.

References


Productivity growth was lousy in the 2000s, but we can learn something from the previous decade. During the 1990s, Australia managed to double our rate of productivity growth. Statistics in this paragraph are drawn from Gerald Burke and Andrew Spaull, 2001, “Australian Schools: Participation and Funding 1901 to 2000,” Year Book Australia, 2001, ABS, Canberra (available at http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/A75909A2108CECAACA2569DE002539FB?Open). Estimate for 1946 is based on an ACER survey, which found that 7 percent of youth aged 16-17 were enrolled in school. TOTAL SCORE. Funding Ethnic Bilingual Education Affirmative Action Groups. Between 2000 and 2006, the Department was advised by the Council for Multicultural Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2003). The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools, introduced in 2005, also explicitly recognizes the importance of learning languages other than English (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2005). Some of these programs are taught in mainstream schools, while others are offered through ethnic or community languages schools.
This was a time in Australia’s political history when the Whitlam government’s expansion of funds for both public and private education revived Australia’s dual system. As Professor Gerald Burke and Dr Andrew Spaull say in their study, Australian Schools: Participating and Funding 1901 to 2000, the federal government’s funding policies of the time helped the private secondary schools sector to such an extent that they offered parents an attractive and affordable product. The report adds that the increased support for private alternatives under the ensuing Fraser government shifted “