

Come in Cinderella: the emergence of adult and community education.

Parliament. Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training.

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COME IN CINDERELLA

The Emergence of Adult and Community Education



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A Report of the
Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
November 1991

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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

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The emergence of Adult and Community Education

**Report by the Senate Standing Committee on
Employment, Education & Training**

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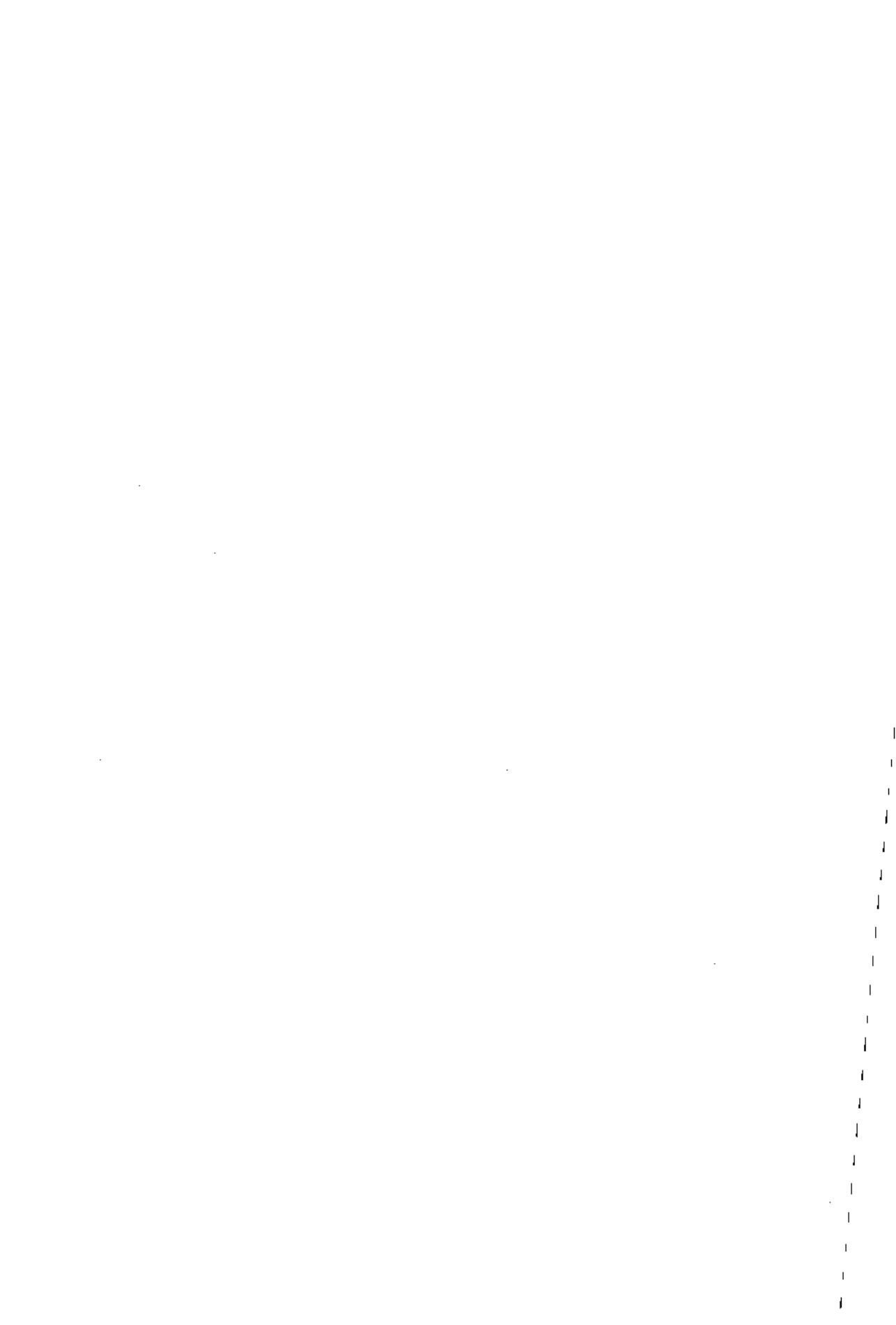
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TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (1) Examine and describe existing policies and practices in adult and community education, with particular reference to the roles of:
 - Commonwealth Government agencies
 - State government agencies
 - adult and continuing education centres in higher education sector
 - TAFE
 - voluntary and community programs
 - industry based training agencies
 - professional bodies and trade unions.
- (2) Consider the impact of current demographic, economic and social change on patterns of adult and community education, on education providers and on education funding.
- (3) Identify barriers to participation in adult and community education and recommend means by which they might be overcome.
- (4) Examine the educational, employment and personal outcomes of participation in adult and community education.
- (5) Consider the training and supply of adult and community educators.
- (6) Recommend policies, strategies and processes to provide a coherent approach to the provision of adult and community education and to enhance its role and contribution.





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RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The Committee recommends the immediate establishment of a high level Working Party to develop a national policy on adult and community education, drawing upon the findings of this Report, to be launched by mid-1992. The Committee suggests that the Working Party be convened jointly by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Conference of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET)

(pp. 159-162)

- (2) The Committee recommends the immediate establishment by the Commonwealth of a formal Advisory Committee on Adult and Community Education to assist the Minister in policy formulation and other matters related to the sector. This Advisory Committee should be of the type provided for in Section IV of the *Employment, Education and Training Act, 1988.*, and its membership shall reflect the diversity of the sector. The Advisory Committee shall:

- report to the Minister, via the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), on the role of the Commonwealth in adult and community education, in particular concerning the priorities, strategies, targets and resources associated with the provision of adult and community education by both government and community-based agencies;
- formulate a draft Commonwealth policy and contribute to the development of a national policy by the States, Territories and Commonwealth under the auspices of the AEC and MOVEET;
- monitor the implementation of national policy and report to the Minister on the extent, efficiency and equity of its implementation;
- provide advice regarding desirable changes to existing Commonwealth structures and policies which would facilitate the implementation of national policy; and
- liaise with other Councils of NBEET to encourage a coordinated, mutually supportive approach to the provision of adult and community education by the schools, TAFE and higher education sectors.

(pp. 163-164)

- (3) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training designate an office within the Department to be responsible for the implementation of Commonwealth policy in adult and community education, and to ensure that adult and community education has a permanent presence within the Commonwealth bureaucracy. The office should have close links with related areas, notably those dealing with vocational education and training, with adult literacy and with migrant education.
(pp. 164-165)
- (4) The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, priority consideration be given to increased funding for the sector.
(pp. 140-146)
- (5) The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training modify its funding guidelines to provide for both vocational and non-vocational criteria in determining grant allocations for adult and community education.
(pp. 84-85, pp. 102-103)
- (6) The Committee recommends that State and Commonwealth governments adopt funding practices which facilitate long-term planning in adult and community education by focussing on triennial funding rather than short-term, submission-based funding processes.
(pp. 135-137)
- (7) The Committee recommends that whenever government agencies provide a grant to adult and community education providers for the delivery of a particular program that grant shall include, as a matter of course, a component specifically to provide for child care.
(pp. 120-121)
- (8) The Committee recommends the introduction of State Government funding support for Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres in those States where it does not yet exist.
(pp. 59-62, p. 127)
- (9) The Committee recommends that each State and Territory establish a formal consultative mechanism across human services departments at ministerial level or senior officer level to coordinate and monitor policy on adult and community education.
(p. 165)
- (10) The Committee recommends the development by all States and Territories of a network of regional councils of adult and community education with the intention that as far as practicable decisions which have a direct bearing upon local providers — particularly those relating to the distribution of resources — be devolved to the regional level.
(pp. 165-166)

- (11) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth establish, with support from the States, a National Institute of Research, Innovation and Teaching in Adult and Community Education. The precise structure and functions of the Institute should be determined by the proposed Commonwealth Advisory Committee to the Minister, to reflect the close relationship between research and the practice of adult education. The adult education community should have significant control over the program and activities of the Institute.
- (pp. 154-156)
- (12) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth undertake a comprehensive review of the funding and delivery of the basic education of adults. Such a review should consider, amongst other things:
- the extent of publicly-funded entitlements which adults can utilise to meet their basic education needs; such entitlements could range from tax-concessions to vouchers.
 - the minimum level of education which all adults can expect to receive at public expense, that is, at no direct cost to themselves, or in the case of employees, to their employer.
- (pp. 92-98)
- (13) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:
- (a) extend its support for existing projects directed towards the establishment of national schemes for competency standards, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and related matters; and
 - (b) specifically require that such projects take into account the needs of, and recognise the skills formation role of, the adult and community education sector.
- (pp. 127-130)
- (14) The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training commission a report into ways in which a clearinghouse function could be effected in the adult and community education sector. The function should build upon existing networks within the sector to provide for the dissemination nationally of ideas and developments in curriculum, teaching methods and other matters of professional concern to adult educators, and might be a responsibility of the proposed Institute.
- (pp. 154-157)
- (15) The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, consideration be given to the establishment of a professional development fund — along the lines of the Higher Education Staff Development Fund — whereby adult and community educators may receive financial support to enable the upgrading of their professional qualifications or for other training and development purposes.
- (pp. 149-154)

- (16) The Committee recommends that, as a stimulus to research by practising adult educators, the Commonwealth provide over each of the next five years two Adult Education Research Scholarship Grants comparable to average weekly earnings.
(pp. 154-156)
- (17) The Committee recommends that the Higher Education Council of NBEET establish a standing committee within the Council to monitor and advise on the adult and community education role of the universities, particularly its links with formal award courses, and its contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the community at large.
(pp. 42-45)
- (18) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth commission a national survey of participation in community-based adult education and its benefits, either as a discrete exercise or through the Australian National University's National Social Science Survey.
(pp. 48-50)
- (19) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:
- (a) commission a cost-benefit analysis of participation in a representative sample of adult and community education provision (e.g. workplace basic education, rural community adult education, a group of neighbourhood houses); and
 - (b) within the context of the exercise, assist the providers involved to design and trial a method of documenting costs and benefits at a local level.
(pp. 75-86)
- (20) The Committee recommends that the Australian Education Council engage a consultant to advise on a mechanism for the collection of standardised national statistics on participation in adult and community education. This mechanism should avoid the imposition upon providers of burdensome record-keeping.
(pp. 156-157)
- (21) The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish policies which provide for:
- (a) the free use of school and TAFE buildings by *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations; and
 - (b) reasonable access by such groups to associated facilities such as libraries, computer rooms, etc.
(pp. 45-46)
- (22) The Committee recommends that State education authorities examine the possibility of the use of regional and rural school bus services by participants in *bona fide* adult and community education activities.
(pp. 46-47)

- (23) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth publish a comprehensive guide detailing the various government support schemes available to the private sector to enhance its training effort.
(pp. 66-69)
- (24) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth support the development of a comprehensive information database of private training providers and courses.
(pp. 66-69)
- (25) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:
- (a) acknowledge the demand upon the adult and community education sector to meet the needs of adults with disabilities, and its potential in this regard; and
 - (b) clarify departmental responsibilities for the education of adults with disabilities and direct resources accordingly.
- (pp.107-113)
- (26) The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments reflect in their policies and planning related to the aged the proven benefits of sustained educational activity into the so-called third age.
(pp. 62-64)
- (27) The Committee recommends that:
- (a) universities give favourable consideration to requests from third age learning groups for access to lectures, library facilities and so on at a level consistent with equity and resource considerations; and
 - (b) local governments and regional offices of human services agencies assist third age learning groups through the provision of basic administrative support for their operations.
- (pp. 62-64)
- (28) The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth take appropriate steps to allow *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations to be granted Sales Tax Exemption status under item 63A of the first schedule of the *Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act 1935*.
(p. 139)
- (29) The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its policy concerning the charging of fees for adult basic education courses in TAFE, in the interests of social justice and a consistent approach to adult basic education across States and Territories.
(pp. 35-36)
- (30) The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish a grant-aid scheme for prisoners to meet the costs of fees and materials incurred during further education and training while in prison.
(pp. 113-116)



FOREWORD

The Senate Inquiry began on a small dirt air strip in the middle of a million acres of wheat.

Merredin is half-way between Perth and Kalgoorlie — which is about as far as you can get from the monuments and acronyms of Canberra. We chose to start at Merredin because our preliminary information indicated that this little town and its environs in many ways epitomises what is happening in adult and community education around this vast country.

Out there in the heart of the wheatlands they produce 15% of Australia's wheat crop and lately times have been hard. But they came to the school hall that day because they do not take education for granted. There is self-reliance there, and a capacity to improvise. TAFE, the local high school, agricultural officers and the shire council all seem to work together. The local needs are met first and foremost. Computer and accounting courses for farming families, retailing courses for school leavers, machine workshop programs, and a liberal sprinkling of arts and crafts, languages, fitness, cooking and other practical skills — it's all there.

So it was in other places we visited — Darwin, Brisbane, Alice Springs, North-West Tasmania, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, the Hunter Valley. The same story was repeated with many variations. Truck drivers' wives learning computing and accountancy in Orbost, migrants in Melbourne taking English classes in their factories, engineers upgrading their skills in Sydney; people's needs are changing the system.

In town halls and people's homes, factories, prisons, on farms and in city office blocks, in neighbourhood houses and university lecture theatres, adult Australians are voluntarily seeking education wherever they can get it. And if they cannot get it via the formal high school, TAFE or university system, they are looking elsewhere. For many of them, adult and community education is a second or even third or fourth chance.

And they are prepared to pay for it. Adult and community education operates in this country mainly on a user pays basis and is run by teachers and administrators who are generally earning far less than teachers in the formal system.

Despite this, adult and community education is growing, and now provides education, training, recreation and self-confidence to millions of Australians. And above all else, it is fast becoming the social cement in a society which not only needs cleverness but a sense of community and civility in a world where economists and Treasury mandarins still measure the pursuit of happiness in dollar terms.

This Report took around ten months, thousands of kilometres and many late hours to complete. Over three hundred individuals and groups made written submissions, and scores of witnesses spoke at our public hearings. Hundreds of others talked in private to the Committee members. It is the first comprehensive report on the subject since 1944. Our conclusions on this all-party Committee are unanimous. The Government must grasp the opportunity to consolidate and nurture the vigorous, efficient and broadly-based enterprise which is adult and community education. Australia cannot afford to neglect and devalue a network of providers which touches the lives of six out of ten adult Australians. The benefits to both the public and private sectors are enormous. The time has come for us to back a winner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Aulich', written in a cursive style.

Senator the Hon. Terry Aulich
Chairperson

Chapter 1

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

We have all noticed them. Those rather quaint structures that adorn the main streets of many of our towns, bearing inscriptions like Mechanics Institute, School of Mines, School of Arts, or perhaps Circulating Library. They were established last century by visionaries who recognised the aspirations of ordinary men and women for some form of education, and sought to meet that need. As well, during the 1880s, universities began to offer extension programs “for that large body of persons, men and women — neither children nor specialists — who constitute the great bulk of the intelligent ... members of the community”.¹

The organisations flourished. They offered lectures, courses and books on a wide range of topics. They disseminated new ideas and stimulated debate. They taught basic skills and broadened people’s horizons at a time when there were few other channels through which this could be done. For many people, the Mechanics Institute was the first step towards advancement through the trade union movement or into formal education. For the others, its contribution was less dramatic but no less valuable. Through their local Institutes, Schools and University Extension Departments they acquired new skills and learned something about the ideas shaping their world. The impact of such a process is hard to measure, although for the individuals concerned the benefits must have been significant.

In time, governments recognised the legitimacy of people’s desire for education beyond the school years, and accepted their obligation to provide it. In this they were motivated by both economic and humanitarian considerations.

As education gradually became established in a more systematic way — with universal compulsory primary, and later secondary, education — the Schools of Mines and Arts were superseded by post-secondary technical colleges, and the role of Mechanics Institutes and Circulating Libraries tended to diminish. Today, many are abandoned and neglected. The ideas they embodied and the activities they supported, however, remain as valid today as when those buildings were first erected. Their traditions have been carried on, in other settings, by 20th century equivalents of those early visionaries who recognised a need and responded to it.

The Workers Educational Association, transplanted to Australia from England just before the First World War, took root in fertile soil and is now a major provider of adult education. Victoria’s Council of Adult Education is a multi-million dollar operation, and the resurrected Evening Colleges of NSW — now called Community Colleges — have been an extraordinary success story. Australia now boasts a network of thousands of smaller providers, and the relatively recent Community and Neighbourhood House movement is booming.

Why, at a time when the formal education systems have as comprehensive a coverage as they have ever had, are millions of adults voting with their feet and attending programs run in the fourth sector? Is it simply that the TAFE waiting lists have swollen to over 100,000 and the community sector is the next place to turn? Is there a wave of dramatically renewed consciousness in the community about the importance of education and training? The reasons are many and varied, as will become clear in the main body of this Report, but there are some key observations which can be made at the outset.

Adult and community education agencies are clearly meeting a powerfully felt need for education and training which is accessible, client centred and locally managed. People are hearing the message about the importance of skills in an increasingly competitive job market, and they are turning to training providers who can accommodate their particular requirements. Also, as demands on government services intensify, with a consequent targeting of resources to prescribed clients, others in need are being compelled to become more resourceful and self reliant. It appears, too, that many people are experiencing an increasing sense of alienation from large bureaucratic structures. These are seen as remote and often uncaring, and lacking any real capacity to respond to individual needs.

A real strength of adult and community education lies in its ability to devise programs and strategies which minimise such difficulties. It provides opportunities for a diverse range of individuals — the professionals needing to update their skills, the migrants seeking to improve their English, the women and men deprived of an education when young who deserve a second chance, the workers confronting new technology, the women wanting to return to the workforce as their family circumstances change.

The disparate needs of these and other participants are more easily accommodated within the fourth sector than within those formal education structures developed at a time when education was conceived as something that happened to people between the ages of five and twenty. Not surprisingly, much of Australia's social infrastructure has had difficulty coping with the massive and rapid changes that have characterised the last decades of the twentieth century. Radically different expectations of educational systems arise as our schools and universities become a major instrument of economic reform. Australia's economic competitiveness, we are told, depends upon industrial and award restructuring, which in turn hangs upon the capacity of Australia's education and training system to deliver the goods in the form of skills. This is an enormous task in its own right. But those same schools and universities are also expected to be instruments of social justice, promoting democracy and equity in a culturally diverse, and often financially fragile community, to say nothing of their fundamental role in promoting education for its own sake. The question must be asked whether our formal education system is able to meet such extensive, multi-faceted demand.

As well, there are the issues of demography, technology and lifestyle which have an enormous impact upon the range and level of educational services being demanded by Australians. We are living longer, and have more leisure time, but for many it is leisure

time enforced by redundancy or unemployment. To live creatively in these circumstances, and to avoid dependency, we must acquire life skills which were simply not required to the same extent in previous decades.

As structural changes in rural Australia produce crises in country towns, and a population drift to the cities; as cities themselves struggle to maintain services and rehabilitate deteriorating urban infrastructures; as individuals and families confront unexpected changes in the patterns of their daily existence, and disruption to lifetime plans — the demands on education services to help people cope multiply dramatically. On the brighter side, the enormous social and technological advances of our age have put within the reach of most people, at least in principle, unprecedented opportunities to enhance their personal well-being, and to expand their intellectual and occupational horizons. The question remains largely one of access to those opportunities, and the answer resides largely with the way we provide education to all Australians, throughout their lives.

In such a context, the Senate considered it timely to ask the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training to investigate the nature and extent of education and training beyond the conventional, formal structures and systems. With substantial rises in the retention of school students to Year 12, an estimated 100,000 people unable to access TAFE, and 30,000 eligible students missing out on university places, it is imperative, not just timely, that serious attention be given to the remaining sector — adult and community education.

... the last decade of the century ... will be a time of unprecedented emphasis on the education and training needs of all Australians. In these circumstances it is imperative that the full range and energies of our educational resources are brought to bear.

This Senate Inquiry is the first national account of adult education since the 1944 Universities Commission Report by W.G.K. Duncan. From a number of accounts it appears that the challenges of post-war reconstruction were not all that different in type and relative magnitude from the challenges of Australia's post-1980s reconstruction. Under the disconcertingly familiar heading *Reconstructing Australia's Economy*, Duncan wrote:

A new economy has to be built, involving drastic changes ... people have to be given new skills, but more than that, they have to be shown the reason for large-scale shifts in occupations, and be prepared for repeated shifts in the future. In a word, adults ... have to be "educated for change" ... If the primary objectives of economic and social security ... are to be attained, then the maximum use must be made of the inventive and scientific skills of each nation.

But new inventions are liable to render old skills redundant. The State can do much at once to overcome this difficulty and to accelerate progress if it affords adequate opportunity and adequate incentive to all to learn new skills ...²

It is salutary to recall that these words were written in 1944, and that nearly five decades later almost identical words abound in the contemporary analyses of Australia's situation.

In 1988 the Federal Education Minister, The Hon John Dawkins MP, stated that:

The principle of lifelong education is now accepted as fundamental to achieving social, cultural, technological and structural change, and to our future economic development.³

Such statements augur well for a serious reassessment of the place of the fourth sector in the Australian educational landscape. It is to this sector that six out of ten Australian adults have turned in search of a skill, an intellectual challenge, an enhanced sense of self, purpose and community. It is where most of Australia's lifelong learning currently takes place.

Today, all over the country, adult and community educators are putting into practice the ideals which, a century ago, motivated the founders of the Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts. Like them, they are working with little official recognition or support. All this is ripe for change. During the 1990s, adult and community education must finally receive the recognition that it has long deserved. It will take its place as a valued partner with the established sectors of education — schools, TAFE and higher education — in providing Australians with the skills, knowledge and confidence to create their future.

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1. A. Wesson (ed.), *Basic Readings in Australian Adult Education*, 1971, p.30, cited by Anne Forster and others, 'Adult and Continuing Education in Universities and Colleges', Ch.1 in Mark Tennant (ed.), *Adult and Continuing Education in Australia*, 1991, p.3.
2. Derek Whitelock (ed.), *The Vision Splendid: The First Publication of Dr W.G.K. Duncan's Report on Adult Education in Australia, 1944*. Publication No.35, Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide, 1973, p.141.
3. *Higher Education: A Policy Statement*, circulated by the Hon. J.S. Dawkins, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, July 1988, p.68.

Chapter 2

ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHY WE NEED IT

Seeking a definition of adult and community education is something like the pursuit of the Holy Grail — a tricky business at the best of times. Because adult and community education is at heart a much more “consumer driven” educational enterprise than schools, TAFE or universities, any definition will need to take such a quality into account. The Committee has attended carefully to a range of comment — in submissions, evidence from witnesses and the literature — in order to formulate a definition which is useful, but does not pretend to be the last word on the subject. An account of these deliberations, and the definition which results, appears in **Appendix 1** of the Report.

Broadly speaking, the Committee assumes that adult and community education is defined by its participants. Those participants have already left the formal education system, have returned to learning of their own volition, and have chosen an educational structure and environment which is compatible with their situation. All of this imparts a distinctive flavour to the sector. The Committee acknowledges that the TAFE and higher education systems do contribute to adult and community education, but this contribution normally entails a departure from their conventional operations.

The Committee’s Inquiry has highlighted a number of significant features which make adult and community education different from the other sectors, including the following:

- Its philosophy and operations promote *lifelong* education in ways which the other sectors — by nature, tradition and organisation — simply cannot accommodate.
- It is predominantly a user pays sector, and is therefore *overtly* consumer-driven and client-responsive.
- It is *flexible* in that it is not necessarily tied to the continued existence of formal institutions.
- It enables clients to *enter and leave* as they require, rather than be tied to the “lock-step” approaches which still tend to dominate formal award-granting programs.
- It is *non-compulsory* (although it may be incumbent upon a particular individual to upgrade his or her skills through participation in adult and community education).

- It has an important *compensatory or second chance* role whereby people can overcome skill deficiencies, remedy shortcomings in previous formal education and training, receive social and cultural benefits previously denied them, and so on.

The Committee has noted that the above features may be found to varying degrees within the schools, TAFE and university sectors. However, it is only in adult and community education that such features come together as defining characteristics of the sector.

Adult and community education has sometimes been described as that arena of education and training that has not yet been absorbed into the formal system. While this is not strictly the case, the Committee recognises the element of truth which such a description contains — that adult and community education tends to be at the cutting edge of educational endeavour. History tends to bear this out, as does reflection on current practice in adult and community education. We have already recounted briefly the heritage of adult and community education through Mechanics Institutes and the like. At a time when education was far from universal, they served the broad educational needs of adults with library services, lectures and discussion groups. They responded to the skills needs of workers and of industry long before governments saw fit to establish public training institutions for that purpose.

From the Mechanics Institutes to the present, adult and community education has embodied a concern for a fair go, for access to the power which comes with the acquisition of knowledge and skills and for the equitable distribution of educational opportunity. Adult and community education, in its modern guise, remains within that tradition of social and economic justice, broadly conceived. It is a sector that has consistently acknowledged the potential of the eighty percent of the population who are adults and promoted their rights to education and training which was previously unavailable or inaccessible.

If we as a nation are serious about our economic and social justice goals, we must get serious about adult and community education.

The Committee was impressed by the extraordinary scope and complexity of adult and community education activity throughout the country, and is convinced of its potential as a major source of education and training provision. Australia has set its sights on elevating educational standards within the community and a dramatically improved level of skills across the workforce. The Committee believes that it is impossible for the formal education and training system to meet the requirements of such goals in the short to

medium term, if ever. Now, more than ever before, governments should be supporting the flexible and pervasive network of adult and community education providers. Such support entails:

- recognising the sector as a major contributor to skills formation and general education;
- taking the sector properly into account in national education and training policy and in the establishment of national competency frameworks, credit and articulation arrangements; and
- increasing the level and stability of funding to the sector.

As a nation we appear to have accepted the validity of the concept of lifelong learning. Yet lifelong learning cannot be adequately delivered by an education system that is structurally static and operationally slow to adapt. The pace of social and economic change is quickening by the decade. No matter how enlightened the formal education system may be, the Committee cannot see that schools, TAFE colleges and universities can ever be flexible enough, and directly responsive enough, to address in their own right the level of Australia's education and training needs. This is not to decry in any way the excellence, commitment and good will that abound in much of the formal system. But schools, TAFE colleges and universities have certain roles and responsibilities which are fundamental to their purpose, and which may simply be incompatible with having to operate at the level of consumer responsiveness which current national training goals demand. The adult and community education providers, on the other hand, have the built-in flexibility and customer orientation which is compatible with present requirements.

The Committee is concerned that the essential role of the adult and community education sector is still too often overlooked in reports which seek to address the educational and training needs of Australians. Some reports continue to concentrate on a "front end loading" model of education and training which seeks to cram more and more into the formal education of young people in the hope that they will emerge better prepared for the future. This model is locked into dealing with schools and TAFE while ignoring the implications of the concept of lifelong learning for a network of provision beyond the existing formal structures. The Committee intends to analyse recent contributions to the policy debate and provide further comment on them to the Senate.



Chapter 3

CONTEXTS

Any discussion of adult and community education should take into account the social, economic, technological, and policy and administrative contexts, and these demand brief consideration as a preliminary to the main discussion.

Social Context

An education system which is not protected and nurtured by society will fail to protect and nurture society itself.¹

The international context must acknowledge the tendency towards a global society, with the internationalisation of economies and cultures being created by powerful communications technologies and corporate networks. It is a context which also includes a growing global concern for the environment.

At the regional level, increasing emphasis has been placed on Australia's geographical proximity to Asia. This has influenced trade, cultural and political agendas, with attendant changes in patterns of immigration, and a formal commitment to multiculturalism. One result has been government encouragement and support for language, cultural and business education relevant to our Eastern and South East Asian connections.

The rapid economic and technological advances of the Asian countries emphasise the need for Australia to develop an efficient, internationally competitive economy. Despite commitments to clever country status, the debate remains open as to whether Australia can match the technological sophistication and cheaper production inputs of its neighbours. It may yet be compelled to remain not much more than the source of primary materials (whether minerals or the English language) for Asian manufacturing and commerce. The creation of the European Community from 1992 could leave Australia further out in the cold.

To the extent that economic relations between Australia and Asia will significantly determine the social and cultural relations which emerge over the coming decade, education may expect to find itself increasingly an instrument of Australian-Asian accord. How well it will carry out this task remains to be seen.

The national social context for adult and community education is clearly a multicultural, and increasingly a cross-cultural, one. Four out of ten Australians are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, half of them from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). One in eight of these Australians speaks a language other than English at home.

The age structure of the population will also change. During the 1990's the proportion of people aged 75 years and over will increase rapidly, while in the first two decades of the next century the post World War II baby boomers will create a peak in the numbers of those aged 60-69.² The increase in the ethnic heterogeneity of Australia's older population will also have a significant impact on the size and composition of the elderly population, and also on the kinds of problems which they experience.³

The position of Aboriginal people in the broader Australian society is also an important factor in the national social context of adult and community education. The abundant evidence of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in all spheres of life, combined with recent moves towards the formal reconciliation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, will intensify the demand for education by, for and about Aboriginal people.

The pattern of participation in post compulsory education by young adults has changed dramatically over the past decade. Retention to Year 12 has virtually doubled, with increasing numbers of young adults moving on to tertiary studies. A substantial number of young adults experience unemployment upon leaving school, and government policy is to encourage all school leavers to embark upon some kind of training program. Labour market programs, tied into income support structures, are attempting to address some of their needs, with varying degrees of success.

Many unemployed young adults are not only sceptical of their chances of employment, even with further training, but also have strong negative feelings about their school experiences and are reluctant to pursue additional formal education. Moreover there will be a significant cohort of young graduates from schools and tertiary institutions in the near future for whom there will be no immediate places in the workforce. The Government is seeking to ensure a dramatic increase in the number of young people moving into further education and training beyond the compulsory school years. These will become a significant feature of the social context in which adult and community education will be carried out towards and beyond the year 2000.

Major changes in the structure of the farming and pastoral sectors have resulted in significant changes to the lifestyle and employment opportunities available to rural Australians. The displacement of people from the land to urban centres and regional townships has dramatically challenged the viability of many smaller rural communities, to which the provision of many services is becoming too costly. Those who remain in the country are being severely disadvantaged in terms of their access to the kinds of educational opportunities upon which economic and employment success is increasingly dependent.

The Committee believes that the above factors indicate a pattern of compounding disadvantage. Those who traditionally have been disadvantaged — by poor schooling, isolation, language, cultural and other barriers — risk further disenfranchisement from the benefits of restructuring because they cannot place their feet even on the first rung of the training ladder. This is a major theme which will be taken up more vigorously later in the Report.

Adult and community education has a vital function in strengthening community links and making communities more self reliant. The local social contexts which frame the operations of adult and community education vary greatly, not only from State to State, but between and within towns, suburbs and otherwise fairly identifiable communities. Broadly speaking, however, there seems to be an increasing awareness and cultivation of the concept of "local community", and thereby the development of a focus for concerted activity. This may stem from a recognition of mutual needs and interdependence, and the necessity for individuals to rely on fellow community members to a much greater extent as the supports of a steady income or stable family structures become weakened. In some instances it stems from a deliberate choice by a community to become more self reliant, to utilise its combined resources for the mutual benefit of its members, or from a philosophical commitment to cooperative and sustainable forms of social organisation. Evidence submitted to the Committee frequently testified to the self-affirming and community strengthening features of adult education programs.

Economic Context

... economic prosperity is based on the utilisation of intellectual property and resources in the arts, the sciences and the technologies, and through the development of highly skilled and continually learning workforces.⁴

Australia is a relatively small economy, with a domestic market of only 17 million people, its trade dominated by exports of raw materials and heavily dependent on imports of high-value manufactured goods. It is linked into a global network of trade and commerce involving partners of significantly greater economic power. The emergence of three major trading blocs — Asia, the European Community and America — demands that Australia be flexible and responsive if it is to do business with these economies while retaining some control over its own economic and social agenda. In the education sector, the Government has responded to this situation with a call to cleverness:

More than ever before the reservoir of talent in our people will have to eclipse our great natural resources as the determinant of our success. We will have to use our intelligence and wit ... to secure and improve our place in the world.⁵

At the national level, Australia is attempting to deal with the local impacts of participation in the global economy by a range of structural adjustments — deregulation of the financial sector, changes to tariff structures and so on. The structural adjustment process for industry has placed a high priority on the development of a skilled workforce. This emphasis has been followed through into national education policy, where TAFE, higher education, and the school have been pressed to attend more closely to the skill needs of the manufacturing and services sectors.

Industrial award restructuring and workplace reform have reinforced this trend, and the Government has moved to support such industrial reforms with complementary legislative reforms and administrative arrangements in the education portfolio. Such changes are intended to instil in industry a commitment to training, and to promote a more workplace oriented, training ethos among public education providers.

Notwithstanding such changes, Australia's recent economic history has been one of recession, with serious increases in unemployment. Apart from inadequate skill levels on the shop floor, doubts have also been cast on the capacities of Australian managers to implement in their companies the necessary technologies and workplace practices to become internationally competitive. Such a context has significant implications for adult and community education. To meet the numerous and varied skill needs of workers and managers is clearly beyond the present resources of the TAFE and higher education systems. Providers in the fourth sector will be subject to intensified demand from clients who cannot access these mainstream sources of education and training.

Technological Context

The Committee believes that the following comments by Barry Jones, MP encapsulate the issue as we understand it. Above all else technological change emphasises the absolute necessity for our education system to be a whole of life process for every Australian citizen:

We need to develop mechanisms which will facilitate lifelong education. An educated workforce is needed if technological change in the workplace is to be beneficial; an educated population is needed if we are to make wise communal decisions about the pace and the direction of technological change. Thus there is a clear need to move toward a situation in which adult education is seen as being as universal and natural as schooling for children.⁶

Clearly communications technologies have profound implications for the learning opportunities available to people. A comprehensive telephone system reaches virtually everyone in Australia. Computers are becoming faster, cheaper and more common in homes and workplaces, linked nationally and internationally via land based or satellite links, and thus offer practical communication connections between people. Video cassette recorders can be found in almost every house and community around the country, however remote. Specially designed hardware and software is providing participation for some disabled people at unprecedented levels. There is no doubt a number of mixes of technologies whose potential has not yet been fully explored. Up to the minute information is accessible in mind-boggling quantities at the touch of a button.

Adult and community education must respond to, and will be influenced by, the rapidly changing technological environment. Learning with, about and through technology is something for which adult and community education will need increasingly to provide. Its cornerstones of client-centredness, accessibility, relevance and empowerment all have a technological dimension which cannot be ignored by either students or providers.

Policy and Administrative Contexts

As indicated above, the Commonwealth Government has taken a strong pro-active approach to education and training arrangements based on perceived skills needs and coordinated at a national level. To this end it established, in 1988, a National Board of

Employment, Education and Training, and four constituent Councils, to advise the Minister from a national perspective. The Minister has also encouraged a national approach to schooling, established a Unified National System of higher education, and supported a national network of Industry Training Committees.

Government policy has since sought to address a range of training issues including:

- improving the responsiveness of training systems to industry's needs;
- progressive introduction of competency-based training and assessment;
- developing articulated training and effective accreditation systems, to ensure that transferable skills are widely recognised;
- providing new means of sharing the costs of training, including paid/unpaid training leave;
- ensuring equity of access to training provided;
- developing effective mechanisms at industry and enterprise level for assessing training needs and skills development.⁷

The responsibility for much of the policy advice on skills training rests with the Employment and Skills Formation Council, whose work gave rise to legislation for a Training Guarantee, given effect from 1st July 1990. The Act provides that companies whose payroll exceeds \$200,000 should expend a minimum of 1% of payroll on training their own employees, or contribute an equivalent amount to the public training purse. Such a requirement has provided an opportunity for private training providers, including adult and community education agencies, to compete with public training institutions such as TAFE and the universities for training contracts to companies.

The demand for skills training, and its revenue-earning potential, has confronted education providers with some interesting choices about the type of courses they offer, and the priorities to which they assign their limited staffing and other resources. These considerations have vexed the minds of adult educators in particular, whose decisions on program offerings have traditionally been informed by a combination of liberal educational philosophy, a commitment to social justice and a client-centred ethos of service. Funding agencies invariably tie their dollars to quite specific employment outcomes, and these may or may not accord with the identified needs of a group of adult clients. This will be explored in more detail later.

A somewhat less visible, but nevertheless critical issue, is that of the "user pays" principle, which is becoming increasingly common in relation to service delivery. The introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme represented a fundamental shift in approach to higher education funding, and variations on the user pays theme are

becoming much more common in the TAFE sector. It remains the case that many TAFE courses, identified as essentially vocational, are free of charge, but more TAFE colleges are offering fee-paying courses in areas where there is market demand.

What constitutes a vocational — hence free — course is not entirely clear. Usually it means attachment to a specific profession, trade or labour market program. It has also been noted that the vast majority of places in free, vocational courses are occupied by men, while women occupy the vast majority of places in fee-paying courses — including vocationally-oriented ones.

The issue of user pays is one which received a good deal of attention in submissions and by witnesses appearing before the Committee. In comparison with schools, TAFE and higher education, the adult and community education sector is already characterised by a far greater reliance on fees. It is the user pays sector *par excellence*. This has some interesting ramifications given the nature of its clientele and its strong social justice orientation.

Social justice policy is clearly of relevance to the provision of adult and community education. In broad terms the Government's social justice strategy has four principal elements:

- Equity fairness in the distribution of economic resources
- Equality equal, effective and comprehensive civil, legal and industrial rights for all
- Access fair and equal access to services
- Participation the opportunity to participate fully in personal development, community life and decision-making.⁸

Government agencies are required to report on the social justice impact of their programs even where the goals of those programs are not primarily socially oriented. Employment and training programs, for example, have a significant social justice dimension to the extent that they seek to provide opportunities for personal and community development as well as a chance to access economic resources through paid employment.

Many of the government publications describing employment and training policy highlight and justify the social justice imperative, as the following random selections demonstrate:

A central priority of the Government ... has been to address the needs of the disadvantaged, particularly those in the labour market ... [It] is concerned that disadvantaged groups in the labour market, particularly the long-term unemployed and sole parents, are not left behind ...

Equity of access to education and training is ... essential ... to bring about social justice ...

A society which does not respond to the needs of its disadvantaged groups will incur the heavy socio-economic costs of under-developed and under-utilised human resources.⁹

... this Government is committed to making social justice ... an indispensable element in achieving economic policy objectives ...

Education and training play a crucial role in individual development by improving life options and, through this, enhancing the general well-being of society.¹⁰

Notable in such pronouncements is an emphasis on the educational needs of young people, and a singular lack of emphasis on adults. Where issues of worker retraining and upskilling are raised these are couched almost exclusively in terms of the contribution of TAFE and higher education.

It is fair to say that the policy and administrative contexts outlined above are characterised by a complete absence of any recognition or acknowledgment by the Commonwealth of the significant contribution of adult and community education providers to national economic and social goals. This issue will be addressed in some detail later in the Report, but the policy vacuum in which the fourth sector of education operates is a major shortcoming which warrants disclosure at the outset.

The adult and community education sector has demonstrated its capacity to respond to the needs and circumstances of millions of Australians, to provide educational opportunity where it has been previously denied and to create pathways out of powerlessness ... It is grossly inefficient for governments to ignore or neglect the remarkable education and training capacity of ... community based providers ...

A further context which embraces both policy and administrative concerns relates to the federal structure within which education is delivered in Australia. Given that education is constitutionally a State responsibility, but with increasing Commonwealth involvement via national priorities and funding, it is appropriate to consider, albeit briefly, recent developments in Commonwealth-State relations. These can be gleaned from the Joint Paper *Duplication of Services* issued at the Special Premiers' Conference in October 1990.¹¹

Traditionally many government services, including education, have suffered inefficiencies and policy compromises due to the lack of guidelines for the assignment of roles and responsibilities between the tiers of government, to say nothing of parochial jealousies. This has been compounded by the division of financial responsibilities, and the

implications of the so-called 'vertical fiscal imbalance' whereby the Commonwealth raises much more revenue than it spends, and the States spend much more revenue than they raise.

The Joint Paper on Duplication of Services makes several points of particular relevance to the present discussion:

12. The Commonwealth's interests can be broadly categorised as including ... functions which have a national significance or which affect national objectives. Reasons for national government involvement could include issues of mobility, portability, uniformity, horizontal equity and universality.

13. In those functional areas where it has a legitimate interest, however, the role of the Commonwealth ... will range from one of full responsibility, through varying degrees of participation in shared responsibilities, to one where the Commonwealth's role is limited to a broad interest in the adequacy of services. In some areas, the Commonwealth's role may be essentially one of facilitation, assisting the development of cross-government approaches to issues requiring coordinated action or helping to avoid overlap and duplication between States ...

17. In assigning roles and responsibilities the focus must be on the most efficient method of delivery and, importantly, on the outcome for the program's clients.¹²

Any attempt to develop a policy for adult and community education in Australia must have an eye to both historical structures and currents of change in the broad area of Commonwealth-State relations. Out of the interplay of these will emerge the new policy and administrative context in which adult and community education will have to assert its needs and proclaim its possibilities.

In short, the last decade of the century will be host to the working through of a major restructuring of Australia's economic, technological and social infrastructure. It will witness an intensified orientation towards Asia and the Pacific Rim and an adjustment to a substantially revised Europe. Above all it will be a time of unprecedented emphasis on the education and training needs of all Australians. In these circumstances it is imperative that the full range and energies of our educational resources are brought to bear.

Adult and community education providers operate throughout the length and breadth of the country — from the central business districts of our capital cities to isolated mining settlements; amongst urban migrant communities and remote Aboriginal groups; serving the disenfranchised school-leaver and the professional seeking continuing education; giving skills and confidence to women seeking postponed or desperately-needed employment. The adult and community education sector has demonstrated its capacity to respond to the needs and circumstances of millions of Australians, to provide educational opportunity where it has been previously denied and to create pathways out of powerlessness into further education and training.

It is grossly inefficient for governments to ignore or neglect the remarkable education and training capacity of the extensive network of community-based providers which already exists. Relatively small additions of guaranteed funding to the sector will reap significant additional benefits in terms of overall levels of skills formation, to say nothing of the abundant personal and community benefits which flow from the sector.

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Chapter 4

THE SECTOR DESCRIBED

Current Government Administrative Provision for Adult and Community Education

Adult and community education has traditionally been much less closely tied to government than the formal education sector. It has developed in response to community demand rather than government directive, which helps to explain its great diversity. In this diversity lies both its strength and its weakness. Its strength derives from the fact that it is essentially demand driven. It is thus more responsive to the needs of its users. The many different subjects, approaches, levels, settings and modes of delivery adopted by the sector reflect the variety of these needs.

Unlike the more traditional sectors of education, which are both supported and encumbered by large bureaucracies, adult and community education must be flexible enough to respond immediately to the changing needs of users. Should it fail to do so, its very existence would be threatened, since there are few powerful organisations with a vested interest in its continuation. The fact that its numbers have grown throughout the post war period, and most notably during the last ten years, is evidence of its success in meeting these diverse needs and expectations.

While the absence of large bureaucratic structures has facilitated the responsiveness of the sector to its clients and enhanced their sense of identity with it, and ownership of it — all factors which have strengthened it immeasurably — there has been a cost. Without a Commonwealth structure to represent its interests nationally, or even a single State government structure in many instances, and with its reliance on large numbers of diverse small providers, both governments and the general public have been left with a very fragmented view of the sector's operations. Most do not appreciate the extent of these operations, the nature of the education provided — which is still too often dismissed, quite inaccurately, as "recreation and leisure" — or the degree to which adult and community education links in to more formal educational provision. Ignorance of these and other issues accounts in part for the lack of recognition afforded this sector and its tenuous and inadequate funding. The following section will examine current government responsibility and administrative provision for adult and community education, firstly at Commonwealth level and then by State and Territory. We will then proceed to describe the major providers, both *systemic* providers, that is, providers who form part of the other major education sectors, and *non-systemic* providers.

Commonwealth Government Administrative Provision for Adult and Community Education

The Commonwealth Government is now a significant sponsor of employment-related adult education, particularly through the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). Although the Department is primarily concerned with formal adult education through TAFE and the higher education sector, it has traditionally provided significant funding for other forms of vocational training, generally targeted through labour market programs to people disadvantaged in the labour market. Current programs include, for example, JobTrain, which provides vocational training, usually in TAFE, for opportunities in the local labour market and SkillShare, which delivers vocational training through community based organisations. In 1990-91, for example, the Commonwealth allocated \$120.9m to JobTrain to assist an estimated 50,000 participants, and \$90.7m to SkillShare to assist 90,000 people.

More recently the Commonwealth, through DEET, has expanded its involvement in the provision of adult basic education, to which it devoted \$4m in 1989 and for which it has allocated approximately \$18m in 1990-91. This is in part a response to the International Literacy Year finding that at least 10% of the adult population is functionally illiterate.² They are thus unlikely either to contribute effectively to national productivity or to benefit from the training opportunities arising from award restructuring and the Training Guarantee Act. Although most of this allocation is directed to TAFE or to literacy components within other DEET programs such as SkillShare or the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, a small proportion (\$1.6m in 1990-91) is channelled to adult basic education conducted in neighbourhood houses and other community venues under the Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy Program (VOAEL).¹

Other Commonwealth Government departments are also significant contributors to adult and community education. The Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, for example, spent \$71.5m in 1989-90 under the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).³ This Program provides training in English primarily for recently arrived migrants from non English speaking backgrounds. It is delivered through eight State and Territory Adult Migrant Education Services as well as some higher education institutions and TAFE and community colleges. (For further details of adult education for people of non-English speaking background (NESB) see Chapter 6).

The majority of Commonwealth departments have well developed training courses for their staff and many have extensive public education programs, often conducted under contract by other bodies. The Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health, for example, allocated approximately \$88m to public education programs in 1990-91. It was to be spent on a wide range of programs intended to raise public awareness and understanding of health related issues, for example HIV/AIDS education and prevention and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Education Program, designed to encourage the appropriate use of prescription medication. Some of the programs were

specifically targeted to health care workers, for example the Rural Health Support Education and Training Program for rural community health workers. In addition, the Department allocated \$2.6m to the training of its own workforce.⁴

Because such activities are not usually defined as adult education but as, for example, "agricultural extension" or "drug awareness programs" etc., the extent of Commonwealth involvement in this area is often underestimated. The internal training and public education programs of eight Commonwealth departments were documented by Johnson in his 1988 paper *Adult and Continuing Education: An Overview of Commonwealth Policies and Programs*. In response to requests from the Committee, a number of Commonwealth departments provided information on their staff training and public education programs. Although the figures supplied are approximate, and in some cases incomplete, they provide a fair indication of the extent of the Commonwealth's involvement in adult education activity.

Given the extent of this involvement, it is both surprising and regrettable that no Commonwealth mechanism exists which might provide a focus, a degree of coherence or some policy direction on adult and community education in general, or to afford the sector some official Commonwealth recognition. Insofar as any Commonwealth department accepts responsibility for adult education, this lies with DEET. Within that Department however, responsibility is divided among a number of divisions, each of which is primarily interested in some other area and most of which are heavily focussed on vocational outcomes, which form only one component of adult and community education. In the Committee's view this neglect by the Commonwealth of the fastest growing sector of education is unacceptable, both on social justice and on economic grounds, and should be redressed. Recommendations to this effect appear in the final chapter of this Report.

State Government Administrative Provision for Adult and Community Education

State and Territory government involvement in adult and community education tends to be peripheral to their major areas of concern — schools and TAFE. Responsibility for adult education, insofar as it exists, is often shared between a number of agencies, each of which is concerned primarily with some other aspect of education or training. These agencies differ from State to State. In a number of States, government organisational responsibility for adult education has changed recently, or is in the process of changing.

The different government approaches adopted in each State and Territory reflect the particular conditions existing there, the degree of responsiveness to the range of community pressures and the different ways in which adult and community education has developed historically across the country. While it would be counterproductive to move to a uniform model of government involvement, a clearer understanding of current arrangements would be helpful in fostering links between providers and users across States, in sharing ideas and in building a common data base.

At State government level, regular official contact is maintained between responsible authorities through the Conference of Senior Officers in Adult Education, which meets periodically to discuss issues affecting the sector nationally and to report on relevant developments in their States.

State government funding of adult and community education varies markedly between States. Consequently, opportunities for access to fourth sector education are much greater in some States than others. Such discrepancies should be of concern to the Commonwealth which, in the pursuit of social justice, has sought to reduce inequities between States as far as schools, TAFE and higher education are concerned.

Victoria

The Victorian Government has had a significant formal involvement in adult and community education in that State since the establishment of the Council of Adult Education in 1947. That body became incorporated in 1981. It delivers a wide range of programs itself, mainly in metropolitan Melbourne, and also provides support and funding to other adult and community providers, especially Local Advisory Committees. These are community providers which have negotiated a special advisory and reporting relationship with the Council of Adult Education. The Council reports directly to the Parliament through the Minister.

In response to the increasing size and importance of the sector in Victoria, and in acknowledgment of the need to clearly identify a government response to it, the Victorian Government in 1987 established a discrete unit within the Ministry of Education. This was the Division of Further Education, charged with responsibility for the education of "... all people of post compulsory age except where these studies involve vocational education and training, higher education or full time study."⁵

At the same time the Government set up the State Training Board, effectively establishing separate identities for vocational education and training and for further education. In 1990 the Government passed the Vocational Education and Training Act, which established a structure for the State training system, and announced its intention to introduce legislation for the further education sector.

Once finalised, this legislation will establish a Board of Adult, Community and Further Education and eleven Regional Councils. (The original title of "Further Education" and the definition of this concept were expanded in response to community representations.)

The Board will be a statutory authority with responsibility for policy, planning, accreditation, promotion and provision of advice to the Minister on community based provision of adult and community education. Equivalent responsibility for adult and community education provided through TAFE rests with the State Training Board. The two Boards will have joint responsibility for ensuring coordination of adult and community education Statewide, and for avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The eleven Regional Councils are to represent the interests of users and providers and are to provide advice to the Board on all aspects of adult and community education within their regions, including resource allocation. They will also contribute to policy development at regional and State level, and to the establishment of State priorities. In addition, the State Government has established a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Further Education, the role of which is to advise the Minister on Statewide policy and strategies.

Concern has been expressed in some quarters about current arrangements. PROCEED Continuing Education Centre, for example, stated in its submission that:

With the transfer of further education from the TAFE Board to a newly created Division of Further Education within the Ministry of Education, and the subsequent employment of public service staff with little or no experience in adult and further education, the understanding of what further and adult education has been for the last 25 years has been in danger of becoming lost.⁶

Similar concerns have been brought to the Committee's attention in a number of submissions. The issue of centralisation and bureaucratisation versus local control is being debated in a number of States and is one of the concerns which the Victorian Government is seeking to address in this legislation.

The contribution of some local government authorities to adult and community education has been important historically in Victoria and continues to be influential in some localities where authorities provide staff and venues for educational activities. Such support is generally more evident in Victoria than elsewhere.

In general there is a reasonably clear distinction in Victoria between education provided through TAFE — which focusses on vocational education and training for awards but includes some access programs to assist disadvantaged students to enter TAFE programs — and the adult and community sector which concentrates on the provision of short, non-award programs in skills development, personal enrichment, recreation and so on. This distinction will be further clarified when the new legislation comes into operation, probably towards the end of 1991. However, as the Council of Adult Education points out:

... [adult and community] centres, by public demand, are increasingly involved in programs to assist with income generation and to enhance vocational competence.

Thus ACE centres are now involved in the certification of educational programs because it is requested by students. This has the potential to become an area of overlap.⁷

Evidence provided to the Committee suggests moreover that in practice so much preparatory work is done in the adult and community education sector that each type of program should be viewed as part of a single continuum. Specific structural arrangements may be less important than recognition of the equal value and contribution of each sector.

State Government funding of adult and community education through the Ministry of Education is relatively generous in Victoria. In 1990-91 the Ministry allocated \$16.8m for this purpose. Approximately \$6.8m of this was provided to the Council of Adult Education and the remaining \$10m was distributed through the regional councils to community providers. These providers also receive funding from a number of other State departments such as Community Services Victoria. Approximately 700 community providers receive funding through the Division of Further Education and the Regional Councils. In recent years the proportion of funding raised through fees has increased much faster than the proportion provided by governments. This trend is evident in all States and Territories and its implications will be discussed in greater detail later in the Report.

Many Victorian Government departments and agencies outside the Department of Education and Training run extensive public education programs. Some of these are targeted to the public generally, for example the *Active at Any Age* community health and fitness campaign, which is run by the Victorian Council on Fitness and General Health. Others are targeted to specific segments of the community, for example education programs for the farming community on salinity, soil conservation and so on, organised by the Land Protection Division of the Department of Conservation and Environment. Further examples were provided in an attachment to the Victorian Government submission.⁸ This serves to illustrate the fact that, as at Commonwealth level, government involvement in adult and community education, broadly defined, is more significant than is generally appreciated.

New South Wales

Adult and community education in New South Wales, as elsewhere, is characterised by a range of government and non government providers. For this reason the New South Wales Government has taken the view that it is neither possible nor desirable to devise a single administrative structure or providing agency for the sector. At the same time however, it has seen a need to ensure effective coordination. This is the role of the Board of Adult and Community Education (until recently the Board of Adult Education), which also advises the Minister on issues related to adult and community education, distributes funds to provider agencies and generally promotes the interests of the sector:

The Board has established procedures between providers within the State system that aim to minimise duplication of programs and resources; it coordinates specialised funding for recognised target groups and priority subject areas; by working with existing providers it has been able to identify gaps in provision and has encouraged additional providers; it consults with other providers outside its immediate area of responsibility (e.g. universities, TAFE colleges) on an informal, collaborative basis.⁹

The legislation establishing the Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) specifically requires it and the TAFE Commission Board to prepare jointly, for the Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment, on an annual basis, "a strategic plan for the coordination and development of adult and community education generally in the State."

The maintenance of the two separate Boards in the recent legislation can be seen as recognition of the fact that both TAFE and other government funded community agencies have a role in adult and community education. The requirement for joint planning is an attempt to minimise overlap and enhance cooperation between TAFE and community providers. This is likely to become increasingly necessary as community providers, in response to demands from fee paying clients, provide more and more of the skills based accredited courses which have historically been the responsibility of TAFE.

At the same time, TAFE is reducing its provision of recreation/leisure courses, especially in the metropolitan area, in response to funding guidelines which emphasise vocational education and training at the expense of all other programs. Community providers with a long history in this field are moving to fill the gaps left by the TAFE withdrawal.

Providers in New South Wales have been organised into seven Regional Councils to assist in coordination and consultation among the agencies, and to supply advice to the Board and the Minister on needs and priorities within each region. Each Council consists of members representing a range of adult and community education providers as well as representatives from State departments with an interest in adult education such as the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health. The Regional Councils thus carry out the functions at regional level which the Board performs at State level.

In 1990, total enrolments in community based adult education in New South Wales were approximately 300,000, compared with 100,000 in 1980. The Board claims credit for much of this growth:

Over the ten year period there have been significant developments in the structure of adult education in the State, especially in the community-based system. The co-ordinated system which has evolved, largely through the work undertaken by the Board of Adult Education, has provided a greater stability for adult and community education in the State and has been a major factor influencing the enrolment growth over the period and increasing demand from the community for access to relevant programmes.¹⁰

State funding has not kept pace with the growth in enrolments. In 1990-91 the Government allocated \$3.25m for distribution by the Board, which "determines priority areas for funding and monitors the financial effectiveness of the programs and agencies supported by State Government funds."¹¹ This allocation has remained substantially unchanged since 1982. In that year government funds were sufficient to meet about 75% of the overall running costs of the providing agencies, which raised the balance through course fees. In 1990 they constituted only 25% of running costs, forcing providers to raise fees to levels which threaten to place courses beyond the reach of disadvantaged participants. The changing proportion of costs met by government and by users is a concern to providers nationwide and will be discussed later in the Report.

The decrease in the proportion of costs met by government has been particularly marked in New South Wales. Some evidence to the Committee suggests that this may, at least in part, be attributed to the failure of the old Board of Adult Education adequately to represent the interests of the sector:

I believe that much of the blame [for the neglect of evening colleges] should be laid at the feet of the existing Board of Adult Education who have failed to adequately articulate the benefits and achievements of adult and community education and have also failed to secure adequate funding, security and resources for Evening Colleges and other Adult and Community Education organisations.¹²

Governments need to acknowledge ACE as a dynamic, cost effective, efficiently run fourth sector of education. But in this and other rural areas of NSW it has largely been achieved by the NSW BAE's exploitation of the community spirit from the people working in the sector.¹³

As in other States, government agencies other than the education departments have significant involvement in public education and staff training but no details of their contributions were provided to the Committee.

Queensland

In Queensland, the organisation with statutory responsibility for adult education is the Bureau of Employment, Vocational and Further Education and Training (BEVFET), which forms part of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations (DEVETIR). The Bureau has a dual role in that it is a direct provider of adult education through TAFE as well as promoting and supporting its provision by community and other providers. The links between TAFE and the community sector are thus much closer in Queensland, at an administrative level, than in Victoria or New South Wales.

In 1989 a Council for Adult and Community Education was established within the Bureau to provide advice to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations on all aspects of adult and community education. It consists of two Bureau representatives and 12 members drawn from community organisations involved in the provision of adult and community education throughout Queensland. It is thus well placed to encourage cooperation between public and private providers rather than the competition which the Queensland Government views as wasteful of resources. In the view of some contributors to the Committee's Inquiry, the effect of this arrangement is to disadvantage non-TAFE providers, whose interests tend to be swamped by those of TAFE, the largest provider of adult education in Queensland.

State Government funding for adult education in Queensland totalled \$5.6m in 1990. This was used to run vocational and recreational short courses up to 30 hours in TAFE colleges (the Bureau's Program 1 courses). At least 50% of these are "skills based, work-related courses with obvious vocational consequences." There were approximately

88,000 participants in 1990, most attending on a fee for service basis. It was the Government's intention that full cost recovery should operate in this Program by June 1991. Preliminary estimates suggest that this target has been met.

Individual colleges are not required to cover costs, because it would be virtually impossible to do so in remote or economically disadvantaged areas, but the idea is that, State-wide, the full costs of the Program should be recovered. A sub component of Program 1 offers similar types of courses through community based providers. They receive \$250,000 in Commonwealth funds and some State infrastructure support but no State funding.

The \$5.6m referred to above does not include the costs of adult basic education (provided under Program 2) which is funded by the Commonwealth and State governments and offered free of charge on social justice grounds. Despite the move to full cost recovery and the concomitant increase in fees in Program 1, enrolments have continued to increase, although the rate of increase has not been uniform between years or between areas:

The demand for adult education in Queensland has increased at a mean annual rate of 9.25% over the last 15 years ...

The record enrolment of 88,274 in 1990 is a significant achievement and represents the second consecutive year of sustained growth in the program since 1984.¹⁴

In Queensland there are 19 government departments and more than 1200 statutory authorities, government agencies and related instrumentalities. All of these departments, as well as many of the agencies, conduct education and training programs for their staff. The estimated cost of these programs was \$22.6m in 1990-91, or approximately \$271 per employee per annum. In addition, at least ten departments conduct education programs targeted either to departmental clients or to the general public. The estimated costs of these programs was \$7.7m in 1990-91.¹⁵ A detailed breakdown of this expenditure, by department, was supplied to the Committee by the Queensland Government, the first time that such an exercise has been undertaken in any State or Territory.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government Department with primary responsibility for adult and community education is the Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (DEIRT). Previously it was the responsibility of the Department of Education and concern has been expressed in some quarters about its relocation at DEIRT. A submission from Mrs R K Wilson, a field officer in adult education, for example, stated:

I was disappointed, given the present Tasmanian Government's stated commitment to community consultation, by the shift of Adult Education from Education Department to D.E.I.R.T. without consultation with staff or public. The obvious emphasis on the priority of job-related training by this department

and the appointment of a new Director who was previously Programs Manager of T.A.F.E. also leads me to question the future direction that Adult Education may take.¹⁶

The DEIRT is a direct provider of services and also distributes funds and assists other providers, notably neighbourhood and community houses. The Government has expressed some concern about the potential for overlap between the two forms of provision, given that no coordinating mechanism exists between them.

The Department has maintained a discrete identity for adult education through the Division of Adult Education. At the same time however, the Government has sought to maintain close links with other education sectors. There are administrative links with TAFE, which is now another discrete Division of DEIRT, the Training Division. The Government has also encouraged extensive and free use by the adult education sector of State school and college facilities:

This has facilitated the development of networks in isolated rural areas as well as city suburbs for the provision of a wide range of courses at costs which do not discourage participation.¹⁷

Adult education in Tasmania has historically had a strong regional focus, reflecting the needs of its dispersed population:

Since 1948 successive Tasmanian Governments have resourced formal adult education in ways which encouraged the acquisition and staffing of Centres spread as fairly as possible around the State. An equitable spread of a wide range of provisions through regional administrations with considerable freedom for the planning and delivery of services has been encouraged.¹⁸

Currently the Division of Adult Education employs a full time member of staff in six regional centres, as well as a number of part time secretaries in more distant centres. They are responsible for delivery of adult education programs in those regions.

Recent trends in adult and community education in Tasmania have included the growth in provision through neighbourhood houses, of which there are now 29, and the growth in adult literacy and basic education and workplace basic education, these latter developments significantly encouraged by recent Commonwealth Government funding.

The State Government funding allocation for adult and community education in 1990-91 (excluding adult basic education) was \$2.5m, of which it intended to recoup \$1.06m through fees. This follows a 50% fee increase between 1988 and 1989 and it has had the predictable effect of reducing enrolments. These fell from 35,362 in 1988 to 30,834 in 1990.¹⁹

Despite concessional rates for disadvantaged participants, the impact of the fee increases has been most severe among this group, many of whom are now becoming major users of neighbourhood houses, where fees are minimal. Since these houses provide a wide range of services, of which education is only one component, they receive funding from a range of government programs and departments, for example, the Family Support

Program and the Department of Community Services. This funding, and their heavy reliance on volunteer labour, has enabled them to keep fees to a minimum. Neighbourhood houses also receive some support from the Commonwealth through its Non Government Adult Education Grants Program, provided by DEET and administered by DEIRT. This totalled \$42,000, statewide, in 1990-91. The increasing emphasis of the DEET guidelines on vocational outcomes has distorted the focus of the education programs in some neighbourhood houses, a development brought to the Committee's attention in a number of States and Territories.

The State Government allocation for adult basic education was \$429,000 in 1990-91, with a further \$103,000 allocated to Aboriginal education. The Commonwealth contributed \$379,000 to these programs during the same period. No fees are charged to participants in these programs.

As in other States, a number of departments apart from DEIRT run public education programs. Some examples were included in an attachment to the Tasmanian Government submission.

South Australia

The South Australian Government does not currently have a comprehensive policy on adult and community education although it has a significant involvement in the operations of the sector through provision of financial and other support.

Apart from the recently established re-entry schools which come within the ambit of the Education Department, administrative responsibility for the sector rests with the Department of Employment and TAFE (DETAFE) and, more particularly, with the Office of Tertiary Education, both of which are responsible to the Minister of Employment and Further Education. DETAFE offers a significant range of adult and community education courses in its network of colleges and is also developing employment and training initiatives outside the colleges, sometimes in collaboration with private providers or labour market programs.

The primary responsibility of the Office of Tertiary Education is university education but its charter is much broader than this and encompasses adult and community education:

The Office's overall mission is to further South Australia's economic, cultural and social development through a responsive system of tertiary education. Tertiary education is widely defined to include all education available to those who have completed their primary and secondary education or are above the age of compulsory school attendance. In addition to university education the Office is concerned with private provision of post-school education and training and a range of community adult education programs.²⁰

The Office is not involved directly in the delivery of programs but it has responsibility for developing and coordinating adult and community education in South Australia, for administering Commonwealth and State funds allocated to the sector and for providing executive support to the Advisory Committee on Community Adult Education.

The Advisory Committee consists of representatives of government and non government providers of adult and community education and its role is to advise the Minister on policy and on the allocation of Commonwealth and State grants, to encourage a coordinated approach to provision and to foster an awareness in the community of the importance of lifelong learning.

In 1990 the State Government established the Community Adult Education Program, through which it funds a range of courses provided in neighbourhood houses and community centres. State Government funding for the Program totalled \$360,000 in 1990-91. Funds are allocated on the advice of the Advisory Committee in response to submissions from community based organisations. This funding system is currently under review. Providers find it unsatisfactory because it discriminates against the smallest groups who find it particularly difficult to muster the resources required to develop a submission, and because one-off grants, with no guarantee of renewal, constrain the type of program which can be offered.

Annual, submission-based funding is the usual practice in most States and Territories and has been strongly opposed in submissions to the Committee from providers everywhere, most of whom support the introduction of triennial funding to minimise the difficulties referred to above. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the section on funding.

The Advisory Committee also distributes Commonwealth funds provided by DEET through its Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy Program. The Commonwealth contribution to South Australia was \$140,000 in 1991. It has not increased for many years and its increasingly stringent vocational guidelines limit its usefulness to many providers.

The State's Community Adult Education Program (CAEP) is a social justice initiative. To qualify for funding, providers must be able to demonstrate that the courses offered address educational, social or economic disadvantage or have a community development role. Both TAFE and community groups are eligible, but in the case of TAFE, providers must be able to demonstrate that the course is being run at the request of community groups. The majority of recipients to date have been neighbourhood houses and community centres.

Regional councils of adult and community education are not well developed in South Australia. Local governments however are generally very supportive of neighbourhood and community houses. Although the level and type of support varies between councils it has recently been estimated by the community services association of

local government that, in total, South Australian local governments provide three times the funding provided to neighbourhood houses by the South Australian Department of Family and Community Services, which is generally assumed to be their main source of support.²¹

Many South Australian Government departments and agencies provide training for their staff. Some provide training for outside staff. The Department of Family and Community Services, for example, provides money for the training of workers in non government welfare organisations. Some departments have a general public education role. These include the State Electoral Department, the Department of Recreation and Sport and the South Australian Health Commission. No details of these programs were provided to the Committee.

Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory there is currently no formal administrative structure with responsibility for adult and community education outside TAFE. A submission from the Northern Territory Department of Education stated:

The Northern Territory Government through its Education Act, is primarily concerned with education in schools, technical and further education and higher education institutions. There is no formal emphasis on continuing education by the Northern Territory Government, and expansion of government initiatives into this area is not possible in these times of economic and fiscal restraint.

... The Northern Territory Government supports the principle of continuing education as an appropriate means of personal development of the population. Continuing education is outside the parameters of the Education Act, and the Government does not plan to take an active role, through legislation, in this education sector.²²

Government initiatives in adult education in the Territory are likely to have a strong emphasis on vocational training. A new statutory body, the Northern Territory Vocational Education and Training Authority, is in the process of establishment. It will have 12 members with expertise in the area drawn from industry, unions and the general community and will advise the Minister on policy, planning and coordination of vocational education and training. It may also have authority to accredit courses and register providers.

The main providers of adult education outside TAFE are industry bodies and professional associations and the Centre for Continuing Education at the Northern Territory University, but their efforts are neither coordinated nor funded by the Northern Territory Government. Territory and Commonwealth funded labour market programs also have an education/training component. TAFE colleges offer a range of award and non-award courses. The latter are generally provided on a fee for service basis which excludes the most disadvantaged. Most TAFE courses are offered in Darwin and Alice Springs where the population is concentrated, although the Northern Territory Open College is active in smaller centres where it is the main (and usually sole) provider of non-formal education to adults, particularly in Aboriginal communities.

One of the major providers of education for Aboriginal adults in Central Australia is the Institute of Aboriginal Development (IAD), an Aboriginal controlled, community based organisation located in Alice Springs which provides both award and non-award courses. It receives no funding from the Northern Territory Government and has been almost entirely dependent on DEET funding (through the National Aboriginal Education Program) for its continued financial viability. It appears that DEET is now intending to withdraw financial support because it considers the funding of IAD's predominantly TAFE program to be purely a Northern Territory Government responsibility:

... The stumbling block is that unlike in some States, the NT TAFE system simply does not accommodate independent providers ...²³

Submissions from Aboriginal organisations in the Northern Territory have been very critical both of the National Aboriginal Education Program (NAEP) and of the Northern Territory Government:

The reliance of the NAEP on the States and Territories governments to implement the policy can be seen as another example of its lack of commitment to Aboriginal control. This is particularly so in the case of the Northern Territory Government which has had a history of opposition to Aboriginal controlled organisations and educational institutions.²⁴

As in other States providers have expressed concern about the increasing focus in funding guidelines on vocational outcomes. This is considered particularly inappropriate in Aboriginal communities where little paid employment is available to people completing vocationally oriented programs. A submission from the Northern Territory Open College, for example, made the point that:

The barrier is increasingly that of perception; unless a "job outcome" can be cited, little or no funding is available from Commonwealth or NT Government sources ... Current Government policy and funding heavily discriminate against non-vocational adult education programs.²⁵

A number of Territory Government departments and agencies conduct training programs for their staff and public education programs for the general population. Details of programs provided by one department, the Office of Youth, Sport and Recreation, are provided in the submission from the Northern Territory Department of Education, which also says that:

... the Government does accept that its officers and departments may subscribe to the provision of continuing education through in-house training and education programs particularly to isolated communities and officers.²⁶

A particularly noteworthy exercise in adult education and training in the Northern Territory, especially for the Aboriginal population, is conducted jointly by the Northern Territory Open College and the Department of Corrective Services. A range of courses are conducted at prisons in Darwin, Alice Springs and at the Gunn Point prison farm near Darwin. The Committee was particularly impressed by the combined efforts of College lecturers and Chief Industry Officers employed by Corrective Services who, with very

basic equipment and limited funding, manage to provide accredited, certificate level courses. The skills acquired by prisoners in, for example, the use of heavy plant machinery, in brickmaking and in sawmilling are likely to be of direct benefit to them in attempts to obtain employment in their communities upon release.

The Gunn Point programs are too recent to make possible any overall assessment of their success in this Report. The Committee considers however that, with some additional resources, they have the potential for further expansion and adoption or modification by prison authorities elsewhere. Accordingly, the Committee intends to examine the outcomes of the program at a later date.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory does not currently have either a policy or an administrative structure with responsibility for general adult education:

Non-formal adult education in the ACT is conducted in an ad-hoc fashion within a loose framework of provider networks. These providers operate in isolation and without the benefit of a coherent policy and strategy to guide the provision ... Unlike some of the larger States, where organisations have been established to coordinate and promote adult education activities, the ACT does not possess an organisation with this charter.²⁷

The major provider of both award and non-award adult education in the ACT is TAFE. Most non-award Stream 1000 courses are offered through ACTAID, a company associated with ACT TAFE. TAFE also provides a range of community based programs through its Adult Basic Education and Outreach Department. It has recently begun to assume a policy role as well:

Since November 1990 the ACT Institute of TAFE has the responsibility for advising and implementing ACT Government policies in adult education.²⁸

In 1990-91 the TAFE allocation to its community education and outreach programs in the ACT was approximately \$370,000 (including \$50,000 targeted to Aboriginals). In addition it received approximately \$100,000 from the Commonwealth for vocational and adult literacy courses.

In line with developments elsewhere TAFE Stream 1000 courses are offered on the basis of full cost recovery. Despite concessional rates to people on low incomes the inevitable result of the user pays policy is to discriminate most severely against the most disadvantaged in the community — those whom, it can be argued, are most in need of the benefits of adult and community education. Particularly disturbing is the ACT Government's decision to charge fees for TAFE's general adult literacy program which everywhere else is offered at no cost to participants on the grounds of social justice. In the ACT concessions of 50% are available to holders of Health Benefit cards or similar.

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its policy concerning the charging of fees for adult basic education courses in TAFE in the interests of social justice and a consistent approach to adult basic education across States and Territories.

The ACT Department of Education runs programs for adults in its secondary colleges. These are mainly courses leading to Year 12 certificates although a number of non-award courses are also offered. All of these courses are provided on the basis of full cost recovery. Government departments in the ACT provide in-house training for staff as well as general education programs for the public and for departmental clients but no funding or other details were provided to the Committee.

Western Australia

In Western Australia the bulk of adult and community education is provided by TAFE which conducts a wide range of formal and non-formal courses in its colleges, in the workplace and through community centres. Its outreach and distance education components are well developed, especially in rural areas.

There is no equivalent in Western Australia of the Board of Adult and Community Education in New South Wales or the Council of Adult Education in Victoria and the community education sector is generally under-resourced and poorly supported by government.

There are currently 71 community learning centres and neighbourhood houses in Western Australia with more than 8,000 members. These are linked by a coordinating body called Learning Centre Link. It is funded by the State Government through TAFE (from whom it received \$60,000 in 1990-91) and through the Department of Community Services (from whom it received \$64,000 during the same period) and employs 3.5 full time staff.

The 71 centres are heavily dependent upon volunteers for their survival. Six employ two full time staff, ten employ less than one full time member of staff each and the remainder are run entirely by volunteers. Even these paid staff are currently under threat. Some centres receive funding from the Department of Community Services and the Office of Child Care to pay creche supervisors and a number receive small grants from shire councils, churches and other local organisations. Many are totally self funded, raising all their revenue through course fees.

Similar trends are evident in Western Australia to those noted elsewhere. TAFE is increasingly moving to the adoption of a user pays approach to funding. At the same time funding provided through the Non Government Adult Education Program is becoming increasingly tied to literacy and prevocational education, the narrow definition of which is of great concern to providers. The effect of each of these developments is to disadvantage disproportionately those who stand to gain most from additional education and training.

Major Providers of Adult and Community Education

A large number of the submissions provided to the Committee during the course of its Inquiry, and a majority of witnesses appearing before it in public hearings, stressed the very diverse nature of adult and community education provision in this country. Provision varies between States and within States, reflecting local needs and priorities, government encouragement or lack of it, local initiative and leadership as well as changing economic, social and demographic pressures. It is thus difficult to comment generally on providers. Nevertheless, certain providers and broad patterns of provision are common to all States and these will be described in the following section. The largest formal provider of adult and community education in every State and Territory is TAFE. The higher education sector is also an important contributor. The role of the school sector is more circumscribed but is nevertheless important in some States.

The TAFE Contribution

The Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector is the principal provider of technical and vocational education in Australia as well as a major provider of liberal/further education. Courses are offered to 1.5 million students in 233 TAFE Colleges throughout the States and Territories.²⁹ TAFE also has a significant distance and outreach component and cooperates with community providers in some areas to run courses in community colleges, neighbourhood houses and other community centres. Some of these community based agencies are themselves registered TAFE providers.

The Commonwealth Government has had a limited role in the development of TAFE, reflecting its lack of constitutional power in this area. Its major involvement has been through the provision of substantial funding:

The Commonwealth provides direct TAFE recurrent and infrastructure grants to the States/Territories on the basis of negotiated and agreed Resource Agreements, which outline the Commonwealth priorities for the particular year. Commonwealth policy for TAFE has in the past been formulated in consultation with the States/Territories. As a result of the 2 November 1990 Special Ministers Meeting on Training and the subsequent move to a national approach to training, it is expected that the Commonwealth will move towards closer collaboration with the States/Territories in policy formulation for the recurrent and infrastructure programs.³⁰

In 1991 Commonwealth funding on infrastructure in TAFE totalled \$209.288m. Its recurrent funding was \$149.291m and in addition it spent \$8.4m on national projects. Commonwealth administrative responsibility for TAFE rests with the Vocational Education and Training Division of the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

The TAFE system operates under legislation enacted by the States and Territories. Although its functions are broadly similar across borders there are significant variations in administrative structures and modes of operation. These reflect different responses to local conditions and have been referred to briefly in the previous section.

In all States courses are grouped into four main "Streams" according to their vocational and educational outcomes. Substreams exist within some of these. Stream 1000 courses are non-award courses variously described as hobby, recreational, leisure or personal enrichment courses. Statistics for enrolments and student contact hours clearly demonstrate that, although the demand for Stream 1000 courses (measured by enrolments) is high, this is not reflected in TAFE's allocation of resources (measured by student contact hours). Approximately 37% of student enrolments nationally were in Stream 1000 courses in 1989. However fewer than 5% of student contact hours were devoted to them. Stream 2000 courses are preparatory courses to assist participants into employment or further education. In 1989, 16% of TAFE students were enrolled in this Stream which accounted for almost 18% of student contact hours. Stream 3000 courses are initial vocational courses leading to qualifications in a wide range of trades, para-professional and professional occupations. They accounted for 41% of enrolments in 1989 and 74% of student contact hours. Stream 4000 courses are intended to upgrade vocational and professional qualifications and to provide additional skills. They accounted for 6% of participants in 1989 and approximately 4% of student contact hours. These figures clearly demonstrate (a) TAFE's emphasis on vocational courses, to which it devotes the vast bulk of its resources, and (b) the strong demand for less strictly vocational courses, which is not matched by resources. The widespread application of the user pays principle to Stream 1000 courses since 1989, the year to which these figures refer, is leading to a reduction in demand for these as people cannot afford the fees.³¹

Historically there has been some tension within TAFE between the technical/vocational, formal, award component of its provision and the liberal/further education component. After the Kangan Report of 1974 (The Report of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education), TAFE:

moved[d] away from a historically narrow, overly specialised and restrictive model of technical education towards one characterised by more open relationships to community, the labour market and industry and other educational agencies. In short, increased "access" has been accompanied by greater openness and breadth of provision in the colleges.³²

In the last few years, however this situation has changed. A narrow vocational interpretation of TAFE's role now dominates government and educational thinking. In this view TAFE's responsibility is primarily to meet the demands of industrial development through skilling of the labour force. Its liberal/further education role is considered less important. Funding policies increasingly reflect these perceptions, with full cost recovery now operating in most TAFE systems for liberal/further education courses variously described as hobby, leisure or Stream 1000 courses and generally offering no award on completion. Courses classified as vocational are run at no cost or minimal cost to participants. However with the Commonwealth's decision in late 1990 to lift its embargo on the charging of tuition fees for vocational courses, this situation may change.

The simplistic distinction between vocational and liberal/further education courses is damaging to the fourth sector of education on a number of grounds. Firstly it ignores the reality that many participants in leisure/hobby courses use the skills so acquired in

economically productive ways. They are discriminated against in the sense that they are forced to pay fees for these courses while participants in courses categorised as vocational are not:

... the distinction between vocational and non-vocational courses is not as clear cut as some would claim. It cannot be assumed that a vocational or non-vocational purpose on the part of a course is matched by a similar intention on the part of the learner. Ultimately, it must be the learner's application of his or her knowledge and skill which determines whether or not a particular course serves a vocational or non-vocational purpose.³³

Secondly the distinction ignores the role of Stream 1000 courses in preparing people to enter more strictly vocational mainstream courses. In this respect Stream 1000 courses perform the same function as pre-vocational courses, which are subsidised. The same is true of many courses run in community learning centres and neighbourhood houses.

Most importantly the fee for service approach discriminates most severely against the most disadvantaged, in particular those people most in need of encouragement to undertake further training and who are least likely to move directly to a strictly vocational course. Fee concessions may lessen the discriminatory impact of these policies but they do not overcome it. Since the majority of participants in Stream 1000 courses are women, the user pays policy reinforces their disadvantage to a disproportionate extent.

There is indeed some anecdotal evidence to suggest that TAFE in general is becoming the preserve of the middle class. In public hearings in Queensland, for example, a trainer of TAFE teachers commented that:

... even the TAFE colleges are being hijacked by the middle class, and not just the middle class but by the upper middle class ... There has been a distinct shift in terms of just who the formal education sectors are serving.³⁴

Predictably, in most TAFE systems, enrolments in Stream 1000 courses have fallen after rising consistently through the 1980s, with potential participants turning increasingly to community providers. In New South Wales judicious reclassifying of hobby courses to the vocational streams — for example dressmaking has become a formal course in fashion technology and retailing in some centres — has lessened the impact of the changes.

Some community providers, pointing to the growing number of Stream 1000 participants being priced out of TAFE (with its relatively large resources), and moving to community groups (with minuscule budgets), have argued for a transfer of resources from TAFE to the community sector. Others fear that such a course of action will exacerbate existing tensions between TAFE and community providers and divert attention from the fact that non-award adult education is seriously under-resourced irrespective of where it is provided. Nevertheless current funding arrangements are clearly unsatisfactory and need to be addressed in the context of a national policy on adult and community education, which is discussed later in this Report.

The size and character of the different States has affected the extent of their TAFE involvement in non-award adult education and the way in which this relates to other agencies and providers:

In States with smaller and more widely dispersed populations (Queensland and South Australia, for example) the TAFE Colleges are also major adult education providers, but in Victoria and New South Wales other authorities are chiefly responsible for adult education.³⁵

The "other authorities" referred to here are the Division of Further Education and the Council of Adult Education in Victoria and the Board of Adult and Community Education in New South Wales. The relationship between TAFE and the other community providers is often cooperative and mutually beneficial. Moorabbin College of TAFE, for example, runs further education programs jointly with community providers in neighbourhood houses and community venues and described how many participants then proceed on to accredited courses at this or other institutions. In its submission it stated that:

There is value in diversity of venue, eg community houses, colleges, neighbourhood learning centres, as this allows for a diverse range of people to gain access to education, however this requires significant coordination.

Implementation of a Statewide policy and strategy which involves a diversity of venues would be a significant achievement.³⁶

A submission from Raymond Terrace Neighbourhood House and Information Centre described its links with the local TAFE, use of TAFE teachers for some of its courses and attempts to ensure that there is no duplication of classes.³⁷

It would be fair to say however that the relationship between TAFE and community providers is sometimes strained. One TAFE submission to the Committee, for example, stated:

We believe that TAFE colleges make an important contribution to the community and individuals in the field of adult and community education. We believe it is economically responsible and socially wise to continue to expand that provision.

However (in Victoria) because there are a large number of community providers, who are politically active, and because the smaller number of TAFE Colleges are far less likely to act politically (at least in relation to the type of programs under discussion) we believe there is an increasing tendency to devalue the work that TAFE Colleges do in the field of adult and community education.³⁸

Dr. J V D'Cruz from La Trobe University, referring specifically to adult basic education in Victoria, also drew attention to lack of cooperation between the two sectors:

The apparent lack of enthusiastic cooperation at present between TAFE Colleges and community providers needs to be addressed. TAFE College workers in adult literacy and basic education seem to feel alienated under the present split between the State Training Board and the Division.³⁹

A different perspective on the same issue was provided in a submission from the Network of Women in Further Education in Victoria which stated:

The Network of Women in Further Education believes that adult education suffers from its second class status in most of the institutions where it is delivered. Providers whose primary function is the delivery of adult education are the exception rather than the rule.

The biggest slice of adult education provision of most States and Territories is delivered through TAFE Colleges where it is treated as a secondary concern, often suffering cuts in favour of expanded occupationally specific training programs. Even in Victoria, where community based adult education is most developed, it is estimated that about 2/3 provision is in TAFE Colleges.⁴⁰

In States where TAFE is the major provider relations between it and the community sector also appear to depend to some extent on the personalities involved although institutional factors play a part. A submission from South Australia, for example, explained that in that State:

Community groups rely extensively on volunteer teachers or people who will accept very low hourly rates of payment. This has led to an assumption by DTAFE and others that educational programs in community centres are of doubtful quality in educational terms though no systematic evaluation has yet been possible.⁴¹

A separate but related issue, and a contentious one in some States, is the policy or lack of policy on the free use of TAFE buildings by non profit educational groups. In some States, for example Tasmania, it is government policy to encourage extensive and free use of State school and college facilities for formal adult education classes. New South Wales has developed a comprehensive policy and guidelines for the community use of school facilities. In other States there appears to be no established policy, with arrangements depending entirely on relations between community providers and their local TAFE colleges. Cooperation at this level can be critical to the survival of some groups as is evident from a submission from U3A in Toowoomba:

... a very important and positive part of the success of the venture in Toowoomba has unquestionably been the recognition of our aims, acceptance of our efforts, and appreciation of what we are about, by the incumbent Director of the Toowoomba TAFE College, Mr Geoff Holmes. This attitude was not initially reflected by some sections of the College personnel who saw the concept as threatening to their own revenue.⁴²

The Committee supports the use of publicly funded buildings (schools and libraries as well as TAFE) without charge by bona fide, non-profit providers of adult education at times when these buildings would otherwise be unused.

A major concern of the Committee is to ensure that future arrangements for adult and community education are such as to encourage cooperation between the sectors with an input into adult and community education and, as far as possible, to remove existing impediments to it.

Another issue likely to become increasingly important in the adult and community education sector generally, and in that sector's relations with TAFE in particular, is the issue of accreditation, which is discussed elsewhere in this Report. To date few courses provided through the fourth sector have been accredited. The situation is changing however because of increased community expectations of certification and accreditation arising from award restructuring and associated developments. The Victorian Government submission stated:

At a local level, informal arrangements between individual community providers, TAFE colleges and higher education institutions enable students to gain credit for previous study. There is however a need to formalise and extend these arrangements throughout the entire education sector through the development and implementation of a State and potentially national accreditation system.⁴³

The Committee favours the development of a national accreditation system if such a move is supported by all major provider groups. It recognises however that individuals participate in adult and community education for a great variety of reasons, not only to gain a certificate. There should be sufficient flexibility to enable a range of needs to be met.

The Higher Education Contribution

Universities in Australia have played an important part in non-formal adult education since extension services were established in Melbourne and Sydney universities in the 1880s. These spread to other universities as they were established. In most universities extension courses were organised through off campus (extra-mural) departments and focussed upon the provision of liberal/arts related subjects in public lectures or tutorial classes, often in close association with the Workers Educational Association (WEA).

Extra-mural departments have had no independent funding in any of the universities. They have always had to compete with other university departments for funds. Consequently their position within most universities has become increasingly tenuous. Some have closed. Some have survived by levying fees that are sufficiently high to cover all but infrastructure costs.

Others have changed the nature of courses offered so that their major effort is directed to professional continuing education and management courses, to educational travel and to consultancies, from all of which they earn significant income and even generate profits. Professional development is viewed as a particularly lucrative area, the growth of which is assured by the introduction of award restructuring and the gradual

impact of the Training Guarantee legislation. Even in 1984 it was estimated that 67% of all enrolments in adult and community education in higher education were in professional continuing education.⁴⁴

Whereas the contribution to adult and community education made by the school and TAFE sectors depends largely upon State government priorities in these sectors, the contribution of the universities depends on their own individual priorities. Their contribution therefore varies from one institution to another rather than from one State to another. Nevertheless the push to full cost recovery is having a similar impact on university extension departments everywhere. The current situation is summed up in the following submissions from Monash University and from the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University:

Formerly, when universities were funded by a block grant it was possible for central coordinating agencies and university managements in turn to determine that continuing education was a core university activity to be funded centrally from the block grant. This is much harder to achieve now that higher education operating grants are determined by a formula which is largely driven by approved student load in award courses. The tendency now is to expect complementary activities such as continuing education to be a source of additional, discretionary funds, or at least to cover costs. This restricts higher education's involvement in adult and continuing education to money making activities.⁴⁵

There are indications that the universities are taking continuing education more seriously. Such developments as the need for universities to diversify their sources of income, and the Training Guarantee Act, have made them aware that the continuing adult education departments do have capacity to earn income and meet community and vocational needs ... Several departments have indicated that they are expected to become fully cost recoverable in two or three years' time ... Reluctantly, in some instances, departments are abandoning their commitment to liberal arts and more traditional adult education and are becoming much more business and professionally oriented.⁴⁶

The Australian National University's submission describes the work of continuing education departments in 41 higher education institutions in Australia and New Zealand. For each institution it provides a brief outline of the department, a description of major areas of activity, staffing arrangements and future plans. It was compiled early in 1991 and provides the most comprehensive and current information available on university extension services in this country.

Despite the moves to cost recovery, university extension centres continue to attract large numbers of students in metropolitan areas. Total enrolments in adult and community education provided through higher education were estimated by Johnson at 160,000 in 1984. University extension courses at the University of Western Australia, for example, enrol approximately 20,000 students annually and the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sydney enrolled 15,000 students in non-award courses in 1990 (as opposed to the 27,000 'regular' students enrolled in award courses). Some submissions have gone so far as to argue that provision itself stimulates demand:

In education, competition and duplication of provision is often seen as a waste of limited resources, but in the user-pays environment of adult and community education exactly the opposite is true. Competition ensures that the consumers of adult and community education get a quality product that is competitively priced. One case study from the Sydney area is that of the University of Sydney and the Workers Education Association. Until 1983, these two bodies presented a single program of adult and community education in conjunction with each other. In 1983, the University severed the relationship and created its own Continuing Education Program. Prior to this the University was subsidising the activity to the tune of some \$500,000 p.a. Since that time, the enrolments of students attending courses offered by both agencies have more than doubled. The University subsidy is now \$0 and the State subsidy to the WEA has been cut back.⁴⁷

A number of submissions to the Committee from universities involved in adult and community education have stressed the need for greater cooperation between the universities and community providers and between the universities and TAFE. Where universities provide support in the form of infrastructure, accommodation or teaching assistance to community groups this is greatly valued and can be critical to the survival of the operation. With the university sector now under great financial pressure itself however, some institutions have concentrated on renting out available space for profit to the detriment of community groups. The following submissions illustrate the varying relationships between Universities of the Third Age (U3A's) and their local universities:

In a few cases in Australia (e.g., Flinders University, the University of W.A., Monash University, the University of Sydney, and the Victorian Council of Adult Education) higher education bodies have provided help to U3A branches in the form of office space and meeting rooms and back-up help for message taking when the U3A office volunteers are not present. In the case of Flinders University the branch of U3A, recently formed, has the use of an office with word processor, photocopier and telephone and limited stationery supplies — all at the university's expense.⁴⁸

Some U3As have difficulty in obtaining premises in which to function, and it was with a feeling of disbelief that we noted the fact that Monash University threw their U3A (one of the three earliest) off the Campus and left them to find accommodation for themselves ... Having been led to believe that Tertiary Institutions have an obligation to assist with Continuing Education, we were astonished at the behaviour of the Monash Administration.⁴⁹

The Committee is attracted to the suggestion of the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education that links between formal award and continuing adult education delivered through the higher education sector should be fostered and monitored by the establishment of an Australian Continuing Education Unit represented in the Higher Education Council. The Committee also considers that the traditional role of university extension services in making the intellectual resources of the university available to the community at large should not be jeopardised by the commercial role being thrust upon them. Both Commonwealth and State/Territory governments could encourage universities to revitalise their community connections by rewarding extension activity in some way.

The Committee recommends that the Higher Education Council of NBEET establish a standing committee within the Council to monitor and advise on the continuing education role of universities, particularly regarding its links with formal award courses, and its contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the community at large.

The Contribution of the Schools Sector

The schools sector makes a very limited contribution to adult and community education. Nevertheless, its support can be of very great benefit, especially to small community providers, the viability of whose operations may even be placed in jeopardy by withdrawal of that support.

Since school education is predominantly the responsibility of the States, the level of support and cooperation between the school sector and the adult and community education sector differs markedly across the country. Where no State government directive or policy exists on the relationship between the two sectors, the degree of cooperation appears to vary according to the personalities involved at the local level and the extent of involvement of the local community with activities conducted in its school.

The greatest support provided by the school sector to adult and community education is through the use of schools outside school hours at minimal or no charge as venues for adult education programs. This practice is widespread in a number of States. In some instances it extends to use of school facilities other than buildings. Some wealthier providers, for example some Community Colleges in New South Wales, are in a position to buy equipment themselves which they install for use by the school during the day and College use outside school hours. Such arrangements are obviously mutually beneficial.

Free use of school buildings is greatly appreciated by community providers but as it has generally been dependent upon the good will of school principals any such arrangements have, of necessity, been temporary which limits their usefulness. With the move to greater control and financial accountability at individual school level, schools in most States are under pressure to charge fees for use of their facilities. This is causing a great deal of concern among providers, as the following submissions demonstrate:

Locally accessible venues are a significant factor in provision of adult education. Venues cannot yet be secured by evening colleges on a permanent basis. Access to school buildings is by agreement with the day Principal alone and this agreement is only as (sic) binding as long as the Principal continues to support the College's work. The Principals of the schools we operate from are supportive of the College and the educational opportunities we are providing the community, but this is not always the case.⁵⁰

The college has no security anywhere, a deplorable state of affairs. Evening Colleges have only ever been able to find office accommodation in the past because of the good graces and generosity of the Department of School Education at the local level. Now that evening colleges are no longer even part of the same government department I have grave fears for our survival.⁵¹

One must question the commitment of some State governments to adult and community education when they can encourage policies which keep publicly funded school buildings empty (and in many cases targets for vandalism) for 16 hours out of 24 while small community providers of education to disadvantaged and other groups are forced to limit their operations for lack of suitable, affordable accommodation. Even the economic rationale seems dubious, a point made in the following submission:

Given that we must accept, however reluctantly, the ascendancy of arguments of the economic rationalists in the formulation of public policy it seems important for the rationalists to agree on whether it is more rational economically to have buildings paid for with public funds in use as much as possible by community education groups or whether it is more rational to have those buildings idle unless community groups can pay commercial rates of hire. This question applies equally to facilities and resources other than buildings.⁵²

The Committee notes that NSW has developed a comprehensive policy on the use of school facilities by outside groups.

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish policies which provide for:

- (a) the free use of school and TAFE buildings by *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations; and**
- (b) reasonable access by such groups to associated facilities such as libraries, computer rooms etc.**

Several submissions to the Committee have also raised the possibility that school buses might be used during periods when they would otherwise be idle, to transport participants to adult and community education programs not adequately serviced by public transport. This would be especially helpful in rural areas where distance and lack of transport are consistently cited as major barriers to access:

A solution to this problem [of lack of access to transport in rural areas] presents itself when one realises that exactly the same situation confronts children attending school in the same area. But in that case, the community recognises their educational need and provides school buses. Those vehicles are often lying idle during the hours between the beginning and end of the school day; and it is exactly during that period that U3As usually program their activities. Why cannot the community also recognise the educational needs of older adults and subsidise the use of those buses for their benefit? This is a relatively low-cost policy which the Inquiry is urged to recommend.⁵³

A similar point suggesting the shared use of school buses was made in a submission from the Country Women's Association of Australia:

Further education students, if space is available should be allowed to travel on the school bus, if that is their wish. In rural areas public transport is seldom at convenient times for off-peak business time travel.⁵⁴

The Committee is not aware of any State government policy to permit or encourage the use of school buses by adult participants in community or related education although, as noted elsewhere in the Report, some local governments provide community bus services. Possibly insurance considerations are an inhibiting factor. Nevertheless the Committee would like to encourage State government departments of education to examine this issue. If it could be satisfactorily resolved, it would greatly benefit a very disadvantaged group of participants and potential participants in adult education — rural residents without their own transport — at minimal cost to education departments.

The Committee recommends that State and Territory education authorities examine the possibility of the use of regional and rural school bus services by participants in bona fide adult and community education activities.

The Committee was pleased to hear of examples of cooperation between schools and TAFE to provide accommodation, staff and resources to assist adult learners. It considers that such cases should be publicised to draw attention to the benefit of such arrangements to adult learners and as a means of encouraging their wider adoption. A few examples are given here:

An example of resource sharing is between Yallourn TAFE and Cann River Higher Elementary School in East Gippsland. Adults living in the Cann River district can study a literacy course based on materials from Yallourn TAFE at their local higher elementary school.⁵⁵

... In Victoria the ... [Victorian Certificate of Education] is awarded and programs developed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board; provision for adults is mainly via TAFE colleges — often using secondary school premises for evening programs;⁵⁶

Where such arrangements do not yet exist some individual organisations appear to have recognised their potential and are pressing for their introduction. A submission from a rural area in Western Australia, for example, saw TAFE-school cooperation as a means of assisting students to continue their education beyond Year 10:

The attachment of TAFE personnel and resources onto the existing high school infrastructure would provide the educational and vocational training required at post compulsory level.

An added advantage of placing TAFE personnel at high schools is that the local community could also benefit from adult education classes and short vocational courses.⁵⁷

One of the most innovative recent ventures linking schools directly with the provision of adult and community education is the development of re-entry schools. These began in South Australia and Western Australia in the early 1980s and a number are now operating or under consideration in both these States and in the Northern Territory. These schools provide "second chance" education for adults who dropped out of school or were unable to complete their secondary schooling. They offer Year 11 and Year 12 courses leading to matriculation, bridging courses for those who are not ready to begin Year 11 work and a range of non-award courses, some delivered in cooperation with TAFE. Again, the level of cooperation between TAFE and the re-entry schools appears to be very variable. Students may attend full time or part time, during the day or the evening. The majority who attend full time during the day are in receipt of AUSTUDY, but lack of adequate financial support, particularly for students with family responsibilities, is a major cause of attrition. The re-entry schools are funded by State departments of education.

Some schools integrate returning adults into mainstream classes. This approach is not always successful. Some schools consider that returning students have special needs for counselling and support and require a different teaching approach. Separate provision has therefore been offered in some re-entry schools and at least one is a stand-alone school specifically for adults. Demand among adult students is high for each type of school. In South Australia, where there are now nine re-entry schools, demand is expected to increase from 1992 when matriculation will no longer be available through TAFE colleges.

Community Providers

Community providers contribute an extremely large and generally under appreciated share of adult education in Australia. The diversity and geographical spread of such providers is remarkable. They provide educational opportunities for millions of Australians: we are talking about figures like 150,000 enrolments in New South Wales Community Colleges and 130,000 in Community Adult Education Centre (CAECS); 100,000 WEA enrolments in South Australia and New South Wales; and an estimated 1.7 million people passing through the network of Neighbourhood Houses across the country each year. With individual providers the Committee's observation is that even a very small operation will number the people who come through its doors each week over the hundred mark if you include multiple visits. In the case of a more established provider this can rise into the thousands on a regular basis.

The Committee believes that the absence of a proper understanding of what is going on at community level in adult education contributes to the low profile from which the sector suffers at the present time. The evidence received at both hearings and inspections has left us in no doubt that the work undertaken by community providers is making a most significant and rapidly growing contribution to community and educational development in this country.

The Committee is aware that the submissions we have received may only have skimmed the surface of this thriving area. The closer one goes to the grassroots in adult education the more it can be seen to rely on the contribution and commitment of volunteers and people who work long hours beyond those they are paid for. In such circumstances there is likely to be a shortage of energy available for submission-writing. We cannot expect that those submissions we have received will fully reflect the extent of the community provision.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth commission a national survey of participation in community-based adult education and its benefits, either as a discrete exercise or through the Australian National University's National Social Science Survey.

The community sector has long been an important provider of general adult education in Australia. But in recent years it has also made a substantial contribution to both skills formation and public education campaigns — for example, parenting or health and lifestyle initiatives. There is also now a significant flow-on of people from community-based adult education into further education and into the labour market. The sector is proving particularly effective from two points of view. Community providers operate at low levels of delivery cost and so represent efficient use of the taxpayer's dollar. For the same reason they are attractive and accessible to the disadvantaged skills-seeker who may not have access through the formal system.

The size, capacity and political sophistication of the community sector varies from State to State, with Victoria recognised as having the most highly developed arrangements followed by New South Wales and South Australia. The AAACE points out:

It is in these States that the community sector has achieved recognition and funding support from government. In WA, Tasmania and Queensland, where TAFE has taken on the role of the major provider, the community based sector is by contrast relatively under-developed and critically under-resourced.⁵⁸

While there is a multitude of individual providers operating at community level some common patterns and categories are discernible across the States. These will be discussed in general terms in what follows, with significant differences in style and emphasis within States drawing comment in passing.

One clear pattern that emerges across the sector is its high degree of dependence on the work of volunteers and workers paid at part-time levels. Constant references were made to this in submissions. A survey of 123 adult and community education organisations in Queensland — where adult education is largely delivered by TAFE — revealed that volunteer workers there exceeded full-time workers by 3.5 times.⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, such ratios are much higher in the non-TAFE community sector where delivery becomes more and more dependent on individual commitment rather than financial reward.

Community providers may be grouped into two broad categories. The first category comprises those with significant infrastructure which function at a statewide or regional level. Organisations in this first group usually receive sizeable annual grants from State governments and normally maintain a core full-time permanent staff. Organisations in the second category tend to restrict themselves to shire, council or neighbourhood areas. They are largely dependent on local support and focus on particular local needs. They are generally highly democratic in structure and style and are characterised by an almost total reliance on part-time managers, tutors on low rates of pay and on volunteers. Some but by no means all organisations in the second category receive annual grants from enlightened State agencies but in most cases these are small and are limited to contributions towards administration. It is open to both groups to win extra funds from State or federal sources for specific purposes.

Organisations in the first category currently include the Council of Adult Education and Local Advisory Committees in Victoria, the Workers Educational Association in South Australia and New South Wales and the Community Colleges (previously Evening Colleges) in New South Wales.

The Council of Adult Education

Of all the community providers across the country the Victorian Council of Adult Education (CAE) is unique. The CAE was set up in 1946 in Victoria under its own Act which gave it autonomy, independent funding and a separate advisory role with nevertheless some residual accounting connection with the Department of Education. A new Act in 1981 made the Council a separate body corporate entirely responsible for its own accounts.

The CAE defines its task as a dual one: to act directly as a provider on a large scale, and to encourage and assist other adult education providers in the State, sharing skills and knowledge with them. The Council is the major metropolitan provider in Melbourne. In 1990 it presented over 3,900 courses of its own in the fields of liberal arts, business studies, languages, creative arts, fitness, health, nutrition, leisure, recreation and women's studies. It ran Government-supported programs in literacy, basic education and English as a Second Language and enrolled 3000 people in Victorian Certificate of Education courses, as well as running educational tours. CAE enrolments have grown from 40,000 in 1980 to 60,000 in 1990.

As well as its activities in Melbourne, however, the CAE focusses an important part of its attention at a statewide level. This has included providing advice and support to 49 rural Local Advisory Committees (LACs) affiliated with it under Section 16 of the 1981 Act, but this is likely to change with the passing of Victoria's pending Adult, Community and Further Education Bill. When this happens the CAE expects to establish other support networks in the State.

Witnesses from the CAE emphasised a number of points in relation to its current activities. They noted that in recent years there has been a strong demand for job-related courses, linking courses to further education and training, and courses geared to income generation and self-provisioning. The CAE has increased its vocational skills offerings accordingly. Along with this has come a demand from participants and in the community at large for certification and accredited course offerings. The CAE anticipates increasing levels of accreditation of its courses once the necessary accreditation mechanisms are put into place at government level. Workplace basic education has been operating for the last five or six years and a purpose designed Business Education Centre now runs many training activities in consultation with industry.

At the same time the Council continues to emphasise the values it has traditionally embraced: a desire to develop and mount programs that help people to understand and cope with changes in the world and the society in which they live; a commitment to social justice and equity; and the provision of new opportunities as well as second chances to people who have previously missed out or been denied access to education.

Given the demands and commitments under which it operates at the present time, the CAE urgently needs additional resources. As with many other providers, the CAE noted that the concessional element in its fee-paying enrolments has increased dramatically, to the point where it now constitutes 20% of these enrolments. The contribution from the Victorian Government has actually decreased in real terms, with an inflation-adjusted reduction of a quarter of a million dollars from this source last year⁶⁰ and a further reduction posted for 1992. The proportion of funds the CAE received from this source as against other income decreased from 60% in 1990 to 40% in 1991.

Local Advisory Committees

From 1981 to the present time, the CAE has lent its strength and support to voluntary associations interested in adult education in country districts throughout Victoria by appointing Local Advisory Committees (LACs) under its own Act to represent them. Until recently LACs have been the regional community pipeline to the CAE and, through the CAE, something of a policy pipeline for their districts on to the State Government. But they have also possessed significant infrastructure and have offered their own courses. Under the Council of Adult Education Act 1981 LACs functions included:

- advising the CAE with respect to the requirements of the district;
- organising and conducting, either on behalf of the CAE, by itself, or in collaboration with any other body, adult education in the district; and
- assisting the work of the CAE.

Historically they have filled roughly the same kind of functional niche as the one currently occupied in New South Wales by both the Community Colleges and the Regional Councils, with the advisory function in Victoria being exercised through the CAE.

LACs have been governed by their own rules of incorporation, however, and although they initially received State funding through the CAE, in all but the first years they have been funded directly through the successive State government administrative agencies responsible for adult education. Under the new Victorian Act which will give statutory recognition to Regional Councils of the Division of Further Education throughout the State, it is expected that the LACs legal connection with the CAE will end, and with it any suggestion of a role for them other than as providers.

Workers Educational Association of New South Wales

The New South Wales Workers Educational Association (WEA), which was established in 1913, is the single largest non-government provider of adult education in that State. It operates at four centres — Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle and the Central Coast — each of which is accountable to a separate branch Council of the Association.

WEA classes and enrolments have grown from 562 classes with 14,312 enrolments in 1980 to 2689 classes with 41,500 enrolments in 1990.⁶¹ The WEA is closely linked to its client community and is responsive to changes in that community. WEA Regional Councils represent students and affiliated trade unions, cultural and interest groups, and this is topped by a State Executive.

The WEA Regions receive an annual grant from the Board of Adult and Community Education and some funding is also given to the State Executive. The funds received currently from the Board constitute less than 6% of WEA's total revenue.

Originally the WEA's major emphasis was on liberal studies courses for working men and women, many of whom would have missed out on these opportunities earlier in life. Socio-economic changes in Australian society in recent decades however have somewhat altered this emphasis. The profile of students appended to the WEA submission shows that a majority now come from the better educated sectors of the community. Liberal studies courses still tend to be offered in significant numbers in the Sydney metropolitan region. In the other WEA regions, however, demand is for courses in business, communication and lifestyle and leisure pursuits⁶² reflecting the economic and social concerns of the areas. These regions are heavily industrialized, and include a high proportion of migrant families and people who are less likely to have the time, money or confidence to undertake adult education courses. On the figures available, 14% of WEA students in Sydney in 1985 were born in non-English speaking countries, while 80 nationalities were represented among WEA students in the Illawarra Region in 1991.

The WEA in New South Wales cooperates with local community groups, government and other educational organisations to determine local needs and the appropriate programs to satisfy those needs. Examples of courses offered as a result of this cooperation include English Language courses run jointly by WEA and the Adult Migrant Education Service in Sydney, introductory business skills courses in Illawarra for the Commonwealth Employment Service, and a program called Helping Early Leavers run by the Hunter and Central Coast Region with funding from the NSW Ministry of School Education.

Under the influence of the International Literacy Year and recent government policies and priorities in these areas, the past two years has seen an increase in literacy and numeracy programs and programs for school leavers and the unemployed. This has been particularly so in both the Hunter/Central Coast Region and the Illawarra Region — both industrial areas with large proportions of immigrant workers, tradespeople and people with low disposable incomes. In the Hunter region, project-based literacy programs have also been conducted in workplaces such as BHP.

Demand for literacy programs remains strong, but levels of government expenditure have now dropped back. The difficulties are further compounded by the fact that the funding is piecemeal, coming from many different sources and under a variety of guidelines. As well, the short-term nature of the funding works against stability and predictability of programming. More government funding is needed to underwrite such courses because they require smaller classes and more expensive resources than WEA is able to provide under user pays arrangements:

WEA is pro-actively providing a service to those identified by the Federal Government as disadvantaged and assists State and Federal Government to achieve program goals.

While the Region is happy to accept the challenge of self-sufficiency in adult education and the userpays principle it must be recognised that certain groups in society will bear the cost.

WEA and other adult and community education agencies do not receive Federal Government support and recognition beyond eligibility to compete for a variety of grants. Other agencies such as TAFE, AMES etc have access to recurrent and infrastructure funding from both State and Federal governments in recognition of their educational role. With such recognition adult and community education agencies could reach a larger proportion of the population, who would then have access and an introduction to lifelong education and training.⁶³

The WEA, along with many other community providers, indicated to the Committee its strong preference for triennial funding in this field.

The Hunter and Central Coast Region pointed out that the general grant it received in 1990 was the same as in 1989, representing a significant real decrease in support. Reduced funding levels are increasing the pressure on organisations like WEA to levy still more fees from students. But when this happens many potential students then find that they are unable to afford courses. Those most in need of courses are often now

the least able to afford them. In the Illawarra Region, for example, where unemployment and low incomes are a major problem, first term WEA enrolments in 1991 were down by 800 compared with first term in 1990.⁶⁴ In the areas where enrolment appears to have risen in response to uncertain times, it is confined to those groups who can afford to pursue adult education activities either to increase their employability or to fill newly enforced leisure time.

Workers Educational Association of South Australia

In South Australia the WEA has been in existence for 74 years. It is the largest provider of non-formal adult education there, maintaining a headquarters in the centre of the city but operating out of 35 locations around Adelaide. In 1990 it enrolled some 30,000 students — more than a third of whom were not in the workforce — and employed 400 tutors. Several thousand students from all over Australia and from overseas also take WEA correspondence and Trade Union Postal Courses each year.

The WEA is an approved provider under the Training Guarantee Act and many businesses and government departments use its highly regarded Training and Development Service. The WEA also works in conjunction with other community providers such as Community and Neighbourhood Houses.

Social justice is an important part of WEA objectives as it is with many community providers. In line with this WEA funds its own concession scheme for pensioners and other low-income groups. With the aid of government funding it has also operated a highly successful program giving access to its courses to more than 2000 people with physical or mild intellectual disabilities.

New initiatives planned for the next triennium include an expansion of courses for particular target groups, the introduction of more skills training courses, the extension of courses to outer suburban and regional centres and the development of courses in areas from which TAFE is currently withdrawing.

In 1990 government grants provided 13% of WEA's income. This included a general purpose grant of \$174,000 from the South Australian Office of Tertiary Education, with the rest going to special programs. The organisation is facing a cut of 26% in its general purpose grant in 1991, and sees this as threatening existing programs as well as new initiatives. Like its counterpart in New South Wales, WEA in South Australia is conscious of its role in contributing to the fulfilment of many of the social justice objectives put forward by governments at the present time. The reduction of government funding is seen as particularly ironic in these circumstances. WEA would not only prefer to see general purpose grants maintained at 1991 levels, but again like New South Wales it would also wish to see them allocated on a triennial basis as this would make it easier to plan for the longer term.

Community Colleges in NSW

The Metropolitan and Rural Community Colleges (previously called Evening Colleges) were conceived as ways of utilising the facilities of public schools and high schools after hours to provide a range of courses in personal development, living skills, languages, and arts and crafts. More recently, however, their profile has changed somewhat, with courses in literacy and numeracy, courses for people of non-English speaking backgrounds, vocational and prevocational skills acquisition courses and some business training courses now included on their lists.

The Director of the Central Coast Community College summed up the role of his College as:

... promoting and providing opportunities for learning in the community. Many (thousands) of those who have restarted their education at one of our informal courses have thereby gained the confidence to tackle formal courses at TAFE and Universities. Many have been motivated by this initial achievement to get out of the welfare system.⁶⁵

The Director of Manly-Warringah Evening College reflected recent directions as follows:

... in the last two years this focus has broadened to incorporate job, occupational and career related education and training. The movement from recreational enrolments to job related enrolments has been most startling this term ... Students of the College have expressed the need to complete courses as either part of the requirements of their employment ... or as a means to improve their employment prospects. While some students are reimbursed by their employer for their efforts, many accept that further education costs are just part of the economic package of today's employment market.⁶⁶

In recent years Community Colleges have expanded and become professionalised to a certain degree. They now employ full-time principals, usually with a teaching background, who are paid award rates under their own salary agreement. Other salaried staff work in administration, while tutors and course coordinators are paid part-time out of course fees. The principals are responsible for setting up courses that are attractive and of relevance to the local community and for appointing administrative staff and local co-ordinators. The Colleges no longer come under the umbrella of the Education Department as they once did but are recognised by the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education as providers of adult education in the State. They receive annual grants and special grants from the Board on the advice of the Regional Councils. These grants assist with salaries and special program costs, but otherwise colleges are expected to cover costs through fees.

Community Colleges are governed by Councils drawn from members of the community who pay a prescribed fee and become members of the College. Regional Colleges are centred in the major city in the region but are required to operate from several centres across their region. In 1990 there were 106,894 urban enrolments and 30,921 in the regions.

As with most adult education providers, enrolments in Community Colleges have expanded enormously in recent years, their numbers doubling since 1983. The expansion of activity has brought with it substantial cost burdens: Colleges need to employ more staff for administration and course co-ordination; school principals are now asking for payment for the use of facilities by the College; office space is becoming harder to find and more expensive; courses are requiring higher insurance costs; royalties now have to be paid under copyright legislation, and so on. The Principal of Riverina Community College made the point that the funding the College receives from the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education to cover salaries has not changed for five years and now no longer funds even her salary, let alone other administrative assistance. This is one of the many serious funding problems to which we return later in the Report.

Colleges share the concerns of all community groups that, where government funding does not increase, fees must rise, often to prohibitive levels. Commercial activities must increasingly be undertaken, often at the expense of programs with basic educational and social justice aims. Occasionally a "money spinner" will underwrite the costs of unprofitable but necessary programs. Mr Alan Duncan, President of the NSW Council of ACE Organisations, gave the example of ballroom dancing classes, and added:

Many of us do not consider that terribly educational but, my God, it is good for the economics because we get money from that to help us fund the appropriate courses and a range of activities which are going to help people's self-development and vocational development.⁶⁷

The Director of the Central Coast Community College alerted the Committee to the down side of such a strategy — namely, skewing Colleges' original objectives:

The College is increasingly turning to commercial and contract training to make ends meet. This is to some extent at the expense of adult education programs which run at a loss and must be subsidised ...

... we are facing the prospect of having to wind back our adult education programs, our *raison d'être*, because people cannot afford them, to concentrate more and more on income producing contract training activities.⁶⁸

Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs) and other Recognised Adult Education Centres in New South Wales

More numerous in regional and rural New South Wales are the accredited providers known collectively as Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs). The Committee received submissions from a large number of CAECs — which operate under a variety of names such as Adult Education Centre/Association, Learning Group, etc. — serving country towns and districts where other provision is minimal. In 1990 the State Government through the Board of Adult and Community Education contributed overall about 25% of the running costs for CAECs, the other 75% being raised from fees. The

contribution of the Board usually only covers payment of a part-time salary to the Coordinator, perhaps some subsidisation of concessional enrolments and some administrative expenses.

The structure of the CAECs is more casual and localised than the Community Colleges. They are run by an elected committee of local people who disburse funds received from the Board and employ a Coordinator to administer the centre under their control. The Coordinator then arranges courses to meet local needs. CAECs do not enjoy the benefits of the traditional association with schools that are available to Community Colleges and their access to premises is often a worry. At CAEC level the success of adult education operations is crucially dependent on the contributions and commitment of lowly-paid part-time staff and volunteers and on the degree of support for their activities in the local community.

Most CAECs provide courses in basic adult education (i.e. literacy and numeracy). Depending on size they may offer employment-directed courses in areas such as business, and commerce and computing; liberal education courses; language courses; and leisure and public health courses. Outreach centres (where they can be afforded) assist isolated participants, and programs are offered at various times of the day and evening in order to cater for all sectors of the community. Fees have to cover course administration, advertising, hire of rooms, materials and payment to tutors, most of whom are recruited in the local area.

Although CAECs have access to occasional grants for specific programs from State or Commonwealth sources, Coordinators who are paid part time salaries and work more like full-time hours rarely have any spare time or energy for the submission writing and paper chase involved in securing them. Indeed, keeping good Coordinators in the job seems to be one of the biggest problems that confront CAECs. As the Coordinator of the Gravesend Learning Association told the Committee in her submission:

... the most annoying aspect [of the job] is being constantly urged to be 'professional' when stretched to the limit, trying to provide community learning opportunities on a 'shoestring', keep up with all the administration requirements and constantly changing legalities, keep my 23 yr. old car on the road so I can do the job, fight for improved provision at local, regional and State level --- all for \$65 per week ... no wonder we suffer 'burn out'.⁶⁹

The Honorary Secretary of the Alstoneville Adult Learning Association commented:

It does not seem right that part-time Coordinators need to make a voluntary contribution of time as part of their contract. This, of course, leads to considerable turn-over in the event of more attractive offers.⁷⁰

And the Hon. Secretary of the Kiama Adult Education Association, after remarking that 'our group is relatively stable with three different coordinators in less than five years of operation', concluded that it 'is a poor principle to underpay in the field of education'.⁷¹

CAECs show great flexibility in adapting their activities to the needs of specific local communities. The Nambucca Valley Learning Group serves a rural community with many students who live in "dead-end" arms of the Nambucca River. The group holds daytime classes in the small towns along the river rather than in the district administrative centre, thus serving many isolated women who can get away only during school hours. There is a large retiree population, many single-parent families, a considerable Aboriginal population and one of the highest unemployment rates in the State. All this combined with the current economic downturn in the rural sector has led the Learning Group to focus on courses that keep people interested and motivated and often provide skills which will enable them to seek other employment or continue further study with TAFE:

Many of the courses provided by the Adult Learning Group act as a 'springboard' to various TAFE courses along similar lines. Many students who would otherwise not go on to further education, have been given the interest, confidence and skills by participating in 'non-academic' vocational courses provided by us to then go on to a more structured and accredited course with TAFE.⁷²

Kiama Adult Education Association on the other hand, operates in a community with a large number of people over 55 and a high proportion of the population either currently employed in professional areas or with professional backgrounds. The proportion of Aborigines and registered unemployed people, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds, is low. The Kiama Association believes it is important to maintain a broad balance of courses:

... there need to be employment-directed courses; help with everyday living; courses leading to understanding of current issues and courses that lead to more useful or more enjoyable use of leisure time.⁷³

Community Learning Centres in Victoria

The direct equivalent in Victoria of the New South Wales CAECs are the 45 providers of adult and community education located in rural Victoria who belong to the Association of Further Education Centres. Bearing a variety of titles, but generally referred to as Community Learning Centres (CLCs), these are all autonomous incorporated bodies managed by locally elected committees. While conforming to the same model as the CAECs in structure and function, however, the support available to the Victorian bodies is more substantial than in some other States. The Continuing Education Centre (Albury-Wodonga) had this to say:

The Albury-Wodonga Continuing Education Centre is one of the community based country Adult Education Centres that have emerged particularly in Victoria and NSW. It is uniquely placed as it is part of both the NSW and Victorian systems though because of the nature of the support, it receives substantially more financial assistance from Victoria.⁷⁴

The Victorian Government provides funding to cover base staffing costs of the Centres and contributes to infrastructure and programs. The size of operations varies enormously, with some Centres offering ten or twelve courses per term and other, larger ones running two hundred. As usual the Centres all rely on a huge amount of voluntary time and effort. In the case of the smaller and lowly-funded Centres volunteerism is what keeps them running. Even the Albury-Wodonga Centre, which is the largest in Victoria and employs fifteen staff (the majority of whom are part-time) made the point that its administrative team is assisted in a variety of ways by about two thousand volunteers.

Like CAECs Community Learning Centres focus on servicing a local community, and their programs reflect this. User pays courses as elsewhere cover personal development and practical skills courses, computers, art and craft, gardening, health and well-being, music, languages, cooking, pre-vocational and business skills. On top of these are mounted adult Victorian Certificate of Education courses and access courses for specific target groups which receive government funding. Despite the more favourable funding conditions in Victoria the Association of Further Education Centres, which speaks on behalf of the groups, made the familiar point that funding remains inadequate for the broad range of services provided.

The Association also raised another issue that was echoed by other community providers operating at district or neighbourhood level, namely that government funding arrangements often define targets too rigidly to make the best use of the community sector's ability to design and mount the kinds of courses that are appropriate in their particular local settings:

Most ACE centres are highly skilled in developing the most appropriate ways for meeting the needs of their community. This is not generally acknowledged by government which ties its funding to strategies developed at a central level but are inappropriate at a local level. The social justice policies of governments are often interpreted at a funding level in ways which increases the marginalisation of "targetted groups".⁷⁵

It was a point that was made strongly by members of the Neighbourhood House movement and one which the Committee has dealt with in detail elsewhere in the Report.

Neighbourhood Houses

It is not an exaggeration to say they may have saved a lot of women and men from madness. Melbourne's neighbourhood houses are unglamorous — sometimes just a Ministry of Housing flat — but they are responsible for giving the depressed, the poor, the isolated, the unconfident, and the battered people of modern society something to hang on to.⁷⁶

Neighbourhood Houses, also known as Neighbourhood Learning Centres or Community Centres, make up the most numerous group of community-based providers operating across the country. Recent estimates given to a 1990 conference on adult

education at Flinders University put the annual participation rate at over 1.7 million people, 90% of whom are women, with over 10,000 workers, paid and unpaid, involved in providing that service.⁷⁷

The mandates of Neighbourhood Houses are usually directed towards multi-purpose, general community development. They are highly democratic and informal and their operations involve the input of a few paid workers, predominantly part-time, supported by large numbers of volunteers. They respond to immediate, local needs and provide the kind of non-threatening environment that is crucial to encouraging people whose previous experience of education in the formal system has been limited or indeed counter-productive.

The Neighbourhood House system enjoys a different level of status and support in each State in which it operates. In Western Australia there are 64 Community and Neighbourhood Learning Centres (CNLCs) in both country and metropolitan areas. Adult education is delivered through the TAFE system in Western Australia, and CNLCs attract little if any funding from the State Government for this purpose. Funding from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training is available through TAFE but the strict guidelines under which this is distributed often prevent CNLCs gaining access to it. The CNLCs therefore rely heavily on course fees and volunteer support.

In country areas where many CNLCs are located, their activities have been deeply affected by the rural recession. On the one hand the need for the development of confidence to seek new jobs and skills has increased, but on the other there is a substantially reduced ability to pay.

In Tasmania, staffing funds to a maximum level of 20 hours per week are provided by the State Government for the 29 Neighbourhood Houses. Government funding for courses is largely confined to Commonwealth Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy (VOAEL) grants. As in other parts of the country the complaint is made that this funding is tied too rigidly to courses with an overt literacy, numeracy and direct employment thrust. The costs of other courses are expected to be covered by fees even when these serve vital educational and vocational purposes in less direct ways.

The emphasis of Neighbourhood Houses is on encouraging people to become involved in activities they enjoy and thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem. In this way they often lead people towards outcomes they might never have imagined for themselves before their attendance. Mary Pearson, President of the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, reminded the Committee that "many of the people who attend the Tasmanian Neighbourhood Houses have, for a variety of reasons, missed out on early basic education". Based on a pilot study she conducted in 1990 which tracked the history and activities over five years of people attending Neighbourhood Houses, she describes a typical scenario:

A common thread in the history of the respondents was their 'progression' through types of activities. Typically leisure activities and child related activities such as play group, child health clinic, craft classes, fundraising events or coffee

mornings were listed as their first contact with a neighbourhood house. By the second year people (with growing confidence and self-esteem) were attending health and fitness activities and listening to guest speakers on short topics. At the end of the second year to third year (with a further increase in confidence and self-esteem) many had moved into voluntary positions and were attending or seeking the opportunity to attend personal development courses and adult literacy courses, followed by TAFE introductory courses and basic education courses. Usually by the fourth year many had or aimed to return to employment or were in or attempting entry into full-time study with the aim of a career.

From this she echoes a frequently expressed view when she concludes:

It is vital that Government responds to people who may not necessarily see paid employment or formal education as their goal when participating in a Neighbourhood House and that funding is not tied to these criteria only.⁷⁸

In Tasmania, it has been government policy to support the location of Neighbourhood Houses in communities which are disadvantaged. Fees have traditionally been kept as low as possible and resources stretched to the limit, but the Committee was continually reminded that the user pays system cannot reasonably be expected to cover costs in depressed areas where demand for services is high and the ability to pay is low.

South Australia, like Victoria, offers better developed — though smaller — financial support for the educational activities of Neighbourhood Houses. A range of small State Government grants forms a second tier to the Commonwealth's VOEL funds. In August 1990 the South Australian Government established a Community Adult Education Program (CAEP) as a social justice initiative. The CAEP contributed \$360,000 to community providers in 1990-91. The funds have been available through a submission-based process, although alternative guidelines and mechanisms are currently under investigation. Grants generally cover basic education and literacy programs and some preparatory and access courses with employment-directed outcomes. But CAEP also gives eligibility to programs which address broader life skills and participatory social skills, provided that they have clearly stated educational aims generally related to redressing educational, social and economic disadvantage.

Ninety Community and Neighbourhood Houses exist across the State in South Australia. They are funded primarily by the Department of Family and Community Services to provide welfare services in areas of high need. A significant number offer structured adult education programs in their activities. Coordinators are paid at only part-time levels and there is the usual heavy reliance on volunteers.

Spokespersons for Neighbourhood Houses in South Australia also expressed a need for funding continuity beyond annual allocations so that they are better able to plan courses. They felt the need also for support through structures that would allow coordination and cooperation at regional and State-wide levels.

Neighbourhood Houses face a special set of problems in situations where funding sources include a range of departments and levels of government. Coordinators must devote a lot of time and energy to putting together submissions — which may or may not

be successful. If they are successful, Coordinators then find themselves confronted with differing accountability requirements. The problems caused by submission-based funding are common to the whole of the fourth sector and are discussed in greater detail later in this Report.

'The big problem ... is the time it takes to submit for grants ... operate separate programs ... separate financial records and finally report.'

Things have been somewhat simpler in Victoria where the Neighbourhood Houses have had basic support from Community Services Victoria, and tie in as well with a highly developed regionalised structure for policy-making and administration regarding adult, community and further education. Regional Councils of the Division of Further Education provide advice on allocation of State Government recurrent funds and participate in recommending priorities and policies for the region and the State as a whole. Funds available cover salaries for Further Education Co-ordinators, educational programs, childcare, professional development and works and equipment. The Councils have strong consultative responsibilities and are administratively supported by the Regional Offices of the Division of Further Education. The Committee's observation has been that Regional Offices go out of their way to help community providers develop programs for tender and access both Government and other funding sources in order to mount them. The Committee was particularly impressed with the clarity and comprehensiveness of information issued to providers by the Division of Further Education.

In some places there appears to be a growing flexibility on the part of funding agencies, such as DEET, in the interpretation of formal funding guidelines. A view is developing that programs with rigid employment-oriented outcomes may not be the only courses worthy of support, especially in areas characterised by low job vacancy rates. The Committee welcomes this development and believes that it could serve substantially to increase the funding available for the preparatory and confidence-building courses that are the hallmarks of the Neighbourhood House movement.

Many difficulties experienced by community sector providers were brought to the attention of the Committee. These are discussed in detail in appropriate sections of the Report.

Universities of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age (U3A) movement claims to be the fastest growing educational initiative in Australia, with more than 70 groups operating across the country and a membership estimated in excess of 15,000. Simply, it provides for the

coming together of older people to study and to socialise in the interests of maintaining their intellectual and physical health, making up for lost educational opportunities and giving a focus to their energies and experiences. Groups choose their own topics of inquiry, schedule their program according to their own convenience and make use of resources available in the community relevant to their purposes, especially the expertise of their own members:

The very growth of the U3A movement demonstrates an increased demand for education from active retired people. But here, "education" must not be defined in narrow, traditionalist ways; and, more importantly, it is *not* education which increases workforce participation or has other economic benefits for the individual participants. Indeed it has very little to do with the "econometric" view ... which has been so fashionable ...⁷⁹

Research has shown consistently that the most powerful determinant of participation in adult education later in life is the extent of education already undertaken.

The better educated an individual is, the more likely it is that he/she will seek subsequent learning opportunities. Since successive aged cohorts are better educated than their predecessors it can be confidently predicted that the number of older learners demanding access to increased learning opportunities in later life will increase each year.⁸⁰

On this account, major increases in retention rates and the general level of education in the community will inevitably lead to a burgeoning of demand for adult education by older citizens.

'We are now beginning to find that using our brains in many ways helps us physically.'

As with many community-based organisations U3A groups contend that with minimal resources they can provide a substantial service. They are assisted to varying degrees with facilities — such as meeting rooms or office space — but are finding that the world of cost-recovery is closing doors which were hitherto open to them. They would also like improved access by older people to standard educational services — the TAFE class or the university lecture. Some universities and colleges have been generous in their support of U3A, while others appear to have been particularly unhelpful.

The Committee recommends that:

- (a) universities give favourable consideration to requests from third age learning groups for access to lectures, library facilities and so on at a level consistent with equity and resource considerations; and**
- (b) local governments and regional offices of human services agencies assist third age learning groups through the provision of basic administrative support for their operations.**

The Committee received numerous submissions from U3A groups, and most stressed the invaluable contribution of U3A to the overall health and well-being, both physical and mental, of its members. It is clear that a relatively small investment in U3A activity reaps substantial rewards not only for the individuals involved, but for their families and the broader community by way of reduced dependency of older citizens on carers and welfare services.

Swindell, in the article cited above, describes a major Harvard study of elderly nursing home residents which showed that progressively increasing mental stimulation on a group of residents over a period of weeks improved both their long and short term memories. Moreover, two and a half years later only 14% of the challenged group had died or been moved into hospital compared with 53% of the others. Similar casual observations were brought to the attention of the Committee by U3A participants, with comments such as:

We are now beginning to find that using our brain in many ways helps us physically.⁸¹

Both the private and public expense involved in care for the aged is growing rapidly. Governments and families must explore ways to enhance the independence and well-being of older people, and to break down the ageist stereotypes of dependency and unproductiveness. Investment in structures and activities which are based on a better understanding of the capacities and aspirations of older people will contribute substantially to the reduction of costs associated with a decline into dependency.

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments reflect in their policies and planning related to the aged the proven benefits of sustained educational activity into the so-called third age.

Continuing Professional Education

Continuing professional education (CPE) is a field that is receiving increasing attention by the professional associations and by training providers who see a lucrative market for their services, particularly in the light of the Training Guarantee requirements.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Statistics indicate that there were 876,500 active professionals in Australia in November 1987 accounting for one in every eight members of the workforce. Ninety per cent of these professionals were not self employed but were wage and salary earners.⁸² Two out of three of them were aged between 22 and 44 — a period in their lives when they would be most likely to undertake professional development activities.

Professionals now practise in a context in which general knowledge is believed to double every five years and in which technology grows and changes at an exponential rate. The "half-life" of engineers' knowledge, for example, (that is the length of time from graduation to the time when the graduates' knowledge is obsolete) is estimated to be between three and six years.⁸³

Individual professionals are under pressure to keep up with new developments in their field and they increasingly look to intensive courses, workshops and other packages as the most efficient means of getting what they need. Professional associations usually have the major responsibility for ensuring the maintenance of standards and that continuing education is available to their members. Insurance considerations are also forcing the issue. In an environment of increasing litigation, indemnity insurance is becoming imperative. Cover is often cheaper and easier to get when there is a proven professional commitment to skills update. For all these reasons there have been moves in recent years in a number of professional associations towards making continuing professional education mandatory for members. For example, the Law Council of New South Wales requires that, for annual registration, members must accumulate 10 units of attendance at some form of accredited continuing legal education. While other associations have not gone so far many now explicitly state that professional development is a duty attached to membership.

Of the many groups requiring continual skills updating, professionals would, on the face of it, seem to be better placed than most to pay for courses on a self-funding basis. It is important to remember however that a high proportion of professionals in Australia are not self-employed but are wage and salary earners and that both employers and the community are often the prime beneficiaries of any maintenance or improvement of professional competence through their participation in professional update. Moreover with professional associations insisting on CPE as a prerequisite or implicit duty of membership there is a legitimate claim upon employers, who depend on the professional expertise and status of their employees, to contribute to the cost involved, and to provide adequate professional development leave.

Recent developments at Commonwealth level have encouraged the professions to move more visibly into CPE than ever before. Under present government policy for higher education special reference has been made to continuing professional education in recent discipline reviews. This has focussed renewed attention by universities on what has been in the past a somewhat neglected area.

The current framework for higher education funding, too, has led university departments to seek additional funds through servicing the professional development marketplace. Many university Extension or Continuing Education Departments, who are seeing their internal grants cut in favour of full cost recovery, are responding by "abandoning their commitment to liberal arts and more traditional adult education and ... becoming much more business and professionally oriented."⁸⁴

With many professionals employed by large companies the Training Guarantee Act of 1990 will further stimulate growth in the training market. It is likely that most professional bodies will seek to take advantage of these circumstances by registering themselves as industry training agents under the Act. There seems no better time than the present for professional associations to develop their own accredited, professional development courses. The need is there, the policy framework is there, and more trainers are available than ever before.

Until relatively recently new CPE courses appeared largely at the initiative of training providers, with variable levels of co-operation between the provider and the relevant professional association. The offerings seemed to be less client-driven, or less client needs-oriented, than might ideally be the case. One way of moving closer to the ideal might be to encourage a national body representing the professions to work with professional associations in assessing members' needs and developing suitable CPE programs to meet those needs.

Meanwhile the demand for professional development is already high and there is some uncertainty about whether present resources are adequate to the task. According to Dr Brian Carss, Director of Continuing Professional Education at the University of Queensland:

'Doing more of the same' will not cope with ... [the] numbers or the evident need to provide for post-graduation education as distinct from post-graduate education.⁸⁵

The Committee has argued elsewhere in this Report that people who conduct courses in any field of adult education should themselves have undergone training as trainers. Such a need has not received much attention in professional fields in the past, with most organisations relying simply on people within the profession to be the trainers. A survey of professional organisations in 1987, for example, showed that only 41 of 116 trainers being used at that time were trained.⁸⁶

Private Providers

The national commitment to skills formation has created an environment conducive to the provision of education and training by private enterprise — both in-house for company employees, and as a service to external clients on a fee-for-service basis. The development of a national framework for the recognition of vocational training based on competency-based approaches to skills will provide access to registration for all training providers, whether public or private. It will also set up an open process for the

recognition of all training courses which meet benchmark standards. Combine this with the requirements of the Training Guarantee Act, and the waiting lists in TAFE and the universities, and the stage is set for a potentially dramatic increase in the role of private training providers.

It is extremely difficult to get even a rough estimate of the size of the private training sector. In the case of this Inquiry, we have taken it to include:

- companies or individuals who deliver skills training courses on a for-profit basis, either in their own or clients' premises;
- business colleges;
- private correspondence schools;
- enterprises who train their own employees in-house, or employees of other companies on a 'host' basis;
- professional associations who run professional development programs for their members;
- tri-partite Industry Training Committees;
- suppliers of equipment who train users.

The Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training has been attempting to survey and describe the private training scene. Although DEET's work is not yet complete, informal advice indicates that there are around 700 organisations offering post-secondary vocational education and training courses lasting at least two weeks, to a cumulative total of over 111,000 participants. These are organisations who offer training for occupations that have a recognisable career path and exclude things like dancing schools, martial arts academies and so on. The Telecom Yellow Pages reveal over 9,000 businesses which are involved in teaching skills of some sort.

An ACT-based company has developed an Australian Training Register, a subscriber-funded computer database of training courses, seminars, workshops and so on which are available to the public and to business houses. The July 1991 list contained over 5,000 courses. It is difficult to estimate what percentage of courses actually available have been captured by the database, but even so there is clearly a substantial degree of private training already underway.

Many firms have a long tradition of providing in-house training for their employees. Banking groups, hotel chains, large mining and manufacturing companies have tended to lead the way in sophisticated in-house training provision, which they will often extend to other firms on a fee-for-service basis. Many smaller firms are now recognising that training is an investment rather than a cost and are responding to their staff's training needs:

Of those persons who had a wage or salary job in the twelve months to July 1989, 79 per cent undertook some form of training in that period.

Some 72 per cent of all employees received on-the-job-training. A little more than a third undertook in-house training courses ... and 10 per cent attended at least one external training course ...

Some 39 per cent reported spending between 1 and 9 hours on the main in-house training course, while 22 per cent reported 40 hours or more.⁸⁷

In ... 1990 ... formal in-house training accounted for approximately 70 per cent of training expenditure, \$112 per employee compared to \$51 per employee for formal external training.⁸⁸

The relatively large expenditure on in-house training, and the fact that the number of employees taking in-house courses was three times the number doing external courses, suggests that private provision of training by firms is likely to remain a substantial feature of the training landscape.

However the Committee suspects that the high proportion of in-house training applies in the case of the larger companies only. Many small to medium firms are not in a position to mount their own in-house courses and are turning to TAFE and community providers. Providers in rural and regional centres have often been the only source of training for local enterprises and several reported an increasing demand from local industry as a result of Training Guarantee requirements. Large metropolitan organisations such as the WEA and the Council of Adult Education in Victoria have made a substantial contribution to industrial and commercial training on a fee-for-service basis, as have many university Continuing Education departments. Such involvement is likely to continue to grow apace, with a possible blurring of the distinction between in-house and external courses as "external" providers are commissioned to bring specially designed courses "in-house".

Other features of the ABS statistics of particular interest to the Committee relate to the distribution of training opportunities across occupation types. Notwithstanding that, on average, 79% of workers received training in a twelve month period, the groups who had the highest levels of participation in training were professionals and para-professionals, while those with the lowest participation levels were tradespersons, plant and machine operators, labourers and related workers. That is, training activity remain heavily skewed in favour of those with qualifications already. Such comparisons reinforce the Committee's concerns expressed elsewhere in the Report that additional training provision may tend to neglect those who are already disadvantaged.

In the context of the private provision of training the issue of equity remains a somewhat vexed one. Most government sponsored training and employment schemes have emphasised equity objectives. To ensure equitable participation the delivery of training must be sensitive to the needs of different groups. It must address issues of course structure and length, entry qualifications, location of courses and provision of childcare, certification of skills learned, and so on. Private providers need to be encouraged to take

these considerations into account in developing their courses. There is a cost attached to such considerations and clearly if such costs are passed on to students the impact on the disadvantaged participant will be severe.

Information about the extent and nature of private training provision is clearly important both to governments and to the potential consumer of private training services. Such information should provide details such as:

- trainers' qualifications;
- course types and levels;
- participant group profile (full or part-time, gender mix, NESB, provision etc);
- arrangements for certification/articulation;
- nature of accreditation of courses;
- teaching and assessment methods;
- location, fees, support services.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth support the development of a comprehensive information database of private training providers and courses.

The Commonwealth Government already supports private training in various ways, including:

- grants to employers towards on-the-job training costs of Australian Traineeship System (ATS) trainees;
- grants to employers who indenture apprentices;
- grants to assist in development of industry skill centres, in partnership with industry and other tiers of government.

Information about such support should be brought together and made available in easily accessible form. It should include such things as the guidelines associated with the various support schemes and any analyses of outcomes associated with them.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth publish a comprehensive guide detailing the various government support schemes available to the private sector to enhance its training effort.

Other Providers of Adult and Community Education

Apart from the many organisations who would deliberately classify themselves as providers of adult and community education there are many others who exercise an important general educative function as part of their main purpose. These include museums, art galleries, zoological and botanical gardens, libraries, the myriad of special interest clubs and societies, churches, gymnasia, support groups and so on. That so many people are regularly involved with such organisations; that a major museum or art exhibition can attract more people than a season of rugby league; that Australians buy more books per head than almost any other country — these are all indicators of a community which values learning and intellectual activity. They are hallmarks of a community with a proven and substantial interest in broad-spectrum, lifelong education.

... neglect by the Commonwealth of the fastest growing sector of education is unacceptable, both on social justice and on economic grounds, and should be redressed.

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Chapter 5

THE SECTOR'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Once upon a time there was an Adult Typing (Vocational) course ...

which was surveyed (and) several people gave the following reasons for being in the course:

One person was considering a Business Studies course and saw the typing program as a form of feeling her way educationally.

A woman wanted to learn typing so she could type her children's high school and university assignments, and therefore become a more helpful mother.

Another woman was unemployed and wanted to acquire a skill which would help her prospects of future employment.

A self-employed tradesman wanted to type his own accounts and quotes.

A woman suffering with arthritis in her hands had been advised to exercise her fingers and chose typing as a way of achieving that.

Another participant who was interested in creative writing as a hobby saw typing as a way of developing this interest.

Finally, one person really wanted a break from the house and the routine and saw this course as a way of getting out and meeting some new people.¹

The above is a cautionary tale. Whatever the prescribed purposes of a course may be, learners will measure the success of the course in terms of how it met their own, particular goals and purposes. This is not to suggest that setting course goals is not important. On the contrary, the setting of goals and the measuring of their achievement is an important part of accountability. But a proper assessment of achievements needs to take into account the goals of the learners and not just the goals of the educators and administrators.

The difficulty is that some sorts of goals are more easily specified than others; some are considered more worthy of account than others; some purposes are favoured by political and financial circumstances, others are not. The tale of the typing class merely serves to remind us that any discussion of achievements in the fourth sector must adequately reflect the interests of all the players.

What is set as a goal depends largely on what is valued by the person setting the goal. In the case of the typing class discussed above, for example, the educator who mounted the course obviously had vocational purposes in mind. The title of the course said so. These purposes would probably be specified in terms of achieving typing skills at

'x' words per minute, with 'y'% accuracy. Perfectly legitimate, reasonable vocational goals: just very different from the equally valid goals sought by the individual participants. To extend the scenario, the agency funding the vocational course may have done so for the express purpose of achieving employment or labour market outcomes. Again, perfectly valid and reasonable outcomes from the agency's perspective.

To speak of goals or purposes is to speak from a particular vantage point, in terms which are relative, not absolute. The questions which must always remain in the back of our minds are "Whose goals and purposes, which perspective?"

In the current climate, demands for specifiable and quantifiable results are being pressed on all sectors of education. The adult and community education sector has, by and large, lacked both the inclination and the resources systematically to document its achievements, least of all in ways which can easily be measured in economic terms. Clear benefits do, however, flow from adult and community education, and there can no longer be any doubt that many have substantial economic value.

The sector has traditionally drawn attention to personal and social benefits: individual growth, self-actualisation, the development of an informed citizenry etc. But other benefits that are economic in character — even though they have rarely been expressed in specific dollar terms — have also been at work. Consider the example of the parents who take on an adult literacy course in order to assist their children with their school work — an apparently private matter, but one with significant economic implications. There are many effects on both productivity and economic enhancement that reach well beyond the private individual, improving the well-being of families, and advantaging the economy as a whole.

The evidence suggests strongly that funds invested in adult and community education result in significant savings in other areas of public expenditure such as welfare and health. They also generate a significant return to the public purse via taxation. Combine this with the sector's proven cost-effectiveness, and the result is substantial, measurable benefits which far outweigh the costs of any input of public funds.

A very focussed approach to the relationship between adult education and productivity is provided by Robb Mason of the Council of Adult Education, Victoria.² Mason classifies the outcomes of adult education according to benefits accruing in five production areas, namely:

- income generation;
- consumption;
- property improvement;
- member care and well-being;
- domestic production.

Mason provides specific examples of adult education courses and initiatives which have demonstrable and measurable effects in each of these five productive categories. He also relates outcomes of adult education to broader government policies, based on human capital theory, which seek to increase the retention rates for students in the school system. He refers to American and Australian research which indicates that an educated household, one which puts a premium on learning and educational activities, is more likely to have a positive effect upon student retention than, say, family wealth. Thus, for Mason, the education of adults and the interest displayed in their own learning will have a positive influence on their children's decisions about future schooling.

An interesting example of rarely acknowledged economic benefit is pursued by Marilyn Emery.³ Her research has focussed on the connection between improvements in self-confidence and increased productivity:

Confidence in one's own ability relates to increased predictions of improvement in performance ...

This may not sound new or dramatic ... but it is often forgotten just how powerful self confidence, esteem or worth are. An increasing emphasis on 'hard', vocational, easily measured skills and 'skills formation' can neglect the other factors in the equation which result in improved performance ...

Hierarchical linkage analysis of the correlations ... in a study of organizational commitment shows that ... self esteem ... is the major contributing factor to organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and thus productivity.⁴

Emery proceeds to outline and extend a number of studies which reinforce these findings, and reanalyses the data of a recent Australian study on adult learners⁵, to identify a progression from participation in non accredited adult education, through bridging type courses to job related, accredited courses:

What does entering a non accredited course on quilting, Chinese cooking or 'birds of the region' do to the individual learner that they then decide to further their learning to the point where it becomes registered as an economic statistic?⁶

The role of adult and community education in creating pathways to further education and productive activity including employment is a major feature of the evidence received by the Committee throughout its Inquiry, and an aspect of its contribution that we shall return to frequently in this Report.

'it is often forgotten just how powerful self confidence, esteem or worth are.'

Emery herself conducted a pilot study which focussed entirely on the role of self confidence in the overall contribution of adult and community education to productivity and the national economy. Her sample consisted of participants in a range of educational seekers. Again, on 1987 figures, "if adult and community education could touch 60% of these (100,200 discouraged jobseekers) ... raising their confidence back to where they could seek a job, the net saving in unemployment benefits would be \$295,576." Such figures would need to be substantially upgraded to reflect the situation in 1991.

Another study which reflects similar findings to that of Emery has been undertaken by a University of Technology Sydney graduate student, Helen West. West reports that:

from the point of view of most students, the personal outcomes ... [improvements in their self-confidence and self esteem, feeling empowered and determination to succeed] were ... precursors to further study and gaining/improving employment ...

Before attending [ABE-adult basic education] classes, 22.2% of students had vocational life goals, compared with 40.7% of students having vocational goals since attending classes.

Before attending classes, 4.7% had planned to do other courses in the future, compared with 59.2% planning to do other courses since attending classes.⁷

Evans' 1988 study utilised data from the National Social Science Survey to produce similarly interesting figures about the contribution of adult and community education programs to economic well being:

... job related courses offer large "returns to investment" for the individuals taking them and for the Commonwealth Government (through taxes on higher earnings).

For example, a typical person earning \$25,000 per year ... would raise their gross annual earnings by about \$1,100. Of this, the individual would be allowed to keep \$660 and the government would receive \$440 through income tax (calculations based on 1987-1988 tax scales ...) The total returns ... are greater for job related courses taken early in the career, because then the additional earnings continue to accrue over a longer period. But even a course taken as late as 10 years before retirement would net the individual \$6,600 and the government \$4,400 (in constant dollars, on average).

On average, a bridging course leads to an additional 0.63 of a year of formal education. A full year of formal education is worth \$867 in annual gross earnings, on average. So each bridging course, on average, leads to an increase in annual earnings of \$546.⁸

Helen Kimberley shows the significance of direct economic and vocational outcomes for individual participants in adult and community education in her 1986 study.⁹ Her findings include:

- 43% of respondents said that they were using skills learnt through their adult education course in order to achieve income;
- 21% of those already employed when they enrolled managed to improve the status of their job;
- 33% who were not in the paid workforce subsequently gained employment;
- 38% of participants went on to further education;
- 51% of women who enrolled in TAFE programs in the Eastern Region did so via courses with a community provider, thus indicating improved access to places.

Clearly there is strong prima facie evidence that adult and community education is a sphere of activity deserving of more serious attention by the economic statisticians, to say nothing of its obvious claim to the attention of policy makers. The Committee also received abundant anecdotal evidence of the economic benefits derived by participants:

- the course in flower arranging, which led to the establishment of a florist shop, and ultimately, via a domestic horticulture course, to a nursery;
- the calligraphy class, which brought out untapped artistic talent in the student, and an income from personalised greetings cards;
- the workshops on earth construction which led to the building of 45 homes valued at \$2.5 million;
- the local hospitality course which produced a major regional tourism initiative;
- the art class from which an unemployed participant commenced a profitable picture-framing business;
- the students in a Designer Knitting class who supply a company with jumpers to sell to international tourists visiting Canberra.

These were in addition to the myriad of stories concerning participation in adult and community education which were a consistent testimony not only to life-enhancing, but often life-changing events for those involved. One of many examples concerned that of a woman who described herself as a mother of five, basically confined to home, who undertook a doll making course at the WEA in 1980. She became involved with a doll making guild, and now teaches doll making, and travels frequently to interstate shows. As a result she is a changed person — happy, confident, eager to contribute and drawing enormous satisfaction from all areas of her life.¹⁰

Adult education organisations themselves are often significant contributors to local economies in their own right. A 1987 report¹¹ sought to assist adult education agencies to document ways in which they could assess the impact of government receipts, and compare these with government contributions. Its author estimated that in some cases the return to government can be near 100%. The government can get back in taxes and charges spun off from adult education nearly as much as it contributes by way of grants.

Indeed, in a paper presented in 1988 one provider reported a remittance to the government which, in 1987 was \$5,000 more than the government grant received by the provider. That same provider estimated expenditure in the local community to be around \$840,000 for books, equipment and consumables purchased as a direct result of people's participation in its program.

... adult and community education is a sphere of activity deserving of more serious attention by the economic statisticians, to say nothing of its obvious claim to the attention of policy makers.

In attempting to examine the direct economic benefits of adult education, it is also illuminating to consider those which may arise in the longer term, and in particular, benefits which show up as costs avoided elsewhere — in the health and welfare sectors, for example. It is difficult to provide any substantive data on this account, but there is sufficient information which is indicative of the likely results should any rigorous study be undertaken. For example, a 1981 report dealing with a sample of British doctors, who were recorded as having advised patients to join an adult education class, highlighted substantial potential cost savings in aged care.

Without adult education provision, a doctor may fall back on prescribing anti-depressants, one of which could cost more than sixty pounds per annum per patient ... Many of these ... are retired people who suffer bereavement and loneliness; the adult class is a positive and healthy activity in these circumstances. Suppose that only one half of the retired attend adult education activities, and suppose thereby that each is kept active enough to put back the need for institutionalised accommodation by *one week*. At present prices that would save 360 million pounds per year.¹²

Preventive health care and social support are areas which are readily amenable to a demonstration of the benefits of adult and community education, and should be given serious consideration in any overall assessment of these. Emery's aforementioned study on the economic benefits of self esteem and level of aspiration also addressed the primary health dimension.

Australia is known to be one of the most enthusiastic pill popping nations on earth and is also a heavy consumer of legalized stress reducers such as alcohol and tobacco. The average weekly household income (2.84 people) is \$453.60 (Castles,1988:370) ... the average weekly expenditure on ... health expenses, alcohol and tobacco is \$32.10 ... self confidence is strongly inversely related to the negative effects and strongly related to health. Increased confidence ... could represent a household saving of ... \$10.42 ... per week.

The cost to the nation of prescriptions ... under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for 1986-87 was \$903.7 million. If we take only those drugs that relate specifically to psychological disorders, i.e. analgesics for headaches etc., tranquillisers, antidepressants, tetracyclines, hypnotics and sedatives, the cost is \$184,926,000. Confidence ... (as) a factor in reducing the need for these prescriptions can be valued at \$71,566,362. If taken at the higher level of affecting other areas of life, the value of increased confidence in a year amounts to \$113,729,490.¹³

Fractional savings in cost areas which are measured in millions of dollars can represent a substantial benefit to the community overall. The cost of coronary heart disease and cerebral haemorrhage (strokes) to the Australian community amounts to billions of dollars per year. If adult and community education could be demonstrated to reduce general stress levels along the lines suggested above, the savings would represent a significant gain. Obviously the Quit Smoking and HIV/AIDS campaigns are predicated on the importance of education, and justified financially in terms of the treatment costs avoided if the desired educational outcomes are achieved. Although adult and community education is not targeted in the same way as such public campaigns, it is reasonable to assume an analogous effectiveness in terms of its contribution to personal well being.

The Committee heard evidence and received many submissions from older Australians, notably those involved with the University of the Third Age movement, which emphasised the importance of their adult educational experience in maintaining their well being. They spoke of retaining their mental alertness, enjoying a more stimulating social life, enhanced feeling of independence and confidence, less physical ailments, as well as, for some at least, the social justice dimension of a second chance after almost a lifetime's deprivation of educational opportunity. A carefully constructed research instrument should be able to measure the dollar gains/savings of such a patently beneficial adult education activity.

Volunteers are significant contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the adult and community education sector. Submissions to the Inquiry pointed to many benefits of volunteering:

According to the 1984 Bureau of Statistics, there are 67,000 community organisations throughout Australia and over 4 million volunteers working within (them) ...

... adults, and particularly women, find volunteer work ... often leads on to higher education ...

Of the 1400 volunteers referred through the Volunteer Centre of Queensland Inc. in 1990, 56.7% of people were under the age of 35; 32% were male and 67% were female. People moving into paid employment from volunteer positions comprised 40% of referrals, and those taking on further education a further 12%. In community organisations where the volunteer programs are well co-ordinated and managed, up to 85% of the volunteers who leave those organisations move into part-time or full-time employment or progress into formal education programs ...¹⁴

The Committee's attention was frequently drawn by witnesses to the experiences of women, lacking confidence and skills, who as volunteer workers, in a supportive environment of a Neighbourhood House or community adult education centre, developed rapidly to a point from which they successfully applied for jobs, or embarked on a course at the local TAFE college. Such outcomes are not insignificant. They constitute not only income generation, but very often have flow-on benefits in terms of reduced dependency on social welfare, enhanced psychological well being, improved family circumstances and so on.

The Hunter Valley Research Foundation undertook a study of ways to:

develop a paradigm for the evaluation of adult education, through assessment of the benefits and costs generated, and a subsequent identification of the commensurable components of the assessed benefits and costs.¹⁵

They concluded that the task of assessing, valuing and measuring the outcomes of adult and community education is a perfectly feasible undertaking. It requires, as with any cost-benefit analysis, a clear articulation of:

- who are the beneficiaries (individual, community);
- the frame of reference which is to be used (whose perception of the economic benefits is to apply);
- the criteria against which assessments of value shall be made (economic, social, environmental);
- the meter to be used for measuring the costs and benefits.

While concerns for educational efficiency and effectiveness are perfectly legitimate there are some potentially undesirable consequences of allowing those concerns to dominate our thinking. Richard Bagnall alerts us to some of the more important ones.

Bagnall sees dangers in strategies which promote "outcomes-driven education". While he agrees that to optimise educational efficiency and effectiveness is desirable, he urges "intelligent caution" in its pursuit:

In order for an educational outcome to be of practical value in outcomes-driven education, it must be: clearly and validly specifiable; quantifiable; and objectively and reliably observable as some change in learner behaviour ...

As is repeatedly attested by those persons who have experienced education at its best, the real value (including the instrumental value) of education lies in its ability to transform one's thinking: to release ... one's beliefs, attitudes or competencies from old, less functional, frameworks or patterns. Such transformation is ... an individual matter, not specifiable in terms of pre-determined outcomes. Although the conditions for its achievement may be enriched through intelligent educational practices, it is not likely to be greatly facilitated by education that is guided or constrained by an outcomes driven educational philosophy ...

It tends also to trivialise education ... Thus, wisdom and understanding may be reduced to information, bodies of knowledge to facts, crafts to skills, sensitivity to behavioural acts; and humane virtues to attitudes.¹⁶

Bagnall's argument goes on to suggest that, even on their own terms, the proponents of outcomes-driven education are advancing a strategy which does not serve their own efficiency and accountability interests. Although they espouse outcomes which relate to initiative, independence, creativity, teamwork, flexibility and responsiveness, their type of outcomes-driven education works against this. It is inherently conservative rather than risk-taking, inimical to the unexpected, unresponsive to differences in learners and their situations, and relatively inflexible with respect to goals or activities within programs.

'We need to open up and redefine "outcomes". Take risks and look for more creative ways to address the problems'.

The Committee encountered the downside of outcomes-driven approaches to programs in a variety of contexts. A consistent message from adult and community educators who were involved in labour market and skills enhancement programs was that the goals specified by the funding agencies were frequently inappropriate to the situation, needs, employment opportunities and aspirations of those whom the programs were designed to assist.

A simple example was presented by a woman learning dressmaking within a retail studies program, from qualified teachers, in a class in a rural area. The course is to be eliminated in favour of a manufacturing oriented course using industrial sewing machines, despite the fact that there is no textile industry in the area, and that the town is too small to support such manufacturing.¹⁷ The intended vocational purposes of the new course may have been well-intentioned, but are clearly inappropriate. The results, if they were to be measured in terms of the employment achieved by the participants, would appear to indicate dismal failure.

A strong plea was put by Aboriginal communities concerning the criteria associated with the success of skills training programs. Goals which may be quite relevant in a metropolitan, industrial and educational context are usually wholly irrelevant in a rural Aboriginal context. Results couched in terms of employment, or even progression to further education and training, may have no meaning whatsoever in the latter case. And yet such skills training programs may still achieve valuable, valid and measurable benefits, provided the criteria for assessing such benefits, and the meters for measuring them, are suitably selected.

Intensive training programs — say, over twelve weeks — which are intended to rapidly improve people's skills and hence job prospects, frequently fail to achieve the outcomes of job competitiveness and employment stability that are intended. Such failure is rarely because the person has not achieved the desired level of competency in the specified skills after twelve weeks. Rather, it is because the task of finding, winning and holding down a job in that skill area, even if such jobs are available, is a matter of much more than technical proficiency and some basic personal skills.

In the above example, perhaps the twelve week "ladder" from disadvantage to competitiveness should be replaced by a "ramp" of much longer duration. Perhaps more emphasis on developing self-confidence, and "learning how to learn" would improve the retention of skills learned and thereby improve the chances of staying in a job.

The problems of imposed aims were emphasised in a submission dealing with a Womens Employment Development Program, targeted to disadvantaged women in a culturally diverse region:

As a pilot programme it was necessary to take a research and development approach working on a community development model ...

The aim of the programme was to empower women to effect change in their own lives and move on into education, training, employment or enterprise development ...

Each member of the target group presents with a unique profile, some actively looking for work, some trying to build the courage to move out of their homes, some trying to update their skills and meet the challenges of new technology and others who are feeling so pressured and unsure about what to do.

One of the particular advantages of the programme is that we have been able to take an holistic approach, and move to meet the needs of the women "where they are at" ...

It is difficult in the current economic climate to move outside traditional and conservative approaches. I understand how funding limitations put pressure on programs to come up with particular outcomes ... We need to open up and redefine "outcomes". Take risks and look for more creative ways to address the problems ...

A high expectation of "outcomes" often means members of our target group fall into "the fail again syndrome". Where projects are set up for specific groups — (i.e. new employment opportunities for women) and members are not able to realise those goals — the automatic assumption for many is — "I can't get a job — I have failed — I don't have skills". Blame is directed at self rather than the economic climate.¹⁸

Many of the submissions and evidence received by the Committee stressed the importance of adult and community education addressing the "whole person" in seeking to achieve learning outcomes. Adults returning to education bring with them the cultural and emotional experiences, the chaff and grain of their previous education, the various responsibilities to families and others which are usually part of adulthood. Any strategy for achieving particular benefits must acknowledge the nature and diversity of the people who are intended to reap those benefits. In addition, disadvantage is a complex phenomenon. Chronic unemployability is a composite of many things, not just lack of certain skills. It may be a mix of poor self-esteem, language or communication difficulties, inability to access and process information, limited financial resources, lack of independence and little formal education. Hence the emphasis by adult and community educators on holistic approaches to their task.

Typical of the effectiveness of adult and community education, which accommodates "the whole picture", yet meets the requirements of efficiency and the official skills training agenda, is the Workplace Basic Education Project (WBEP) of the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne.

The WBEP was developed in the context of award restructuring and the Training Guarantee, and was supported by both employers and unions. The following extracts from a study of WBEP student outcomes provide a pertinent account of the benefits achieved through the application of adult education methods and philosophies to training:

The findings ... indicate that on the whole the long term benefits of Workplace Basic Education classes have justified the effort and costs ... [T]he main long-term benefits were increased worker confidence and assertiveness, as well as increased production and efficiency. Other benefits ... were: better understanding of the production process, improved communication ... improvement in ... Occupational Health and Safety issues, increased ability to concentrate and greater flexibility in deploying staff.

Estimates of the cost to employers of having workers in classes varied from nil to \$8,000 per class in lost (production) time ...

Student responses indicated their main objectives for the classes were: to feel more confident about themselves; to write letters or reports; to improve spelling; to improve spoken and written English; to learn things missed out on in school and to do further study. The main outcomes for students correlated fairly closely with these.¹⁹

Two clear points emerge in relation to the costs and benefits of adult and community education:

1. The adult and community education sector accepts the rules of accountability; it is the pre-eminent "user pays" sector of education; the number of people participating in this sector is ample testimony to its effectiveness, and its success in spite of very limited funding a testimony to its efficiency. Thus any economic assessment of the sector would have to report that it is delivering the goods.
2. The measurement of educational benefit is a sophisticated task, with its inescapable mix of personal and external or policy objectives, and issues of perspective and time frame. Given the nature, traditions and commitments of adult and community education, the social/community perspective and the longer term time frame are familiar and important considerations to those who work and study within it. However, these are often not as familiar and important to those decision-makers, working within the policy, bureaucratic and budgetary frameworks, who make judgements about what will, or will not, be supported.

It is clear that the adult and community education sector has no cause to shrink from attempts to measure its achievements. On the contrary, there is much to be gained in documenting its activities and achievements in a rigorous, analysable fashion. Governments would be major beneficiaries of such documentation as well as the adult and community educators themselves.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

- (a) commission a cost-benefit analysis of participation in a representative sample of adult and community education provision (e.g. workplace basic education, rural community adult education, a group of neighbourhood houses); and
- (b) within the context of the exercise, assist the providers involved to design and trial a method of documenting costs and benefits at a local level.

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Chapter 6

SPECIAL PROVISION

This chapter describes the fourth sector's response to the needs of particular groups. It looks at adult literacy and basic education; workplace basic education; education for Aboriginals; education for migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) education for people with disabilities and prisoner education.

Adult Literacy, Basic Education and Workplace Training

The Committee is particularly concerned about those adults who will be unable to benefit from workplace and award restructuring. Restructuring is predicated upon the acquisition of skills which in turn lead to the rewards of a career structure and financial benefits associated with increased productivity. However many adults who traditionally have been disadvantaged in the labour market and the workplace — by inadequate schooling, poor language and communication skills, low levels of literacy and so on — are likely to be even further disenfranchised from the benefits of restructuring because they are unable to step even on to the first rung of the skills enhancement ladder.

Lack of access to training by those who are already disadvantaged is a complex problem in which issues such as literacy, self esteem, and equity are an important part, to say nothing of other external factors such as continuous job-replacement by technology and frequent shifts in employment patterns. We must keep in mind also, that those who are already in employment, albeit with minimal skill levels, are probably more likely to have training opportunities than those who are not. Thus an unemployed person may well be in a position of double jeopardy unless she or he finds their way into a labour market program of some sort.

It is important to remember that much of the recent debate surrounding adult literacy and basic education has been conditioned by the Federal Government's adoption of labour market and training strategies in addressing the needs of disadvantaged jobseekers and the long term unemployed. Rosie Wickert and Julia Zimmerman alert us to the implications of this context:

In *Skills for Australia* there is a clear assumption that labour market programs will improve access for disadvantaged groups 'to mainstream opportunities for education, training and skills development' ... and thus to employment. There are a number of problems with this:

- it subscribes to the 'literacy myth' ... that the only, or even the major barrier to employment for disadvantaged groups is literacy and numeracy. The fallacy of the argument is obvious.

- it does not acknowledge the de-skilling of many occupations currently underway as a consequence of the application of high technology which will impact particularly heavily on those already at the bottom of the employability pile.
- thus it does not acknowledge that a likely dilemma ... is that the course content, determined by the stated goals of these programs, will not be appropriate ...¹

These observations reinforce arguments elsewhere in this Report that externally imposed outcomes must be handled with care, and that the pursuit of politically desirable results often leads to the construction of programs quite inappropriate to the client group. Moreover teachers of literacy and basic education are anxious about what they regard as government's confusion about the causes and effects of long-term unemployment and its lack of understanding of the methods required to enable disadvantaged adults to cope with vocational training:

The fact is that many students who attend basic adult education programs may never be able to cope with the requirements of a short, intensive vocational preparation ... If we are not to become party to an arrangement whereby literacy and numeracy people merely provide sufficient 'remediation' or 'training', whatever you like to call it, to enable the disadvantaged to cling onto the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder, we must start talking rather more loudly.²

Clearly, there are important perspectives on literacy which are not necessarily present in current thinking about labour market training programs.

The Committee is attracted to the definition of literacy put forward by the Australian Council for Adult Literacy:

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking; it incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia, the goal is an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, in order to participate effectively in society.³

Importantly the Council stresses that the definition must be formed:

... in the context of the concept of lifelong learning as the organising principle for all education. We are living in the first period of human history in which the time-span of major changes in knowledge and culture occur in less than the life-span of individuals. Therefore adults must have access to the resources needed to continue their education as society, the nature of work and personal circumstances change.⁴

The adult and community education sector is already making an important contribution to the delivery of adult literacy programs in Australia. This is not to deny the significant role played by TAFE, particularly in New South Wales, in teaching literacy in community settings and the Committee stresses the need to avoid being territorial and to encourage greater cooperation between providers. However there is an urgent need for expanded community-based or workplace-based literacy programs, and the adult and community education sector is well placed to take on additional responsibilities provided that some key support is in place.

Such support includes:

- a national, strategic framework in which the teaching of literacy and basic education skills can be developed in a coordinated, efficient manner;
- significant expansion of training opportunities for adult literacy and basic education workers; and
- the determination of suitable criteria for the accreditation of literacy workers and courses.

... many adults who traditionally have been disadvantaged in the labour market and the workplace ... are likely to be even further disenfranchised from the benefits of restructuring

Given that adult and community education agencies are in a prime position to offer adults their first step back into education or the workforce it is crucial that success attend that first step. Thus quality assurance of the literacy programs being offered is a major consideration. To expand provision of adult literacy programs without setting standards and ensuring their achievement is to court disaster. For the reluctant, insecure, or sceptical adult a bad experience at this initial stage of re-entry to learning would seal their fate.

The Coordinating Agency for Training Adult Literacy Personnel in Australia has stressed the importance of initial training, ongoing professional development and research if the quality of literacy education is to be assured:

- Adult literacy and basic education has always been a badly neglected area of adult/further education ...

There has been a heavy reliance on volunteers and although many of these are very committed and skilled it is not appropriate or effective to ask them to make the kind of professional commitment to developing their expertise that we think this area of work needs ...

... there is a dearth of trained personnel who are experienced in adult literacy education and in teaching literacy in English as a Second Language ...

Over the past few years there has been some increase in the development of training packages and courses ... in an attempt to meet some of the short-fall in supply ...

Adult education has gained recognition as a sector in the educational sphere. Adult literacy and basic education is in the process of being recognised. A sound research basis would further enhance this newly gained recognition ...

If good practice is to be encouraged at the level of provision for students, it is also important to promote the documentation of good practice at the level of training for workers. The writing, trialing and refining of curriculum materials is essential, although time consuming and costly.⁵

The adult and community education sector has a special role to play in adult literacy because of the factors which make up the particular strengths of the sector. Adult and community education appeals to people who are unable, unwilling or frightened to be part of the formal training system. It has a proven capacity to deliver the educational goods in ways which are relevant to adults, through programs which accommodate the realities, responsibilities and limitations of adult life. Its commitment to access and equity suits it to the task of addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups. Moreover it is a very diverse sector, operating through a myriad of outlets across the country, with a wide array of courses and learning opportunities.

The Committee is aware that, just because the adult and community education sector is well placed to deliver literacy and basic education programs, it does not necessarily follow that adult educators have expertise as literacy teachers. As has been discussed above it is an area requiring fairly specialised training and resources. But the strengths of the sector are such that it seems logical and efficient to devote resources to specialist training within it. Moreover the development of services such as the Adult Basic Education Resource and Information Service (ARIS, Victoria) should facilitate the identification of, and the dissemination of information about, appropriate and effective learning materials. Adult educators are generally adept at selecting and applying resources to the benefit of their particular students.

It is worth reflecting on the importance of the adult and community education sector's contribution to literacy in the context of the findings of the Deveson inquiry. Deveson received substantial evidence that the literacy and numeracy problems of workers represented major barriers to further training and that such problems extended well beyond the migrant workforce. The report concluded that:

Literacy, numeracy and other communication and general learning skills are an essential and important element in award restructuring. Unless workers, and those seeking jobs, have these skills they will be denied access to training and career advancement. The community-based providers of adult education should play an enhanced role in these areas and funding arrangements for these courses should be reviewed. The provision of programs directed to literacy and numeracy is primarily a matter for governments.⁶

Several other observations of the Deveson inquiry are also of significance to the adult and community education sector. The first relates to the fact that in 1990 more than 100,000 Australians were unable to enrol in the TAFE course of their choice. Award restructuring will place additional burdens on TAFE and the demand for training will be further magnified by the Commonwealth's emphasis on training for the long-term unemployed, many of whose needs will be in the area of basic adult education. It appears unlikely that TAFE will be able to accommodate such dramatic increases in demand even if a response could be made in terms of better usage rates of facilities and more teachers. Notwithstanding some excellent outreach programs in TAFE the existing infrastructure and culture of TAFE do not lend themselves readily to the kinds of courses and clients represented by those who are only marginally attached to the workforce. The Committee regards the adult and community education sector as being a potentially significant part of the solution to the problems highlighted by Deveson.

An interesting variation on this theme was given to the Committee by a witness at the Queensland hearings who asserted strongly that there was a significant change in the socio-economic and educational profile of students coming into TAFE. The trend was away from what he regarded as traditional sources of TAFE students towards students from more privileged economic and educational backgrounds:

My distinct impression, and also from some research that I have been doing ... suggests ... that, in fact, even the TAFE colleges are being hijacked by the middle class ... they are the sons and daughters of professional people who go to private schools who are picking up the apprenticeships and the associate diploma places, which are the higher status TAFE courses ... in fact, the people, say, in hairdressing have been reporting that the hairdressing apprentices who are now selected by interview tend to be from private schools. Of course, they are selected on the basis of their grooming ... their general attitudes and their general presentation. These people are excluding the traditional clients, the battlers from Inala or from Woodridge or wherever. In fact the kids from Woodridge and Inala generally tell them that they come from somewhere else in order to pick up a place. It is anecdotal ... but it is a strong impression I am getting.⁷

The implication of such shifts in client group is that those people being shunted out of their traditional learning environments in the TAFE sector will need to be picked up by the adult and community education sector. The Committee is conscious of the fact that such anecdotal evidence must be treated with caution but such concerns serve to highlight again the need for adequate data on student profiles and study pathways.

A second related issue is that:

Student withdrawal from TAFE courses, while varying across programs and locations, is a serious concern, especially when attempts are being made to expand the system capacity. Frequently, high rates of attrition are evident in the early stages of courses and even subjects ... TAFE institutions too readily accept the view that withdrawing students leave because they have gained the expertise they sought when the evidence suggests that withdrawals have a much wider range of causes.⁸

The adult and community education sector has a proven record of success with people who do not fare well in more traditional educational settings including TAFE. Student withdrawals constitute a waste of resources, reinforce a sense of failure in the student and reduce motivation. Any strategies for minimising student attrition deserve serious consideration and the claim of adult education providers to such consideration is strong.

Thirdly, Deveson envisages that:

more delivery of training, both general and specific, should be provided ... in the workplace. TAFE should expand its resources more towards support and development and related training activities. These include assistance with skills recognition, ... assistance with industry and enterprise training plans, curriculum design, packaged learning kits, trainer training, training support and consultancy.⁹

Many adult education agencies other than TAFE have had substantial experience in such matters. Large metropolitan based providers such as the WEA or the Council of Adult Education have developed considerable expertise and won substantial contracts from industry for the design and implementation of training programs. Rural adult education providers are often the key resource for training for local enterprise. Such a role for the sector should be recognised and supported by governments keen to see an enhanced training commitment.

The Council of Adult Education, for example, has been involved in the development of the competency-based Clerks' Training Model Project, which links a training system with workplace and industry needs. The primary task has been the identification and description of clerical skills, the developing of competence statements related to those skills, and the establishment of a system of assessment. The result is that clerical workers now have a career path through identified levels of competency.

Other examples of the sector's close links with industry include an Open Learning Centre established at the BHP Port Kembla Steelworks in November 1989, with a coordinator employed to:

... establish an onsite support framework for employees having ... problems with literacy or numeracy associated with retraining. The coordinator acts as a facilitator between the needs of the particular individuals or business units and the various educational providers that can cater for these needs.¹⁰

The providers include not only TAFE but community providers such as the City Mission, Trade Union Training Authority and WEA. Adult educators have been conducting workplace basic education programs at Pasmenco Metals-EZ in Tasmania since 1988. Major improvements have been achieved in attitudes to learning; enhanced self esteem; acceptance of and participation in retraining and restructuring programs; better communication, handwriting, reading and life skills; better worker-supervisor relationships.

Since 1985 Victoria's Council of Adult Education has been involved in around fifty workplace basic education projects in settings ranging from heavy manufacturing to clothing and service industries. Unions and management were involved in all aspects of developing and implementing the projects and the benefits were acknowledged by all.

The Continuing Education Centre at Albury-Wodonga has conducted thirteen of these workplace basic education programs since 1989. Most have been in workplaces with more than 100 employees and in a relatively urban situation. However one program sought to serve the basic education needs of workers in small, scattered rural workplaces. It pursued the tripartite arrangement mentioned above but classes were held away from the work site, unlike the standard situation. As well, the normal 2-3 hour class was changed to a full day session and there was some use of telecommunications for distance learning.

Adult education providers generally have the experience, and importantly the flexibility to devise workplace education programs relevant to the needs and environment of the workers. Community providers are well placed to understand the operations, needs and aspirations of local industries and their employees. It is imperative that policy makers and funding agencies do not overlook the adult and community education sector as a source of workplace training expertise.

In many countries, and increasingly in Australia, adult literacy and adult basic education are becoming very closely linked. Adult literacy is being treated conceptually and for policy purposes as an integral element of the domain of adult and basic education. The Victorian Government has produced a major strategy entitled *Adult Literacy and Basic Education into the 1990s*. It seeks to promote a concept of adult basic education in which literacy continues to play a central role, with basic maths and science receiving more emphasis:

Underpinning much of the work in adult basic education is a recognition that the acquisition of literacy and mathematical skills must be intertwined with the acquisition of knowledge. Skills cannot be learned without content. For this reason science is included; it broadly encompasses those additional areas of knowledge and forms of reasoning needed to make sense of an increasingly complex and technologically advanced society.

It is recommended then that the content and curriculum of basic education programs take into account the elements of language, literacy, mathematics and science with a view to developing holistic teaching strategies ... based upon the principle that items of knowledge cannot be taught in isolation.

In this context, adult basic education should be used for the development of skills and knowledge normally associated with the compulsory school programs through to Year 10.¹¹

The reference to Year 10 as a desirable level of achievement for basic education invites some comments on the funding aspect not only of basic education, but of job-related skills formation. A more comprehensive discussion on funding issues appears elsewhere in this Report.

On the consensus of advice received by the Committee, government should provide for the education of all citizens, hence all adults, at least to the level of Year 10. Obviously, in the case of workplace basic education programs there are some costs borne by employers in terms of lost production time, but the above line costs of basic education, whether in the workplace or in the public domain, are a legitimate claim on the public purse.

The funding of job-related skills formation, not just the basic education dimension, is a particularly vexed one. The Training Guarantee requires larger companies to commit a minimum percentage (1.5% in 1991/92) of their payroll to training. This leaves many organisations and businesses without a legal obligation to fund employee training but the efficiency and other imperatives to training workers remain. It is in these situations that the issue of "who pays" lacks any coherent framework for debate. Some guidance exists by way of the findings of the Deveson inquiry but the implications of those findings are not clear.

For example Deveson's "Finding C" seeks to encourage TAFE to provide services to industry mainly on a cost recovery basis. But how is the cost to be recovered? Should it be from the industry through some industry managed training fund, from the employer whose employees received the training, from the employees themselves, or from a combination of these? Adult education providers have traditionally operated a fee-for-service arrangement but the same questions remain — who is to be charged, and in what proportion?

Deveson also says ("Finding G") that there is no persuasive case for substantial individual contributions to meet the cost of TAFE but that fees could nevertheless be charged. This seems to suggest that at least a token direct contribution from individuals being trained is appropriate. It might also be possible that individuals "pay for" their training in terms of negotiated changes to work practices on site — that is the employee contributes a productivity benefit to the firm in excess of that arising from the training per se — in return for his or her training.

The third relevant point lies in "Finding N" which calls on greater contribution from employers both for in-house training and through greater expenditure in the industry-funded training market.

Thus on Deveson's account it would appear that job-related skills training involves funding contributions to differing degrees by both employer and employee, with support from, say, an industry fund and from government through the public education system or by way of publicly-contracted/subsidised training agencies.

The funding pool is even further muddled by the traditions, haphazardly evolved, concerning full-time, approved courses as opposed to part-time, non-accredited ones. An employee engaged in the former will usually not have to pay tuition fees but employees doing part-time or uncertificated courses will normally be charged fees. It is interesting to note that places in full-time and free vocational courses are predominantly occupied by men while the domain of part-time and fee-paying study is overwhelmingly constituted by women.

Such difficulties are shared by education and training arrangements in other countries. In a 1990 policy discussion paper the United Kingdom's National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) reported an inconsistent and confusing funding situation across the United Kingdom and that this led to inequitable treatment of learners. The Paper noted that:

Public and private sources of funding legitimately include individuals, employers, with local and national government. They provide in a variety of ways for the resourcing of educational institutions, the tuition fees or costs of particular forms of study, and the living costs of learners ... These disparate means of funding are idiosyncratic, and do not provide a properly planned system ... Fundamentally, it is necessary to resolve which elements of education and training should be paid for by government, which by employers and which by individuals. Living costs should be funded separately.¹²

As far as job-related training of employees is concerned the Institute suggests that employers should fund, as a valid business expenditure, the vocational training of employees relevant to the firm's needs, as well as funding the subsistence for their workers while in training by means of adequate wages or salaries. The employees should themselves fund such other education as they choose, making use of means-tested, learner-directed financial entitlements available equally for part-time and full-time study. Employees should fund their own living expenses with any assistance from the State being means tested.

According to the Institute government should fund school education, as well as the provision for adults of basic education to ensure that all adults can achieve a similar outcome beyond 16 years of age. Government should also fund the core facilities, buildings, staff and support services of education and training institutions. Training for those who are unemployed, or in unskilled or low-skilled employment is also a legitimate charge on public monies.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth undertake a comprehensive review of the funding and delivery of the basic education of adults. Such a review should consider, amongst other things:

- the extent of publicly-funded entitlements which adults can utilise to meet their basic education needs; such entitlements could range from tax-concessions to vouchers.
- the minimum level of education which all adults can expect to receive at public expense, that is, at no direct cost to themselves, or in the case of employees, to their employer.

Education of Migrants from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)

The single most important program targeted to migrants from non English speaking backgrounds is the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) which has been operating since 1947. The Program is designed to assist recent migrants to acquire sufficient English to obtain appropriate employment or access to mainstream education and training and to function effectively within the society.

The AMEP is funded and coordinated by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA) and delivered by eight State/Territory Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES), three TAFE colleges, nine higher education providers, two commercial institutes and three community colleges. In addition to a wide range of learning arrangements including formal courses and English in the workplace it provides a comprehensive educational assessment, counselling, placement and referral service, runs a national management information system and offers a number of back up services to participants, especially child care and income support for financially disadvantaged clients. In 1989 AMEP had 70,000 participants and in 1990/91 it received funding of more than \$82 million.¹³

Migrants from non English speaking backgrounds are also assisted to learn English through a range of other programs both Commonwealth and State funded. A number of Commonwealth funded labour market programs have English Language Training (ELT) components. The most significant are Jobtrain, Jobstart and SkillShare. Many adult and community education providers in all States and Territories also assist NESB people with English, but their programs, like the labour market programs, are targeted quite broadly and are not designed specifically for NESB migrants. Specifically targeted ELT programs are funded by most State and Territory governments and these are generally conducted by TAFE.

Following a review of the AMEP in 1985 a three year National Plan was developed for 1990-92. Its major impact has been to focus attention and funding upon recently arrived migrants at the expense of longer term residents. Only 10% of AMEP funding will be devoted to residents of more than five years standing with a further 10% allocated to those who have lived here between three and five years. This will result in a big drop in their participation rates in the AMEP.¹⁴

It is anticipated that many of the longer term NESB migrants who would formerly have received some English language training through the AMEP will now turn for assistance to adult and community providers. Even before the introduction of the National Plan many preferred to attend classes run in neighbourhood houses and similar community settings which they considered more convenient and less intimidating than the more formal approach of many AMEP classes. In rural areas where the AMEP has traditionally had a low profile, community providers were in any case often the only accessible source of education for NESB migrants who lacked sufficient language skills to attend TAFE courses. Their numbers are likely to increase substantially without any commensurate increase in government funding to the fourth sector despite the fact that it will in effect be undertaking some of the work previously funded through the AMEP.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers likely to be affected. Representatives of DILGEA claim that participation in AMEP by long term residents will drop from 12,000 to 5,000 per year, but it is impossible to know how many of the 7,000 residents so affected will seek assistance from the fourth sector. However the dimensions of the problem are in fact much greater than this as the following extract from the DEET submission explains:

The Report of the Working Party on Post-Secondary English Language Training (Dec 1990) found that, by their own estimation, about 360,000 overseas born Australians do not speak English well or at all. Of these, about 170,000 are in the labour force.¹⁵

Whether they were previously eligible for AMEP or not it is evident that many NESB migrants seeking assistance from adult and community education providers have to overcome multiple barriers to their participation. In the first place many are unaware of the opportunities available to them in the fourth sector. This is also true of English speakers but the problem is compounded for those who are unable to read local newspapers and notice boards and have few contacts in the wider community.

Many of the NESB migrants seeking assistance from the fourth sector are women on low incomes for whom cost is a major barrier. Many have small children and for them free child care is critical. Most are dependent on public transport so local venues are an important factor in facilitating participation. For some there are cultural constraints about participating in classes of mixed gender and for this group women-only classes of the type run by some neighbourhood and community houses are the only option. A significant number of NESB migrants are illiterate in their own languages which makes it particularly difficult for them to deal with literacy and other classes in English.

The Committee has received many submissions from community providers commenting upon the multiple barriers faced by NESB migrants. The following extract is typical:

The plight of long term migrant women is of particular concern. The isolation of this sector of the community is compounded by their inadequate English skills. Their ability to participate in social activity, skill development, further education or almost any other activity considered to be fundamental to the well being of

members of any urban community, is considerably diminished, if indeed they are able to participate at all, simply because their English language skills are inadequate. And yet, these women have a genuine desire to improve their skills, but are faced with yet another form of discrimination when they attempt to participate — they don't fit the criteria for AMES classes and they can only be offered a place on a waiting list for ESL programs.¹⁶

Of course NESB migrants are not a homogeneous group. Some are highly skilled and, if they are recent migrants, they can expect to be the major beneficiaries of English language training provided through the AMEP. Others are in the work force and may benefit from adult basic education or ELT provided there. Some are economically secure and thus less likely to be deterred by course fees and associated costs.

Nevertheless evidence submitted to the Committee by community providers suggests that many NESB participants in fourth sector education do face multiple barriers to access and consequently require more support than many English speaking participants. The support required is both financial, in the form of fee concessions for courses and child care, and personal in the form of counselling, referral and outreach. This places additional stresses upon providers who are not given additional funding, and who generally have no training in the teaching of people from non English speaking backgrounds. The situation faced by one provider — better resourced than most — and its attempts to deal with it are described in the following submission:

The cause and effect relationship between all issues under review is further illustrated in the area of the training of adult education teachers. NESB (Non-English Speaking Background) Network was set up when researchers found there were no ethnic services based on the peninsula and that one out of ten Warringah residents have English as their second language. Many of the adult educators are not trained to deal with the special needs of the multicultural classroom. Community education lacks the provision of localised training programs for adult educators.

The cost of inadequate training of adult education teachers is paid in the classroom. The effect is that many of the sectors of the community are not reached by providers. To offset this problem the Manly Warringah Evening College has begun to offer courses for the groups within the community who were previously excluded due to the barrier of language. In 1990 the College ran a program for Tongan women to assist them with their integration into the workforce. This year the College is proposing to continue job training programs; for the long term unemployed, Italian, South-East Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Programs of these kinds require the employment of teachers with specialist skills and as such their salaries form a large part of the budget allocated. Funding is crucial to the success of these job training programs.¹⁷

Evidence on the outcomes of participation in fourth sector programs by NESB migrants, as for participants generally, is very poorly documented. Such information as has been provided to the Committee suggests that participation in fourth sector programs — regardless of the subjects studied — is a significant first step in overcoming social isolation for many NESB migrants who have no immediate prospect of obtaining

employment or education in mainstream institutions. Many in this category, building upon the increased self confidence obtained through participation, go on to undertake a range of other courses which in the longer term are likely to lead to mainstream education or employment. It is difficult to link them directly since years may separate the initial contact with the sector from entry to the workforce. The sector's contribution, though difficult to quantify, is nevertheless significant as the following submissions illustrate:

The ESL class has been of vital importance in the Terrace. It has spawned the "Working in Australia" and "Dressmaking for Migrants" classes as well as the Raymond Terrace Multicultural Social Group. The English and employment chances of these participants has increased a great deal.¹⁸

Aspects of the college's provision which are of note include a Migrant Women's Learning Centre in Collingwood (where some 200 women annually gain access to an educational pathway ranging from basic literacy through to TAFE vocational courses);¹⁹

The Government's recent policy statement *Australia's Language* acknowledges that the adult and community education sector is an important provider of English literacy programs (both for NESB migrants and more generally). It also indicates additional funding for TAFE and community providers and for associated curriculum and teacher development. The Committee hopes that these funding arrangements will be as flexible as possible and cater for longer term programs than tends to have been the case thus far.

Aboriginal Adult Education

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy constitutes the most recent and substantial formulation of the educational needs of Aboriginal people and the structures and strategies most suited to addressing them. Although the Policy does not pay specific attention to adult and community education it gives a clear indication of the key factors to be considered:

The fundamental purpose of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education policy is to develop appropriate ways of responding effectively and sensitively to the educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. This requires an holistic approach, under the guidance of Aboriginal people, to achieve educational equity while accommodating cultural difference and recognising socio-economic disadvantage ...

Numerous reviews, inquiries and consultations conducted in recent years have all demonstrated that Aboriginal people place a high priority on education ... They expect that educational processes should lead them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to realise their individual potential, lead satisfying lives, and contribute actively to the community. They look to education as a means of moving out of poverty and welfare dependency, enabling them to earn income through employment or and enterprise and to manage the development of their communities.

... Aboriginal people generally seek education that is more responsive to the diversity of Aboriginal circumstances and needs, and which recognises and values the cultural backgrounds of students. Education provided according to those criteria ... is likely to lead to higher levels of Aboriginal participation and greater rate of success.²⁰

The crucial issue here is that of Aboriginal control and some of the evidence put to the Committee by Aboriginal organisations argued that the National Policy does not assert that issue strongly enough. Be that as it may the Committee received a consistently strong message from Aboriginal people that decisions about the content, delivery and outcomes of education programs must rest with the people themselves and that local control is the ultimate requirement. This message is reinforced in some of the recent contributions to the literature by adult educators:

... the history of Aboriginal adult education ... has been marked by paternalism and under-provision. Despite the valiant efforts of individual adult educators and the emergence of some useful programs, this remains the case today. More funds, more Aboriginal adult educators and the consolidation of existing programs are certainly needed. But what is needed more than anything is for Aboriginal adult education to be in the control of all Aboriginal people ...

... the outlines of an Aboriginal adult education that is controlled by and serves Aboriginal people can be seen to be emerging. This conception is very much embryonic, but can be seen to have four core elements: Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal-controlled institutions, a democratic educational process and Aboriginal community workers.²¹

The focus for much of the advice to the Committee about Aboriginal control rested on the issue of outcomes of government sponsored education and training programs. The problematic nature of outcomes has been discussed earlier in this Report but it has particular relevance in the context of the Aboriginal experience. The message received by the Committee was consistent and clear:

The barrier is increasingly that of perception; unless a 'job outcome' can be cited, little or no funding is available from ... government sources. Given the low literacy and general academic levels amongst Aboriginal adults, a focus on Adult Basic Education is of a higher order of importance than tying courses to vocational outcomes ...

Current government policies and funding heavily discriminate against non-vocational adult education programs. This is of particular concern for personal development programs which focus on communication and problem solving skills as they are ... an essential, underpinning component ...²²

Cultural maintenance and development is part of education, yet the policy thrusts appear to devalue these. Devaluing these is of extreme concern to Aboriginal people as this contributes to further reducing our participation ... Funding bodies need to realise that rules and regulations imposed on funding may not necessarily match the needs of the Aboriginal community. More often than not,

communities exist where they are for social rather than economic reasons. On-site training is preferred rather than people having to leave their communities to go away for training. Also communities want some say and some control over what happens to their communities.²³

Linked with the local control issue is the matter of the diversity of Aboriginal communities. Such communities include major urban centres, town camps, cattle stations and homelands centres, and embrace people of differing historical experiences, cultural and linguistic heritage, diverse beliefs, values and lifestyles. There is also considerable variation in the socio-economic status of the various communities and the mobility of many Aboriginal people finds them in different residential situations according to seasonal, ceremonial and kinship requirements. Thus Aboriginal communities and individuals within those communities often have differing concerns and expectations thereby creating a spectrum of educational needs:

The implications of this diversity are that universal solutions or programs in Aboriginal education and training will not work. It is crucial that policies and programs be adapted to the differing needs and concerns of communities. They must relate to what individual communities already possess in terms of physical infrastructure and human skills and knowledge, and what communities' expectations and objectives are for the future.²⁴

It is abundantly clear that the main purpose for which Aboriginal people seek education and training is to assist them to take control of their own communities, to develop and manage those communities in ways consistent with the aspirations of their members. Such purposes are entirely consistent with the philosophy and approaches to learning of the adult and community education sector. However there remain problems with the ways in which such approaches are perceived:

... the criticism, usually from administrators, is that Adult Educators who are involved in community based, non-formal, short and non-lecturing type education and training activities are seen to be "sitting around under trees talking to a few people" or engaging in pseudo social activities, and in their view this is not education ...

We believe the reality is quite the opposite. The activities undertaken with adults are vital and meaningful to them because they are taught through methods which are relevant and appropriate to Aboriginal people. What is required is a formal recognition of these informal, and perhaps difficult to measure, activities.²⁵

The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training modify its funding guidelines to provide for both vocational and non vocational criteria in determining grant allocations for adult and community education.

Community based approaches to Aboriginal adult education present special challenges for agencies in the provision of both personnel and learning resources. The fundamental challenge is that of coordination, requiring:

- the availability of a pool of skilled educators, preferably Aboriginal;
- access to the necessary technical and related support services, through telecommunications, and possibly through the use of mobile resource centres/workshops; and
- strong links with community development plans or similar so that education and training is demonstrably relevant to the community's situation.

Adequate training of adult educators for Aboriginal community-based work is absolutely crucial because of the multiplicity of special factors — cultural, environmental, social — which must be taken into account in designing and implementing programs. Formal training opportunities for adult educators are restricted to a handful of institutions around Australia, and the opportunities for Aboriginal adult educators are even more severely limited, notwithstanding the successes of institutions such as Darwin's Bachelor College, University of Technology Sydney, and the University of South Australia. The results are patchy, as the following comments attest:

The number of assistant and adult educators available on communities and smaller centres has increased as have their general level of qualifications. However the situation has not reached the desired level in terms of training in theory and practice of community development and Aboriginal adult education or in terms of quantity with regards to the number of communities who still do not have access to a trained adult educator.²⁶

For Aboriginal people in WA there is no appropriate training for adult and community educators that uses Aboriginal terms of reference and that is credible to Aboriginal people.²⁷

One proposal which the Committee regards as having considerable merit involves a requirement that wherever a community adult educator serving an Aboriginal community is non-Aboriginal, an Aboriginal trainee should be employed as well. The Northern Territory Open College and Darwin's Bachelor College are cooperating to support such a strategy for adult educators working on site with communities.

According to the coordinator of the UTS Aboriginal Adult Education program there are three broad areas in which the Aboriginal adult educator must be skilled:

An Aboriginal community educator wants to be effective in terms of community development, to have a knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture, and to be an effective communicator ... Administration, staff management and money management are important for running a whole range of Aboriginal community organisations ... A knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture is important ... to know where they are at and where they are going. For an Aboriginal community

educator this knowledge is particularly important as a way of knowing how Aboriginal communities developed and how they and community organisations operate in contemporary society. If a community educator did not know much about the background to the factors and constraints relevant to the operation of a community program and organisation they would find it difficult to establish trust among the community.²⁸

Surrounding this concern for adequate training of Aboriginal adult educators is the debate concerning the feasibility of institutions imbued with Anglo-Australian traditions, structures and culture to provide adequately for the needs of Aboriginals. It is not a debate which was raised in any substantial way with the Committee during its Inquiry. However it was apparent to the Committee both through its inspections and its hearings that organisations and activities run by Aboriginals for Aboriginals constituted a highly favourable environment for the achievement of outcomes closely aligned with Aboriginal needs and aspirations.

Much of the delivery of adult education to Aboriginal communities has been carried out by TAFE and the Committee acknowledges the contribution made by a number of TAFE colleges to Aboriginal education. Special TAFE Aboriginal units, sections or schools have provided basic education and general skills training for Aboriginals in both college and community settings. However Aboriginal adult education programs are still predominantly under non-Aboriginal control.

Aboriginal controlled operations, such as Tranby College in NSW, the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide, and the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs provide educational programs, both accredited and non-accredited, which are geared directly to the needs of Aboriginal students. They also offer an institutional environment congenial to Aboriginal learning styles. Organisations such as Nungalinga College provide education and training opportunities for remote Aborigines in ways which assist those who receive training to go back into their communities to teach others and to provide leadership for community development. Inadequate funding is a constant problem for Aboriginal providers and the Committee was impressed with their energy and effectiveness despite the difficult circumstances in which they operate.

'universal solutions or programs in Aboriginal education or training will not work.'

Amongst the more established non-government adult education providers and the community-based agencies participation by Aborigines is extremely rare. The kinds of barriers which confront disadvantaged white Australians no doubt loom several times larger for Aborigines, and existing providers, however favourably disposed and motivated to serve disadvantaged groups, generally lack the experience, understanding and cultural

resources to meet Aboriginal needs. The Committee is strongly supportive of the principle of adult education for Aboriginals by Aboriginals, and commends this principle as a guide to funding agencies.

It is important to consider Aboriginal adult education in the context of Aboriginal participation in education generally. The submission from TAFE Aboriginal Access in Western Australia spelled out the situation very clearly. In terms of participation rates Aboriginal people remain the most severely disadvantaged group in Australia. The situation in post-compulsory education is the worst with only 31.6% of Aboriginal people participating compared with 74.5% of all Australians. The most marked disparity is in the 18-24 years age group where Aboriginal people account for less than 6% of total enrolments.

Moreover within these groups Aboriginals living in remote areas have substantially lower participation rates than their more urbanised counterparts. Given that around one third of the Aboriginal population lives in communities of less than 1,000 people the disparities are glaring. The most severely educationally disadvantaged group comprise those people 25 years and over of whom only 1% are participating in some form of education.

Clearly the potential demand for Aboriginal adult and community education is enormous. In some areas it is claimed that young Aboriginal people are emerging from the schools with literacy levels much lower than their parents and grandparents:

There appears to be a reluctance to accept ... that younger Aboriginal people in remote communities have fundamental problems with numeracy and literacy ... Older Aboriginal people whose formative education was influenced by a Church presence appear to have a more comprehensive and general education.²⁹

I do get a lot of concerned queries from the elders asking why these 15 and 16 year olds are coming back unable to read and write properly. These are people in their sixties and seventies saying to me that they can read and write better than those students.³⁰

On this account it is likely that the demand for basic adult education programs will intensify as Aboriginal communities seek to become increasingly self-reliant. But there are already difficulties being encountered by communities in getting the level of adult education support that they require. A typical scenario is summarised in the following extract from evidence given to the Committee in Alice Springs:

With the adult education ... there is a continuous turnover of adult educators out on the communities and the programs are swapping and changing or cut off. The successful programs that do operate throughout the Northern Territory out in the communities are the ones that seem to be getting chopped off, and I don't know why ... It is the same with your adult educators: the people that have established a good working relationship with Aboriginal people ... seem to be getting transferred all over the place. With Aboriginal people it normally takes anything from six to twelve months before an outsider can establish some sort of a

relationship where people can have confidence in that person ... We get the Aboriginal parents involved to play a role model for the kids ... The problem is that nothing is ongoing.³¹

The Committee acknowledges the vital importance of continuity of both programs and personnel in the provision of adult and community education to Aboriginal communities and urges program managers to give such continuity high priority.

Education for People with Disabilities

Among those who are or could be major beneficiaries of adult and community education are people with disabilities. This term is applied loosely here to encompass individuals with a range of physical, intellectual, psychiatric or developmental disabilities of varying degrees of severity. At one end of a continuum it might include, for example, people with a sight impairment which requires the use of large-print materials and at the other, individuals with multiple disabilities.

The proportion of the population suffering some degree of disability is high and increasing as the following submissions explain:

As 16% of the Australian population has some form of disability (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1988) people with disabilities are a significant proportion of the Australian population.

The incidence of disability is increasing due to:

- the ageing of the population as disability frequently accompanies ageing;
- increases in motor and traffic accidents resulting in severe disability;
- improvements in medical science and technology in preserving the life of severely disabled people.

It is estimated that by the year 2000, the percentage with disabilities will be 23-24%.³²

Estimates of the incidence of students with special educational needs in the years of compulsory schooling range from 15 to 20 per cent of the school population; there is no reason to believe that these numbers reduce in the years beyond post — compulsory education.³³

Although people with disabilities do not in any way constitute a homogeneous group they face common problems in gaining access to, and benefits from, the established sectors of education. These constraints do not apply to the same extent in the fourth sector. The Committee considers therefore that the fourth sector has the potential to make

a significant contribution to the continuing education of people with disabilities. Encouragement and resourcing of the sector to assist it to do so would be consistent with the Commonwealth Government's commitment, embodied in the *Disability Services Act 1986*, actively to promote integration of people with disabilities into the community.

Adult and community education tends to be demand driven and client centred and is thus better able to respond to the needs of individual participants than the formal education system. It is flexible enough, for example, to increase the time allowed for mastery of a particular skill if this will facilitate its attainment by slow learners. In a conventional course bound by a set curriculum and concluding with a formal assessment on a nominated date it would be impossible to respond in this way.

Many adults with disabilities have failed to acquire basic skills while at school. In this they are no different from a significant minority of the general school leaving population. Like them they need ongoing access to education in basic skills. Conventional schools which for each of these groups may be associated with failure are not the answer. For many in each group the less structured, more informal, community based approach of the fourth sector is far more attractive and accessible.

The Queensland Advisory Council for Special Educational Needs observes that:

[Adult and community education] occurs at a variety of sites and can therefore provide opportunities for learning functional skills in settings which are closely related to locations where learners use them (e.g. going shopping, visiting friends and clubs, going to church). Education can therefore encompass the range of experiences adults with disabilities encounter in their local neighbourhoods and the wider community ...

Because fourth sector education is not compartmentalised it offers learners opportunities for life — long learning with no barriers to entry or re-entry: an essential requirement in the education of many adults with disabilities.³⁴

The Committee has been informed of a number of education and training programs in the fourth sector which include participants with disabilities. Some are targeted specifically to this group but the majority attempt a degree of integration. A small number run completely integrated programs. Some community providers also run courses to assist carers of people with disabilities. Some providers are either unwilling or unable to make any provision at all for this group and the overall picture is of very variable levels of provision which are generally quite inadequate to meet the demand. As is usually the case in adult and community education, figures are hard to come by but the type of provision also appears to be quite diverse both between regions and between types of provider.

Sometimes individuals attend courses at mainstream institutions such as TAFE where they may be given a degree of additional support, for example a note taker, to enable them to participate in fully integrated courses. The extent of assistance provided depends largely upon the entrepreneurial skills of the college — since the additional costs associated with the provision of extra support will need to be recovered elsewhere — and

the good will of the college principal and staff. More often people with disabilities attend courses at their local community or neighbourhood centre. Where it is not possible for them to attend a tutor may visit them at home. Some service provision is linked to labour market programs or to rehabilitation systems and these may provide additional support. Sometimes TAFE colleges and community providers run joint programs for people with disabilities.

The Committee considers that the current contribution of the fourth sector to the education and training of people with disabilities is not widely recognised and should be further publicised, particularly examples of successful innovatory programs that have the potential for wider adoption.

Fourth sector courses attended by people with disabilities cover the very wide range of topics and skills which characterise the sector's operations. However because many people with disabilities have spent years in institutions before the current move to place them in the community they need to acquire basic living skills and tend to be concentrated in these courses. Even those who are moving into the fourth sector straight from school may have failed to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills and for them the fourth sector represents a second chance to acquire these skills.

The Committee has been unable to ascertain the number of people with disabilities who participate in some form of adult and community education but the indications are that there are far fewer participants than might be assumed from their total numbers in the population. We know that, for the population as a whole, there is a correlation between success in formal education and subsequent participation in adult and community education. We also know that many people with disabilities are not well served by the formal education system. Many who leave school after fairly negative educational experiences are reluctant to risk a repeat performance irrespective of the educational setting. Nevertheless there are indications that the fourth sector will be called upon to meet the educational needs of an increasing number of people with disabilities. In part this is because the proportion of disabled people is increasing. It is also a result of social and policy changes now taking place:

From the experiences of Yooralla Society we are aware that the changing expectations of people with disabilities, the emphasis of the 1980's upon 'normalisation', 'integration', and 'deinstitutionalisation', plus the initiatives of governments such as the Disability Services Act, the Equal Opportunity Act and the Social Justice Policies, have all increased the demand by people with disabilities to participate in adult and community education and training activities.³⁵

The outcomes of education for adults with disabilities should ideally be judged on an individual basis rather than against broad course objectives. However it is judged there is no doubt about the sector's success in meeting the varied needs of those individuals with disabilities who do participate in its courses. The following submissions are typical of a large number received by the Committee on this issue from a range of providers:

Outcomes of the literacy programs [for psychiatrically disabled people] last year included: practical skills gains, e.g. writing meaningful letters, joining a library, obtaining a driver's licence, learning computer skills: confidence in using community facilities: confidence and skills which enabled them to undertake further studies and employment training (e.g. some of these students now attend STEP, a Skillshare program, others attend TAFE programs; some attend other education centres away from the hospital in order to further their literacy and related skills).³⁶

The Adult Literacy program facilitated by Cosmos over the past few years has provided ample evidence that people with disabilities, formerly regarded as ineducable, can acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills ...

A Basic Cooking and Nutrition program offered at Cosmos has provided people with mild disabilities the opportunity to not only acquire skills for their own domestic environment but basic principles of kitchen safety and food preparation. Whilst the advantages of enhancing their own domestic independence cannot be underestimated, the prevocational aspects of such skills acquisition should not be discounted. In Tasmania and interstate, a significant number of people with disabilities have been able to assume paid employment within the food industry by virtue of such experiences.³⁷

The barriers faced by the general population in obtaining access to adult and community education are discussed elsewhere in this Report. Many of these same barriers apply also to people with disabilities, for example difficulties in accessing public transport (where it is available), in physical access to buildings, in meeting the costs of materials and fees, in finding out what courses are available and in overcoming lack of confidence. In addition however people with disabilities may have to overcome a number of other obstacles which the general population is spared. Significant among these is the attitude of able bodied fellow participants. The submission from Cosmos for example draws attention to this problem in relation to severely disabled people in its client group:

In some cases, physical access may preclude attendance at community venues, yet the most severe restriction tends to be the comfort and degree of acceptance exhibited by non-disabled adults.³⁸

People with disabilities often have difficulty in finding courses and resources appropriate to their needs. This stems in part from lack of adequate training of tutors and volunteers, an issue discussed in more detail elsewhere in this Report. An advocate for students with intellectual disabilities participating in TAFE and WEA programs made this point in her submission:

Quite often education programs exclude a number of individuals due to a lack of understanding about individual learning styles/learning needs. This happens within integrated classes as well as programs specifically for adults with an intellectual disability. Often learning resources are not appropriate e.g. size of print, use of pictures, there is a lack of sensitivity to literacy skills or the pace at which teaching takes place is not appropriate.³⁹

While these barriers are not confined to people with disabilities they tend to affect greater numbers of participants in this category and to affect them more severely. Since the number of options for people with disabilities is far fewer, in the fourth sector as elsewhere, they have much less chance of moving to a more suitable course if their original choice proves unsatisfactory, for whatever reason. In this respect most of the barriers described here and elsewhere can be said to constitute greater obstacles to access for this group than for the general population. These problems are of course compounded for individuals with disabilities who suffer some other form of disadvantage such as coming from a non English speaking background.

Many submissions to the Committee have referred to the need for volunteers, tutors and community educators in the fourth sector to undertake training on the learning needs of people with disabilities:

Staff Development to increase the knowledge and skills of people working with those who have disabilities is an enormous need, but because of time and funding constraints as noted above staff in adult and community education facilities are rarely able to participate in such programs.⁴⁰

At present many educators in the fourth sector are employed because of their knowledge and skills in specific content areas rather than their teaching skills. While the Committee does not wish to disparage in any way the efforts of educators in the fourth sector to assist people with disabilities it believes their contribution could be enhanced by greater understanding of the problems facing learners with disabilities and techniques and methods developed to assist them. Formal training is not feasible for the majority of educators at this stage of the sector's development but in-service courses covering the major issues should be a high priority. These should be developed in conjunction with people with disabilities.

Inadequate funding for providers of fourth sector education for people with disabilities and for the participants themselves, is inhibiting its development and limiting providers' capacity to cope with increasing demand. At present some providers receive Commonwealth funding for programs targeted to people with disabilities. Most of this funding is short term, like the bulk of fourth sector funding. As discussed in Chapter 9 this creates serious problems for the sector generally but for people with disabilities the consequences are particularly severe. For the most part they require ongoing, long term education and training and when programs are cut because funding is not maintained the effects on this group are very damaging:

... They enrol and make progress in adult literacy courses but the time-frame is too short. Their "success" becomes yet another failure because they have not become effective readers and writers by the end of a six-month or one year program.⁴¹

In some quarters there is confusion about which departments or levels of government are responsible for funding education and training programs for this group. Since no department — State or Commonwealth — accepts sole responsibility, funding is haphazard and inadequate. The situation in Victoria is described in the following submission:

The primary source of funding for Independent Living Skills and Recreation Services is from the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health. Our access to Further Education funds is extremely limited and there is a general misconception in the Further Education sector that they do not really need to fund disability agencies on the claim that funds are available from other sources ...

Confusion also exists about responsibilities: in particular is literacy and numeracy training the responsibility of the Further Education Sector or are they Independent Living Skills?⁴²

Some individual providers of general adult and community education have gone to great lengths to run courses for people with disabilities or to encourage their participation in integrated classes. Such classes are expensive because of the range of additional supports required and few people with disabilities can afford high fees. Courses have therefore been subsidised using profits from other courses but there is a limit to cross subsidisation of this kind. In impoverished areas even this is not feasible.

People with disabilities are also adversely affected by increasing emphasis in Commonwealth funding guidelines on vocational outcomes which are inappropriate for many people in this group.

In the Committee's view people with disabilities who undertake skills courses in the adult and community education sector should be treated in the same way from a funding point of view as people in the general population who undertake vocational training. In other words, they should not be required to pay fees and providers should receive government funds to cover the costs of the courses. In some cases participants should be eligible for income support while undertaking full time study.

Such an approach is obviously desirable on the grounds of social justice but it could also be justified on economic grounds. The majority of people with disabilities who fail to acquire adequate living skills will have to be supported by the State in one form or another. The cost of such support is well understood. In this case, compassion, common sense and economic considerations all appear to point in the direction of the policy suggested here.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

(a) acknowledge the demand upon the adult and community education sector to meet the needs of adults with disabilities, and its potential in this regard; and

(b) clarify portfolio responsibilities for the education of adults with disabilities and direct resources accordingly.

Prisoner Education

The Committee does not claim to have developed an overview of the education of adult prisoners in Australia. Indeed, such a task would be a major inquiry in its own right. However, the insights provided by the information made available to the Committee and from visits to two corrective centres, warrant brief consideration.

Of all the disadvantaged people who face barriers to their participation in further education and training, those in the prison system are among the most neglected.

According to the 1990 National Prison Census commissioned by the Australian Institute of Criminology, of the 14,000 people held in Australian prisons, around 45% have educational levels which go no further than partial secondary schooling. The highest educational level of some 46% of prisoners remains unknown. The Committee was disturbed to note the absence of data from New South Wales, despite the fact that New South Wales prisons contain nearly half of Australia's prisoners. In any event, such data as is available may be of dubious value:

The Institute of Criminology data on prisoners tends to be inaccurate. This is because surveys are frequently held and prisoners refuse to fill them in correctly. Any survey like that is associated with the police, so it is not filled in correctly.⁴³

A major problem in prisoners' access to the limited education and training opportunities available is their levels of literacy. This was highlighted both in evidence to the Committee, and in a 1990 Report by Professor Eileen Byrne.⁴⁴ Poor literacy was also linked to recidivism:

There is a ... body of research evidence which establishes a very high rate of correlation between illiteracy or poor education ... on the one hand and crime and gaol confinement on the other. The illiterate are not only disproportionately represented in the prisoner population. They are a much higher proportion of recidivists.⁴⁵

While it is difficult to produce accurate national figures for literacy rates amongst prisoners, a Queensland prisoner made the following claim:

I would say that 30 percent of prisoners in Queensland are illiterate and perhaps another 30 percent could not follow the instructions on a can of soup.⁴⁶

The Committee's attention was drawn to the apparent lack of suitability of many of the materials used in literacy programs in prisons. Mr David Mathiesen, who appeared before the Committee in Brisbane, emphasised the special characteristics of prisoners and argued strongly for their special needs to be acknowledged in the way education was devised and delivered in prisons:

Prisoners' needs and motivations ... differ from those adults in free society ... They need a special curriculum which is different both in content and technique ...

Prison programs need to start with an understanding of inmates' personality characteristics and needs ...

I believe that adult prisoners exhibit quite a lot of reality confusion, social inadequacy, low motivation, low self-esteem, a very high level of substance abuse ...⁴⁷

Why would we expect ... prisoners to have the natural motivation and self-discipline to stick at study in their recreation hours. It is the more unrealistic since prisoners cannot go and come to and from their cells, work in their cells, return to the library etc. as we can. Once a prisoner is escorted to a room, he must stay there.⁴⁸

Prisoners also have severe financial impediments to pursuing study. They only receive a limited income from which they might buy books, writing materials and so on. Certainly any fee-paying courses would invariably be beyond their reach. Moreover prisoners are not entitled to receive AUSTUDY, although Aboriginal prisoners are eligible for certain allowances through ABSTUDY. Professor Byrne has expressed strong views in this matter:

... to say that one disadvantaged group, prisoners ... are ineligible for a scheme of grant-aid for the education and training that is their central life-chance for rehabilitation, is illogical, unjust, and politically nothing less than unaccountable meanness.

The deliberate exclusion of prisoners, who have no real income, from all schemes of grant-aid, is directly discriminatory ... It is a breach of major international Conventions of Rights. It is ... one of the most ill-conceived and punitive policies current in Australia.⁴⁹

The Committee has some sympathy with the sentiments expressed by Professor Byrne, but recognises that AUSTUDY, being essentially a living allowance, may be an inappropriate means of providing financial support to prisoners. However, given the particular problems faced by prisoners in accessing study material and courses, the Committee believes that assistance such as fee relief and book allowance is justified.

The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments establish a grant aid scheme for prisoners to meet the costs of fees and materials incurred during further education and training while in prison.

Despite the obvious shortcomings in much of the policy, infrastructure and resources available for prison education, the Committee was impressed with the work that was being done by individual TAFE teachers and corrections officers under less than ideal conditions. The Committee was impressed with the operations of the Gunn Point Prison Farm near Darwin. Thanks to a collaborative effort between the Northern Territory Open College and the Department of Correctional Services, many prisoners are trained to Certificate level in a number of skill areas relevant to employment opportunities in the community — bakery workers, butchers, heavy plant operators and so on. Although no detailed study of the results of the program has been completed the signs are most encouraging. For many Aboriginals, the program at Gunn Point represents a rare opportunity to gain some kind of qualification. Gunn Point was jokingly referred to as their “university”, providing them with status on their return to their communities.

The Committee sees considerable value in the prison farm approach to rehabilitation through training, although where prisoners are drawn largely from an urban situation its usefulness may be more limited. However, the importance of using practical work skills formation as a way of achieving improvements in literacy should not be overlooked, and the benefits to self-esteem and confidence which derive from such programs are significant.

The Committee is conscious of the difficulties which confront TAFE colleges in trying to provide services for prison inmates — the lack of data about prisoners’ educational background, the restrictions on physical access, the frequently poor level of educational facilities in prisons and the lack of training and experience of TAFE staff in dealing with prisoners and their particular culture.

This is not to deny the commitment and zeal of many individual teachers and administrators in attempting to meet prisoners’ needs. At Cessnock Corrective Centre (NSW), lecturers from the local TAFE college self-elect to teach prisoners. An education program is managed by an Education Officer within the Centre, and includes computer literacy, general secondary studies, basic education and vocationally-oriented skills training.

A submission from educators at Morwell River and Wron Prisons in Victoria describes a range of programs which have been operating since the late 1970’s. Responsibility for prisoner education in Victoria passed to TAFE at the beginning of 1989:

Both prisons offer a wide range of vocational and basic education programs. These include Welding, Fitting and Machining, DLI-Dogman/Crane Chaser, and Forklift Operating. The prisons provide intensive Adult Literacy and Basic

Education programs, assistance with forms, reports, job applications, computers, public speaking, truck and articulated vehicle licenses, Off-Campus courses, cooking classes ...

Special projects have also been developed such as the Wron Wron/Walla Walla (USA) Twinning Project. Last year the project won an International Literacy Year Achievement Award.⁵⁰

The same submission highlighted some of the anomalies that exist in prison education, including:

While there are plenty of penalties for failing to comply with prison regulations, there are effectively no official incentives offered to prisoners to engage in educational activities. (Indeed, some prisons inmates must take a cut in pay to attend education). It seems curiously perverse to have a comprehensive scale of punishments without a corresponding set of rewards.⁵¹

The issue of prisoner education is a highly complex one, and extends to issues of the education and training of custodial officers; the initial assessment of prisoners' educational background, and in particular their literacy skills; the availability of adequate support facilities; the lack of motivation by prisoners who have tended to experience repeated failure, and the lack of opportunity to practise skills which are learned. These are all issues which must be addressed by both State and Commonwealth governments working together.

Given the proven capacity of the adult and community education sector to address the educational needs of disadvantaged adults over the long haul, the Committee would encourage prison authorities to recognise the potential contribution of these providers to prisoner education. The sector is well placed to continue to work with prisoners on their release in a community setting. Again, the success of such involvement will depend significantly upon the resources available for that purpose.

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Chapter 7

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Despite the relative ease of access which characterises adult and community education, there still exists a range of significant impediments to participation, including inadequate child care, transport difficulties, cultural and attitudinal barriers, fees and lack of credit portability. The burden of these tends to fall on those whose need to participate is most pressing. The two most frequently cited barriers for participants and would-be participants are course fees and the lack of suitable, affordable child care. Submissions from a wide range of providers as well as individuals and organisations appearing at public hearings in every State and Territory drew attention to the ways in which these constraints limit or frequently deny people access to adult and community education. In some cases the impact is less dramatic, resulting in reduced choice of courses for individual participants rather than their complete exclusion. Nevertheless, these barriers are keenly felt and warrant close attention by governments.

Financial Barriers

The impact of the current emphasis on user pays and cost recovery policies in the fourth sector is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. It is a major barrier to participation. Its impact is most severe for people on the lowest incomes but is not restricted to that group. In many families with a reasonable income for example, women's personal disposable incomes are so low as to render course fees prohibitive, and these women are not eligible for concessions. Some courses with high fees — such as computing courses — are beyond the reach of many people with moderate incomes, especially when such fees have to be paid in a lump sum at the start of a course.

Many fourth sector providers have attempted to mitigate the effects of the user pays principle by offering concessions to people on low incomes and this has certainly encouraged their participation. There are limits to this approach however since it will only work where classes include a significant number of full fee-paying students or where providers can run some courses at a profit and use the money so obtained to subsidise other classes. In economically disadvantaged areas or areas of low population density where there are not sufficient concentrations of fee-paying students, neither of these approaches is feasible and people on low incomes are effectively denied access to courses. Even when concessions are offered the relatively small fees charged can be prohibitive for some individuals.

Government moves to concentrate funding on courses with clear vocational outcomes have generally kept fees for job related courses low. Many have no fees at all. Such courses are therefore more accessible financially to people on low incomes. Unfortunately for many in this group with few prospects of an immediate return to work courses with a well defined vocational outcome are not appropriate or attractive. Most adult literacy and numeracy courses are also free to participants and therefore are

accessible financially. The overall impact of governments' emphasis upon funding of vocationally oriented programs therefore is to restrict the choice of courses available to people on low incomes.

Child Care

The lack of affordable child care was cited in the majority of the submissions to the Committee which addressed the issue of barriers to access and also by many participants in public hearings. This emphasis is understandable given the preponderance of women in the sector as students, teachers and administrators:

It is estimated that at least 75% of students in ACE are women, a level of participation which is disproportionate in relation to any other sector of education.

The largest provider of ACE for women, is the Community Neighbourhood and Learning Centre (CNLC) movement, with over 90% of their users being women of all ages.¹

Current arrangements for child care for participants in adult and community education are very varied. Some groups have obtained Federal Government funding through the Office of Child Care and consequently are able to provide good quality child care at reasonable rates or free for eligible participants. Some States also make a contribution to child care to assist people undertaking adult and community education courses. This is sometimes in the form of a grant, sometimes through provision of suitable accommodation and sometimes through funding of trained child care workers. Many TAFE campuses provide subsidised professional child care but this is often too expensive for women on low incomes and not always available to those enrolled in part-time courses, as priority is given to full-time students.

'Lack of child care facilities is a significant deterrent to participation.'

Some examples of the child care models now operating in the fourth sector were described in the submission from the Association of Further Education Committee Centres in Victoria:

The Albury-Wodonga Continuing Education Centre auspice the Mobile Child Care Service, which provides child care for primary carers involved in adult education in a variety of settings. This receives significant federal funding from the Children's Services Program. This funding sees the program as a service to children (not their parents) and as such priority must be given to groups where the children would benefit from the opportunity to experience quality child care. The Victorian Government Division of Further Education (DFE), and contracts

from other government and service agencies, broaden the funding base and allow the service to provide comprehensive service to women involved in adult education.

The Centre, Sale, has minimal funding from DFE and has established an Occasional Child Care Service after successfully submitting for funds from Defence Force Family Support Fund, which gave staffing support. Other costs are subsidised from within the overall fee structure.

The Scope centre, La Trobe Valley subsidises the child care costs of participants, if they use registered child care services. They assist placement by referral to Family Day Care.²

Evidence to the Committee stressed that lack of child care facilities is a significant deterrent to participation. Witnesses described the lack of suitable venues in many communities, the high cost of establishing suitable infrastructure and support, and a general lack of recognition by funding bodies. These are all of critical importance to women's access to, and continued participation in, adult and community education. The following examples are typical:

In the area in which I work, Warrane-Mornington, lack of free child care would be a major barrier to attendance at any class. Although we are able to provide this for some hours a week, our inadequate funding severely limits the number of classes we are able to offer. We are funded by the Department of Community Services for one Child Carer per session when in reality we often need to employ two or three, which results in us running many fewer classes than anticipated. This is a real limiting factor considering that we have an ideal venue, excellent staff on call and the money to pay tutors.³

Occasional Care Centres within the Valley are limited and very busy. Maximum time limits placed on these centres can often preclude course attendance. The location of the Centres in relation to access to the learning institution can cause major difficulties with public transport usage.⁴

The Committee recognises the significant barrier to women's access to adult and community education posed by current inadequate provision of child care.

The Committee recommends that whenever government agencies provide a grant to adult and community education providers for the delivery of a particular program that grant shall include, as a matter of course, a component specifically to provide for child care.

Transport, Venues and Times

Although course costs and inadequate child care were consistently raised as the major barriers to participation a number of other barriers were also referred to as inhibiting access to fourth sector education by many people. Important among these was lack of transport and the associated problems of inappropriate location of venues and inconvenient timing of classes. Many participants in adult and community education are

totally reliant upon public transport. Except in major population centres this is often inadequate outside peak hours, when most of the programs take place. Even in metropolitan areas where public transport is available in the evening many potential participants, particularly women and the elderly, are fearful of using it:

The University of Sydney is well placed ... at the confluence of two major roads and there is ready access by public transport. However, there is an increasing reluctance on the part of many people to venture out at night, the traditional time for adult and community education activity, on public transport. In response, the University has changed its provision in a number of ways ...⁵

Older folk in general do not like to travel much at night and sometimes do not own a car. They often have limited funds and cannot afford TAFE or continuing education courses. U.3.A. has overcome these barriers by providing day-time courses at very small expense and by using car pools.⁶

In country areas where adult and community education centres are scattered the costs of transport (public or private) are significant, both for tutors and for participants. Indeed, this is a major factor inhibiting the development of fourth sector education in rural Australia:

In the rural scene, the cost and time involved in travel is the greatest barrier. The simplest solution is to take the teacher into the country either by electronic means, correspondence courses from Distance Education or subsidised travel and accommodation or recruit local successful expertise in business or trades. Retired people would be ideal.⁷

We do have transport problems within this area as well ... Some people in Medowie cannot get to the ESL classes as there is no bus. We have not been able to organise an efficient alternative. One woman from Medowie was so keen to attend a dressmaking course which started at 10 am that she was dropped in the Terrace by her husband at 6 am on his way to work.⁸

Barriers to access resulting from inadequate transport might be minimised, if not totally overcome, through a number of interrelated approaches. In the first place, it is important that the venues chosen for adult and community education are accessible to public transport and, where transport services are limited, are timed as far as possible to minimise inconvenience to participants reliant upon it. The Committee is aware that a number of local government councils provide a community bus service to transport residents to venues. These buses are often equipped to take wheel chairs, thereby opening up many new opportunities to people who would otherwise be housebound.

New South Wales has adopted a very innovative approach to the problem of transport by running many programs in disused buildings in railway stations and timetabling them to conclude shortly before the next train is due. Indeed the Committee was told — but has been unable to confirm — that the Board of Adult and Community Education is the second largest owner of railway stations in New South Wales after the State Rail Authority.

One of the advantages of holding adult and community education classes in school buildings is that these are normally central to the communities they serve and this is another reason why the Committee would like to encourage the wider adoption of this practice. Many also offer easier physical access than the often decrepit, inconvenient buildings in which the fourth sector currently conducts many of its operations. This would greatly improve accessibility not only for people with disabilities but for many elderly participants. The use of school buses when these are not required to transport children would be of major assistance to participants in rural areas. The Committee has made an appropriate recommendation on this matter earlier in the Report.

'We do have transport problems ... One woman ... was so keen to attend ... that she was dropped in the Terrace by her husband at 6 am on his way to work.'

Perceptual and Attitudinal Barriers

Another major barrier to participation brought to the Committee's attention during the Inquiry was lack of confidence on the part of individuals about their capacity to undertake or benefit from any form of education. Lack of information about what the fourth sector had to offer was also a problem. A significant number of people approaching an adult and community education provider for the first time have had no connection with any form of education since leaving school. Many were branded failures at school and believe themselves incapable of learning anything.

These attitudes are a formidable barrier but some providers have had success in overcoming them. This is particularly so where programs are run in neighbourhood houses or other community settings which do not have any of the negative connotations associated with large, formal educational structures. Many submissions documented participants' first tentative approaches to providers or vice versa. These often began with a chat over a cup of tea, followed by an invitation to take part in whatever activity was taking place at the time. Many people, after making contacts and gaining confidence, were encouraged by providers and other participants to move on to other courses either at the same agency or elsewhere and from there to employment or training at TAFE. In some cases this process takes years but it is happening all over the country in all types of agencies. The major barrier is in making initial contact. Many providers are aware of this and are working actively to overcome it. Where agencies have been established for some time many potential participants are persuaded to attend by existing members. TAFE Outreach workers perform a similar role:

Perhaps the greatest barrier for people thinking of returning to studies is their own perception of adult education. Many people have had negative experiences with education in the past and see adult education as an extension of an earlier failure at school ...

... perhaps the only way to overcome negative perceptions of adult education is to provide positive examples. The provision of more outreach courses to be held in non-threatening environments of local Neighbourhood Centres and community rooms would be a good start at changing negative attitudes.⁹

I think it is vital to understand that for many participants in Adult Literacy or any area which involves returning to study, the small community-based programs are the only way for them to achieve. Their past experiences of education have been such that colleges or large programs actually become a barrier to their learning, even if they find the courage to go there. For many of these students the outcomes are slow in appearing as the first steps are regaining confidence and self-esteem, but once this happens the results are often dramatic.¹⁰

Lack of information about what the fourth sector has to offer is a very real barrier to many potential participants:

One of the major ironies of the adult education world is the difficulty of communicating information about adult education to those who need it most. Those who respond to the various forms of communication now being used probably need adult education less than those who not only don't respond — but are unaware of anything to which to respond.¹¹

A number of factors contribute to this situation. Firstly many agencies lack the funds to advertise their courses adequately. Some prepare prospectuses or run advertisements in the local press but these are inaccessible to people with poor English and those who do not read. Word of mouth is an important means of advertising for many agencies but this is of limited use to newcomers to an area or other residents with few social contacts. Inaccurate information or misconceptions about fourth sector education may also be a disincentive. For example young unemployed people who would in fact benefit quite significantly from many of the courses run by adult and community education agencies may be reluctant to attend what they perceive to be classes dominated by housewives with small children or elderly pensioners. Even when they have managed to obtain the necessary information potential participants are sometimes discouraged by unnecessarily complicated and time-consuming enrolment procedures particularly in the case of some of the larger providers.

The Committee is aware that there is an increased availability of electronically-based community information services in public libraries and elsewhere, and encourages adult education agencies to make use of these. However, there are still substantial barriers to people using these services, and decisions about how best to advertise locally will vary greatly according to local conditions.

Geographical Isolation

People living in rural or remote communities are increasingly concerned that their situation makes it difficult for them to gain access to adult education. It has been the Committee's experience that this is particularly so among farmers at the present time.

According to figures quoted by the Country Women's Association fewer than 25% of Australian farmers or farm workers possess an education beyond lower secondary level, reflecting a past tendency for farmers' children in Australia to leave school early to return to work on the farm. The situation will no doubt improve in the future in the light of increases in the Year 12 completion rates of non-metropolitan students recently documented by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training in *Towards a National Education and Training Strategy for Rural Australians*, June 1991. Adult education however is an important pathway to meeting the many challenges in the sector at the present time.

The context of Australian farming has changed enormously in recent years and farming households constantly confront new claims on their knowledge in order to cope. Modern farming involves the use of increasing levels of technology and other inputs. It requires complex cost-structuring as well as constant upgrading of practical skills and there is an emerging need to manage it along business lines to ensure success. Many farms now possess computers in recognition of this but the knowledge is not often there to utilise them to full capacity, nor are suitable farm management systems widely understood. Farm women as well as men seek courses in these areas.

The current rural recession has also introduced a different kind of need among farmers to acquire new skills. Some farmers have been prompted to want to change careers altogether and are looking for chances to acquire the skills to do so, while others simply need to find ways of supplementing their income. Adult education can get them started in these directions.

Too frequently geographical isolation presents a major barrier to their participation, however. In the first place TAFEs are often too far away for them to be able to attend courses. A recent survey in the area served by Wudinna TAFE Campus in South Australia, for example, found that more than half of the rural people living in the TAFE's catchment area had to drive for more than an hour to reach the campus. A wider range of courses available locally was nominated as the single greatest factor that would improve their access to education.¹²

Even in States such as New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia where adult education has a significant presence in country areas through TAFE Outreach Programs or community education providers operating in small country towns, the farmers in more isolated areas still feel badly served. For example a survey conducted by the Western Regional Council for Adult Education in New South Wales in 1990 revealed that 41% of respondents believed that courses were too far away. Very few of these regarded distance education as a possible solution. The further people lived from a town the more likely they were to say that the courses they wanted to attend were too far away. The Council commented:

If those who are responsible for planning adult education services at a regional level espouse the view that agriculture and the family farm are components of Australian life worth preserving, then we will have to find ways to train and support the growing numbers of farmers seeking to supplement their farm income with other activities.¹³

The Committee was told of some examples of the successful use of available communications technology that would help to address the problem of isolation, and was encouraged by these. Expensive satellite technology aside, it is clear that by the end of the 1990s sufficient land-based communications networks will have been put in place throughout Australia to make these applications readily usable. Fax and computer links and cable delivered video can then offer exciting possibilities in adult education that will be responsive to the isolated individual's needs.

Given the high level of adoption of the video cassette in Australia — where a survey of rural families on the Eyre Peninsula alone shows that 85% of families had access to a cassette player — simply making more courses available on videotape, for a start, would be well received.

Radio is still to be exploited to the full as a delivery mechanism for adult education. An example of its potential is evident in the ABC radio program *ConneXions* which has been broadcasting four times a week over Radio National for the last two years.¹⁴ The producers regard distance education as the program's basic function, describing it as offering "interactive adult learning in all its guises". People who want to learn something write in to the producers and are put in touch with people or resources that are likely to help them. The most relevant and interesting of these contacts then form the basis of future broadcast material. The program has struck a nerve in rural Australia.

As Radio National transmitters extend their reach more and more into remote areas the potential of broadcasting, — both radio and television — for rural and remote adult education increases all the time. Monash University has recently put forward a project in combination with ABC Radio National which aims to offer self-directed learning programs that will be both broadcast and available on tape.¹⁵ The Commonwealth Government has also channelled some 1991 National Priority (Reserve) Funds to support an open learning project managed by Monash University and beginning in 1992. Under this project students may study with or without credit their choice of first year units offered by five or six universities throughout the country. It will use broadcast television as one means of teaching.

Other combinations of technologies for distance education and open learning such as those described in the Committee's earlier report *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education* are also already in use in distance education in some parts of Australia. They are not expensive and could be widely exploited where suitable infrastructural arrangements exist.

The South Australian Department of Employment and TAFE now acknowledges open learning as an important part of its strategy in further education for the coming years. Video-conferencing has been used for courses at the Adelaide College of TAFE and at Light College. It opens up numerous possibilities for linking TAFE Colleges to remote campuses, workplaces, prisons, centres for the disabled and is seen as having vast potential for improving educational services to outback areas once new transmission services are extended to remote locations. At Wudinna Campus of Eyre Peninsula College

— a hub of learning in this remote area of South Australia — a proposal for a facility called a “telecottage” has recently been developed to make a range of communications technologies available to the community.

Other strategies employed to alleviate the problem of isolation in remote communities where adult and community education is predominantly delivered through TAFE would centre on an improved supply of outreach resources. The Committee visited an excellent example of co-operative action in Merredin, Western Australia. Although Merredin lies some distance from the nearest TAFE College, TAFE classes were made available locally using facilities and teachers in the local High School. The Committee commends this model.

The Committee has been very impressed with the contribution that can be made by groups such as neighbourhood houses and learning centres in rural areas and in small country towns. The availability of funds for such groups has made adult and community education possible and able to survive in areas it might never otherwise have reached. As we have pointed out elsewhere in this Report the employment of co-ordinators working with committed volunteer support has served to create and sustain networks operating at levels of remarkable efficiency and effectiveness.

The Committee recommends the introduction of State government funding support for Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres in those States where it does not yet exist.

Credit Transfer, Certification and Articulation

Several submissions to the Committee listed as barriers to participation in adult education the lack of recognition of work and life experience, inability to gain credit for previous study, and poor links between the multiplicity of training programs available. As well individual participants in adult and community education are keen to acquire ‘pieces of paper’ which formally document their educational pathways and testify to their prior learning experiences, their achievements and their skill levels. Typical of the evidence received in this regard was the following advice from the Victorian Council of Adult Education (CAE):

The CAE continues to get requests from students for certification that will attest to their completion of an adult learning program ... This will necessitate a simple, accessible, low cost system of accreditation that will enable small and large ... providers alike to establish accreditation for their learning programs ...

Greater resources will be required to operate at such levels and this ... will have a direct bearing upon the costs necessary to provide such services ...

Students need to have their prior learning recognised and they will require this to be accepted by other learning institutions. The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is becoming a matter of importance for adults and the Commonwealth

could assist by continuing to provide leadership and support in this field. The interinstitutional and interstate articulation of learning programs is also something that could benefit from a concerted national effort.¹⁶

Students clearly want their experiences in the fourth sector to be recognised by industrial and professional bodies and to link in with other courses and awards, particularly in TAFE. The Committee is convinced that adult and community education is already making a major contribution to skills formation in Australia and that this role should be recognised and supported:

My particular concern ... relates to the fact that skills developed through adult and community education are not adequately recognised in formal education or training contexts. This "marginalises" adult and community education ... and limits the potential gains ... that would accrue if adult and community education was a recognised path in formal skill enhancement.¹⁷

It is important that the terminology which is used in the debate — but which is frequently misapplied and often confusing — is clarified, and the Report includes a list of definitions dealing with such terms as accreditation, certification, articulation and credit transfer or credit portability (see Appendix 3). Such notions are closely tied in with competency-based approaches to education and training. The Commonwealth Government regards competency-based training and assessment as an important part of award restructuring which presumes that competencies will be defined and assessed in a range of occupations. To this end the Government has established the National Training Board which will work with industry to set national skill standards:

These standards will provide the benchmarks for curriculum development, accreditation of training programs and certification of individuals' skills ...

National skill standards identify the core skills needed for the performance of fundamental tasks required in the everyday practice of a given occupation, and the level of competence necessary to adequately discharge those tasks. These would be applied regardless of where the individual has gained his or her training.¹⁸

With the emphasis on *what* someone knows and can do rather than *where* they learned it, the adult and community education sector clearly has significant new opportunities to contribute to a national training effort. On the other hand, as stated earlier, there will be greater demands upon the sector both to provide training to national skill standards and to certify that students have achieved them. The resource implications of this are considerable so it is important that the fourth sector is given explicit recognition and support for its role in skills development.

Given the major role of adult and community education as a provider of educational pathways into other education and training sectors it is hardly surprising that the Committee's attention was frequently drawn to issues of articulation and credit portability:

Courses should be designed to contain the accreditation and articulation necessary to move ... upwards on the skills ladder ... There must be national coordination ... to provide the utmost practical articulation ... between interest-based and skills based courses ... and then ... on to increasingly more skilled accomplishments.¹⁹

Across the industry (and across Australia) there needs to be procedures established for identifying core skills and setting skill standards. Measures to be used could include: curriculum development, accreditation of courses, certification of skills and registration of courses. This would ensure consumers have reached certain competency levels and provide a measure of quality control. In this way courses conducted by the 'fourth sector' could be articulated into credits towards formal qualifications in TAFE and tertiary institutions, so knowledge and skill acquisition is not associated simply with serving time in an educational institution. In addition, there is room for accreditation of courses provided by the 'fourth sector'.²⁰

While the sector does not want to be confined to, nor driven by, courses which "fit" into, say, TAFE vocational programs, it is important that skills and knowledge gained by people in the fourth sector can be recognised elsewhere. Credit portability has already featured in several major national reports: *Credit Transfer: A Discussion Paper* (NBEET); *The Recognition of Vocational Training and Learning* (ESFC); *Setting National Skill Standards* (NTB); *Open Learning* (NBEET). It is intimately connected with any attempt to establish competency-based mechanisms for skills formation, assessment and recognition.

In this context, the Committee was interested to learn of the South Australian Credit Transfer Project and work on open learning and the educational credit bank being coordinated by Monash University on behalf of the Commonwealth and the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee. While these initiatives involve the tertiary sector the procedures developed in that context are capable in principle of extension to the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through adult and community education. The Committee appreciates that, in the tertiary sector, successful credit transfer and recognition of prior learning depend on the achievement of substantial cultural and administrative changes in universities and colleges. Such changes will not be effected overnight. Moreover the extension of such arrangements to accommodate learning undertaken in the fourth sector will require even greater commitment and encouragement from governments. However the Committee firmly believes that a nationally recognised and comprehensive scheme for skills standards, competency assessment and credit transfer must be given priority and urges the Commonwealth Government to enhance its efforts to this end.

Within TAFE important work is being done towards the recognition of prior learning and competency-based approaches to the granting of credit for prior or experiential learning. Hopefully this will issue in a nationally coordinated scheme and augurs well for a 'flow on' effect into the adult and community education sector. Again the Skillshare programs funded by the Commonwealth and delivered through community providers are specifically required to promote maximum articulation with TAFE and other labour market programs and to pursue accreditation and recognition of Skillshare training courses.

The Committee was pleased to note that some tertiary courses designed for the training of adult educators are putting the principles of credit portability and recognition of prior learning into practice. For example the Associate Diploma in Education (Adult and Community) offered by the University of South Australia is:

designed to meet the needs of students with or without matriculation who have gained considerable experience in various areas ... The Associate Diploma offers considerable credit for skills and knowledge gained from prior experience and has been designed in consultation with practitioners in the field to meet both academic and practical needs.²¹

Clearly where a genuine commitment to credit portability and recognition of prior learning exists many of the apparent obstacles to such processes seem to vanish. Overseas experience — notably that in British Columbia, New York State, and in the UK through the National Council on Vocational Qualifications — demonstrates that large scale, rigorous and effective credit transfer schemes can be established.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth:

- (a) extend its support for existing projects directed towards the establishment of national schemes for competency standards, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and related matters; and**
- (b) specifically require that such projects take into account the needs of, and recognise the skills formation role of, the adult and community education sector.**

Clearly much remains to be done if the adult and community sector is to enhance still further its accessibility, and if it is to realise its full potential as a contributor to skills formation and the enhanced educational levels of the community as a whole. When considering barriers to access in adult and community education one should not lose sight of the fact that, apart from external barriers to their participation, adults have numerous other claims upon their time, energy and resources. Many are in the workforce; many are bringing up children alone; some have other family responsibilities; others are active in clubs and associations. Some evidence to the Committee has also suggested that many people's first involvement in adult and community education coincides with major changes in their lives. Given the constraints and barriers described here and elsewhere in the Report the consistent and sustained growth in enrolments in adult and community education is indeed remarkable.

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Chapter 8

FUNDING ISSUES

The funding of adult and community education in Australia has always been characterised by a number of features which distinguish it from funding in the other sectors of education. These features have hampered its development in the past and now threaten its future viability. They have been referred to briefly in other sections of this Report and each will be discussed in greater detail here. The main features are: very low levels of Commonwealth and State funding and a notable absence of infrastructure funding; heavy reliance on submission-based, short-term funding from a multiplicity of sources; heavy reliance upon volunteers and a poorly paid workforce, predominantly female; preeminence of the user pays principle.

The main vehicle for general purpose Commonwealth expenditure directed to non formal adult and community education providers is the Non Government Adult Education Grants Scheme component of the Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy Program (VOAEL), to which the Commonwealth allocated the relatively small sum of \$1.6m in 1990-91. This is allocated to States on a per capita basis for use by community agencies. Its value to those agencies is increasingly limited by DEET's directive that it be used primarily for programs which achieve vocational or pre vocational basic education and literacy objectives.

The Commonwealth has also recently expanded its contribution to adult basic education and a proportion of this contribution is allocated to community providers through the adult literacy component of the VOAEL. This adult literacy component totalled \$1.3m in 1990-91. Some of the other Commonwealth funding allocated to basic education — for example for ILY projects (a total of \$2.3m in 1990-91) or adult literacy programs in TAFE (a total of \$4.5m in 1990-91) — will also be accessed by community providers.

By comparison with Commonwealth funds flowing to TAFE, higher education or even to schools (for which it does not have primary responsibility), Commonwealth support for adult and community education is minuscule. This is in spite of that sector's increasing contribution to the Commonwealth's educational objectives in adult and basic education, the skilling of employees and potential labour market participants and the provision of ESL courses to migrants.

A similar pattern is evident in the States. The Victorian Government contributed \$16.8m to adult and community education in 1990-91. Although this is significantly more generous than the contributions of the other State governments it has not kept pace with the demands being placed upon the sector, with the result that an increasing proportion of funding has to be raised through fees. As at Commonwealth level, the comparison with funding for the other sectors of education is telling. In Australia's most populous State, for example, the Government appropriation for adult education in 1990-91 was \$4.2m, of which the New South Wales Board of Adult and Community Education was allocated

\$3.25m to cater to the needs of the 300,000 students enrolled with community based agencies. These funds have not been increased since 1982, when enrolments were approximately 100,000. By comparison, 1990-91 saw an allocation of \$867m to New South Wales TAFE for its 530,000 students — a budget more than 200 times larger for less than double the number of students.^{1,2}

These comparisons are not included in support of an argument either for comparability of funding between educational sectors, which is clearly not feasible, or for a transfer of funds from other education sectors to adult and community education. The latter course of action would be likely to exacerbate tensions between sectors. In the Committee's view, good relations between education sectors enhances the effectiveness of them all and should be encouraged rather than inhibited. Rather, the comparisons are included to demonstrate the absurdity of declining financial support from governments for a sector which is being asked to absorb rapidly increasing numbers. Moreover adult and community education is being required to undertake many of the tasks traditionally associated with the other education sectors, notably TAFE but also schools (in the provision of literacy and basic education) and higher education institutions (in offering liberal arts, foreign languages, computing etc).

Funding discrepancies between States also call into question the Commonwealth's professed concern to eliminate educational disadvantage in this sector. The Commonwealth has been very successful in reducing disadvantage and promoting equity in the schools sector. There is certainly scope for similar action in the fourth sector since access to adult and community education depends significantly upon the State in which one resides.

Nowhere are funding comparisons between sectors more telling or more detrimental to adult and community education than in policy on capital funding and attitudes to infrastructure costs. It is true that some State governments provide limited infrastructure support to some providers. In Victoria and South Australia particularly, welfare and housing departments often provide rent free buildings in which neighbourhood houses and other community providers can operate. In some areas in most States, some providers have access to university, TAFE or school buildings at minimal or no charge. Nowhere however do they have any security of tenure or receive any Commonwealth funding to cover capital costs. This is a source of great anxiety to many providers and was referred to in submissions from every State and Territory. The following examples are typical:

The capital resources to enable the CAE to acquire its building and to equip and maintain facilities such as computer rooms and other modern training facilities are formidable and often difficult to obtain without some access to government funds. Such facilities are provided as a matter of course within the TAFE system and the issue needs to be resolved for ACE which is currently locked out of any institutional provision for capital infrastructure.

ACE is the only sector without access to major capital funding.³

Agencies need assistance for capital works and maintenance. Many share community facilities such as schools and halls, but regular and ongoing access to these premises can be uncertain ... Where agencies have their own premises

these are often in need of major renovation or development. Few agencies have any reserves on which to draw for these purposes. The availability of long term, low interest loans or capital grants would be of great benefit to non-government providers.⁴

The ACE sector is one of the largest providers of Federally funded programs for the isolated and disadvantaged. The Federal Government provides infrastructure funding for many other bodies offering these and other educational programs for adults, including TAFE and Skillshare, yet it provides no funding of this type for ACE agencies.⁵

While acknowledging these concerns, the Committee believes that the issue of capital and infrastructure funding should be considered on a case by case basis. This will require a suitable funding mechanism at Commonwealth level. In the Committee's view, policy emphasis should be placed on the use of existing public buildings and facilities. Recommendations along these lines have been made elsewhere in the Report.

For providers a major problem with current financial arrangements is their emphasis upon annual, submission-based funding. This approach is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. Firstly, because there is no certainty that funds obtained in one year will be available in the following year, providers are reluctant to offer long term programs even when it is evident that participants would benefit from them. Providers are forced to adopt a short term, ad hoc approach to courses or risk expending time and effort in preparing longer term programs which may be cancelled at the last minute if funding levels are not maintained. A related problem is the late arrival of funds, which can mean that courses do not begin until much later than advertised. The resulting uncertainty is particularly disruptive and disconcerting to people who may in any case be very tentative about their return to any form of education or training.

Another undesirable effect of short term funding is that it can encourage providers to concentrate upon those groups whose needs are easily addressed at the expense of those who require more intensive long term support. This point was made in relation to adults with disabilities by the Queensland Advisory Council for Special Educational Needs:

There are many problems with this form of funding. Programs commence, and because of the lack of guaranteed employment, competent staff are lost. Because of the relatively short-term nature of funding, organisations are understandably reluctant to become involved with people with long term support needs where the organisations are unable to guarantee them the necessary continuity of support and education.⁶

A further problem with submission based funding is the time and effort required to prepare submissions. Most agencies are severely understaffed and find it difficult or impossible to release people to prepare submissions. Staff also often lack the background or training to mount their case in terms likely to appeal to bureaucrats, and committee members, even where they possess such skills, rarely have the time. The problem is compounded by the fact that many agencies receive (and many others seek) funding from a range of government organisations each requiring a separate submission. Even when submissions are successful the resulting allocations are often so small as to raise doubts

about whether they justify the efforts expended in obtaining them, not to mention the costs of administering them. It is perhaps a measure both of the commitment of staff and of the dire financial position of the sector that providers are still prepared to seek funding in this way.

Submission based funding is discriminatory in that it rewards those organisations best able to deal successfully with the bureaucracy and these organisations are usually — although not always — the larger, better resourced, longer established agencies with more experienced staff.

'We are happy to accept the challenge of being entrepreneurial ... But 90% self sufficiency is too much ... many of Australia's largest companies get more public subsidy'.

A related and equally undesirable effect of submission based funding is that it increases competition between providers for scarce resources, creating strong potential for overlap, duplication and inconsistency of provision and even threatening the usually harmonious relationships between providers.

The following quotations from submissions received by the Committee are indicative of the views expressed by a wide range of interested parties on submission based funding:

In recent times, the basis of Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) funding has moved from triennial funding to a greater reliance on short term tendering available to private and government providers for specific projects. The Victorian Government views this trend with considerable concern. The practical ramifications of this short term funding approach are:

- lack of continuity of program provision;
- impediments to the development of learner pathways between various levels and providers;
- removal of career path for teachers;
- removal of incentive to develop and implement new curriculum, resulting in decreasing program quality;
- deterioration of existing infrastructure; and
- unnecessary competition creating strong potential for overlap, duplication and inconsistency of provision.⁷

There are other grants available to us from time to time and we were successful in obtaining a REAP grant in 1989. The big problem here is the time it takes to submit for grants, then if successful, operate separate programs, operate separate financial records and finally report on programs.⁸

The volume of paperwork associated with applying for funding, maintaining, evaluating, adjusting to constant changes in DFE (ie: their financial year has been altered twice in the past two years) does not leave much time for extras. We keep detailed records and provide regular information and statistics to DFE, but to compile this data into yet another submission requires resources which we just do not have at this point in time.⁹

The Committee favours the introduction of triennial funding for adult and community education along the lines now operating in the other sectors of education. It recognises that there is scope for one-off funding for particular projects or priorities but considers that this approach should be the exception rather than the rule in funding of the fourth sector, whether at Commonwealth or State level.

The Committee recommends that State and Commonwealth governments adopt funding practices which facilitate long-term planning in adult and community education by focussing on triennial funding rather than short-term, submission-based funding processes.

The adult and community education sector would be unable to function on the basis of its current inadequate, insecure, short term, ad hoc funding were it not for the services provided by volunteers and poorly paid teachers and support staff, the majority of whom are female. It is through their efforts that course fees are minimised, concessions are possible in some cases and child care is provided free or at minimal cost in many centres. Volunteers work as tutors, as coordinators and as members of management committees. They provide child care, publicise the work of the sector and clean premises. In the process they learn new skills, make new friends and often move on to paid employment or further training. These are significant, if indirect, benefits. There are very few direct benefits. Many volunteers are not even paid for petrol and other expenses and few have access to any form of training.

Even among the paid work force conditions and rates of pay compare unfavourably with those in other sectors of education. Many teachers are employed on a sessional basis which effectively excludes them from the limited number of career paths available within the sector. There are also very few opportunities for further training and access to these is difficult.

Even when adult educators are paid under an award, they still suffer relative disadvantage. The following comments from two Community College principals indicate a disturbing state of affairs:

For too long Adult and Community education has relied too heavily on the commitment and willingness of dedicated staff members. From the top down we are pathetically underpaid. As Principal I earn about \$10,000 less and work

longer hours than my secondary counterpart, my teachers about \$8 per hour less than TAFE teachers and my administration staff at \$12.85 per hour considerably less than their private counterparts.¹⁰

The funding we receive to cover salaries is \$36,000, what it has been for five years. This is again a deplorable situation. The extraordinary thing is that the Salary Agreement has been signed with no outcry that the salary is not to be fully funded ...

Evening colleges are not even funded for the full amount to cover the salary of the Executive Officer of the college. In no other area of education are the administration salaries not funded.¹¹

Among most providers of adult and community education pay and conditions are even less satisfactory. The following comments are typical of those received by the Committee:

Because of the need to contain fees, there is a heavy reliance on the goodwill of the tutors, co-ordinators and committee alike to accept less than adequate remuneration for services. In a "professionally" funded body this wouldn't occur and the availability of good, well-trained educators would improve. At present our co-ordinator and tutors aren't paid any form of award, there is no sick or holiday pay, superannuation etc. Their wages are based on how much funding we receive, how much it will cover and the fees paid for courses. The balance of the work needed to maintain our service is done solely on voluntary time by the committee and co-ordinator.¹²

Lack of paid staff is a problem. In small rural communities a large proportion of the work is done on a voluntary basis just to keep the organisation functioning at a level necessary to meet some of the community's needs ... The demand from the community is great but with most co-ordinators only paid a small salary for 5 hours per week ... volunteer input the resultant burnout of staff is frequent. Some Centres are still totally volunteer operated.¹³

The availability of low cost child care is critical to the attendance of many women at community education courses, particularly women from the most disadvantaged groups. Where it is provided this is often possible only because of the contribution of volunteers. The Committee considers this situation unsatisfactory and supports the approach of the National Women's Consultative Committee on this issue, as set out in the following excerpt from its submission to the Inquiry:

Many community providers provide child care at nominal amounts, and employ a person to look after the children. The child care is not licensed and the mothers must be on the premises and sign an indemnity against the carer and the provider.

There are inherent problems with the above arrangements. It is dependent on the availability of a suitable person prepared to work for what can only be described as a token salary.

However, this arrangement is not uniform and those community providers who receive funding for child care are able to offer child care that is in line with State and Commonwealth guidelines.

It is therefore essential that adequate funding be available for those centres which seek it and that other relevant child care options be pursued e.g. occasional child care, family day care.¹⁴

The Committee has discussed the issue of childcare in more detail and made a recommendation about its funding, in Chapter 7.

There are two areas in which the Committee considers it might be possible to take action in the short term to alleviate some of the problems brought to its attention in connection with the employment of volunteers and paid staff in the fourth sector. The first is to increase the availability of short duration, in-service training courses. The training of adult educators is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

The second concerns the tax and related impacts upon retired people wishing to undertake paid work in the fourth sector. Many have skills for which there is a significant demand. In country areas they are often the only people available to teach those skills. Many would like to do so but are deterred from offering their services because payment could render them ineligible for income support. As well, reinstatement of that income support upon expiry of their teaching contract can be a long and difficult undertaking under present arrangements. The Committee considers that it should be possible to overcome these anomalies to the mutual benefit of retirees and community providers, and that this matter should be taken further as an adjunct to any national policy development.

More favourable consideration of non-profit adult and community education organisations for sales tax purposes would also benefit the sector and should be examined in the process of policy development.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth take appropriate steps to allow *bona fide* non-profit community adult education organisations to be granted Sales Tax Exemption status under item 63A of the first schedule of the *Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act 1935*.

The other problems are much more intractable and require long term solutions. In the first place it is not realistic to expect that a sector upon which greatly increased demands are being placed can continue to function effectively, or perhaps to function at all, with such a heavy reliance on volunteer labour and inadequately paid staff. It is a tribute to their dedication and ingenuity that they have been able to build it up to its present levels and keep it flourishing and expanding with minimal support from governments or bureaucrats. The task for the future is to retain these qualities and the goodwill and assistance of those responsible for developing them while moving towards

the establishment of a more professional staffing arrangement better able to meet the demands being placed upon the sector. This is a long term development with very significant financial implications for the sector.

Improvement in the conditions of volunteers is likely to result in improvement in the conditions of the paid work force and for students in the longer term. Each of these developments will be particularly beneficial for women who constitute the vast majority of volunteers, paid staff and students in the fourth sector:

Introduction of award terms and conditions has been actively opposed on the grounds that the sector can't afford them and they would reduce the flexible and responsive character of adult education provision. Such arguments would be classed as nonsense in an industry dominated by men or in a higher status educational sector such as secondary schooling. And they are nonsense in adult education too.

Sessional employment of women teachers has excluded them from career paths, participation in policy, planning, and decision making, and from developing a strong lobbying base. Furthermore it fragments curriculum development and weakens the capacity of pre-tertiary, literacy, and basic education programs outside the TAFE system to respond flexibly to the educational needs of women learners. The two-hour sessional system is an anachronistic straightjacket. In the end student disadvantage should impel change even if women in the paid adult education workforce are reluctant to press their own case for equitable wages and conditions.¹⁵

Impact of the User Pays Principle

Adult and community education is the only sector of education in which by and large individual participants are expected to meet most of the costs of their education. This situation presumes that adult and community education is concerned only with the enrichment of the individual rather than the enhancement of her/his productive skills or the general betterment of society. The Committee, along with the sector as a whole, disputes that assumption, holding it to be an ill-informed and narrow view of the contribution of adult and community education and of the nature of the benefits it bestows.

A number of strategies have been adopted by adult and community education agencies to reduce the impact of the user pays approach on their most disadvantaged clients. Many agencies, for example, offer fee concessions. The following examples are typical:

Concessions are extended to the elderly (pensioners) and the unemployed. A 50% reduction on tuition and facilities fees is provided on presentation of a health benefits card. During 1990 some 14,221 clients (16.11% of total enrolments) were given concessions on enrolment at an estimated cost to the Bureau of from \$350,000 to \$400,000.¹⁶

The WEA has accepted a social responsibility to provide courses to particular sectors of the community regardless of their ability to pay full fees (eg holders of Abstudy/Austudy letters, health care card holders, single parents, unemployed). On the great majority of its courses the WEA has, for many years offered significant concessions ... Almost the whole of this concession is funded from the WEA's own resources.¹⁷

Some submissions have suggested that although such concessions are undoubtedly helpful to individual participants there are anomalies:

The issue of fee recovery structures needs to consider mechanisms which do not require participants to "prove" their disadvantage in order to gain free access or reduced fees. A system that assumes most can pay, with special arrangements for those who can prove they are disadvantaged is unlikely to be an equitable system. For example, personal disposable income of many women is virtually unrelated to total family income, and yet it is often assumed that only holders of HealthCare or pension cards or other evidence of Social Security benefits should be entitled to concessional rates.¹⁸

Women's ability to pay for their ACE is linked to how much is left over from the family budget. Their needs will always be put after that of their families. All CNLC need to be aware of these issues to satisfy the notion of access and equity.¹⁹

Even with concessions the costs are still too high for some prospective participants and there are limits beyond which concessions cannot be extended. If concessions are offered to a large proportion of students, or if the concessions are very large, this increases the costs to other participants to such an extent as to threaten the viability of courses:

Despite the relatively low fees charged by the ACE agencies and concessions of up to 50% to disadvantaged groups the courses are still beyond many people in the community. These groups are often the most in need of this type of education but agencies cannot afford to seek higher enrolments from these groups and generally lack the finances and resources to cater for them.²⁰

The Centre maintains a discount rate of 50% of the course fee, but this is increasingly restricted to courses where the direct costs are low. While it would be socially desirable to offer such discounts on, say, computer courses, the necessary increase in fees to cover the discount would carry the concept of user pays to an extreme that would price the courses beyond many people's reach. The alternative of making discount places on such courses available only if they have not been taken up by full-fee paying students is administratively cumbersome and in many ways socially unacceptable.²¹

Some agencies use profits obtained from money-making courses to subsidise other courses rather than individual participants:

Throughout the move towards full cost recovery, and informing the Centre's work today is a process of cross-subsidisation. Thus, rather than concentrate on courses that can "pay their way", the Centre offers a full range of courses, using those that are profitable to subsidise those that are less so and setting fees

accordingly. For example, a Business Course will be offered at rates competitive with those of private providers, but a course in an area of medical research (such as Asthma, Cancer, Heart Disease, Back Pain) provided to enhance community awareness, will be offered at or below cost.²³

The Committee appreciates the value of such cross-subsidisation. However, there is a danger that this approach will lead to a concentration upon revenue raising activities at the expense of broader course offerings:

Increasing pressure to create discretionary income can promote the programs that lead to excess funds rather than those that might be more difficult or costly to run. Often this can mean more recreation/leisure programs rather than more challenging, even contentious programs that might go to the heart of living and surviving in a changing world. Balance must be retained in adult education programs, and local control and some discretionary funds are essential to that.²³

In Queensland where most adult and community education is conducted by TAFE, cross subsidisation takes place between colleges rather than between the courses offered within a single institution:

The policy of full-cost-recovery on a systemic basis is pursued in recognition of the fact that some Colleges are disadvantaged in their capacity to achieve full-cost recovery and are unlikely to achieve that objective. The profits of larger colleges within the network are expected to offset the losses incurred by smaller disadvantaged Colleges. The larger metropolitan and provincial Colleges are expected to make a contribution towards the cost of providing vocational education and training from profits generated by the Program.²⁴

Some submissions have suggested that prospective participants in adult and community education courses could be encouraged to attend through deferral of fees, on the lines of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme, or through introduction of staged payments rather than a lump sum payment at the beginning of a course, as is now usual. A few centres have already introduced a "pay as you learn" procedure for expensive courses, notably in computing.

Many of the most damaging effects of the user pays principle are not confined to the disadvantaged but affect all participants, potential participants and providers. Perhaps the most significant is its impact upon the types and numbers of courses offered. Government funding guidelines for the sector are now so tightly tied to the provision of vocationally oriented programs that increasingly these are becoming the only programs that agencies can offer at minimum cost to participants.

Such a narrowly vocational approach totally underestimates the role of the fourth sector in providing preliminary preparation for participants who are not ready for employment. It also forces agencies to run vocational courses which they consider are inappropriate to the needs of their students:

The Commonwealth Adult Education grant (VOAELG) has not increased for many years and has not recognised whole areas of need in suburban fringes. The trend towards more strongly and explicitly vocational education, despite consistent opposition and resistance from State distributors and providers has left great gaps in opportunities for whole chunks of the population.²⁵

Of concern to providers in this region, is the narrow focus of some funding bodies on vocational outcomes for participants. Commonwealth DEET programs in particular wish to see their funding provide training leading to further study and/or employment. For many participants of further education in central metropolitan region, employment is a distant goal.²⁶

The last few courses run here have been partially DEET funded ... this means we have had to satisfy DEET requirements in terms of what they consider to be a "successful" outcome. What DEET considers a most "successful" outcome is when an exiting student finds employment ... Each DEET funded course must produce a certain percentage of such "successful" outcomes, or funding for future courses is in jeopardy. While we can appreciate that DEET must see some significant return for its investments, this funding being tied to outcomes approach puts undue pressure on staff working within such programs to place clients in employment that may not be the most suitable position for them, or may be only short term, and does not allow for effective counselling of clients when they are not yet work ready, and could better benefit from a further period of training/study.²⁷

There is a very real danger that some of the strengths of the adult and community education sector — its ability to appeal to and cater for a very wide range of interests and needs — will be severely undermined by the present emphasis on vocational outcomes:

An overarching problem is the possibility of a split in adult education programs; government supported programs such as VCE and literacy for those who qualify to attend, on the one hand, and high priced courses for those who can afford them on the other. The problem is that people "in the middle" or on low incomes could be denied learning that might expand, challenge and inform their lives. This is a particularly pointed form of discrimination. Those who need government support to attend programs get only those programs that relate to work or compensate for disadvantage; those people who can afford it get access to a broader range of educational opportunity. The rich get enriched, the poor get training.²⁸

There is a form of gender discrimination here too:

... general education is being divided from vocational education by income and by gender. If you want retraining related to a job, the government or the company will pay — and it is given far more to men than to women. If you want a course in parenting or other aspects of personal development, you are much more likely to be female and you must pay the full cost. Politicians jump up and down about gender imbalance in engineering and trade courses, but never seem even to notice this imbalance.²⁹

The situation is particularly acute in rural areas where it is often difficult to attract sufficient numbers to keep fees to acceptable levels. For courses deemed non vocational and thus ineligible for government funding the fees necessary to cover costs are too high

for many potential participants. Without them classes are too small to remain viable so everybody's choice is reduced. This is particularly unfortunate since many potential rural participants have no other avenues for improving their education. Where a range of agencies operates in close proximity and low class sizes threaten viability there may be some scope for rationalisation of courses. In many rural areas however a relaxation of government guidelines and an increase in government funding are probably the only solutions:

At present many Government Departments are offering funding for similar services to a variety of providers. This not only is not cost effective, but in rural areas can lead to insufficient numbers being available for a particular organisation to run the activity. In some areas this competition for participants could lead to no-one being able to access a particular course.³⁰

... in Bingara TAFE duplicates courses run by our organisation which often means that neither group has sufficient student numbers. TAFE also offers courses which we have previously tried to run unsuccessfully. The NSW Department of Agriculture co-operates well with us to our mutual benefit.³¹

Elsewhere in the Report we have noted the many demands being placed upon the fourth sector and the increasing expectations held of it. We have discussed the growth in enrolments in the sector and its cost effectiveness. Earlier in this section we noted the large and increasing proportion of costs being borne by participants in the sector, either in salary foregone by volunteers and poorly paid teachers or in fees paid by students.

The Committee has formed the view on the basis of evidence presented to it during the Inquiry that this situation cannot continue for much longer without threatening the operations of the sector. It has thrived despite government neglect but it is unrealistic to expect it to do so indefinitely. The following submissions draw attention to the situation now faced by many providers:

Agencies assist governments in meeting their priorities — for example more equity in educational provision and a better skilled society. If agencies are to continue this support, they in turn need more support from government.³²

We are happy to accept the challenge of being entrepreneurial and reasonably self sufficient and we have done so. But 90% self sufficiency is too much for this relatively less affluent community. Many of Australia's largest companies get more public subsidy in the form of tariffs and incentives.³³

... Adult education has always sought to recover part of its costs from participants and has accepted its obligation to operate as cost effectively as possible but there is a level below which it cannot go.³⁴

This is not an argument against students in the fourth sector contributing to the costs of their courses. Most participants in this Inquiry expected them to do so, except for students of basic education and literacy, whose costs were generally considered to be a government responsibility. Their plea is not for courses which are free to participants but

for a fairer sharing of the costs between all beneficiaries, i.e. governments, employers and individual students. The Committee shares this view, with the proviso that student contributions should not be so great as to discourage participation nor to entrench existing disparities in access to education.

Fairer sharing of the costs of education provided through the fourth sector is only part of the solution. An increase in government funding is equally critical if the fourth sector is to maintain its present levels of operation, let alone expand them. A fairly modest increase can be expected to have a marked impact on such a poorly resourced area and should be given the highest priority in development of a national policy.

The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, priority consideration be given to increased funding for the sector.

As part of this exercise the strong links between funding allocations and narrowly defined vocational outcomes in the fourth sector should be reassessed. Current guidelines are based on an incomplete appreciation of the work of the fourth sector, and particularly of its role in assisting students who are quite unprepared for work or further training and for whom attendance at an adult and community education course may be but the first step in a very long journey towards that end. While many of the benefits of adult and community education are difficult to measure in purely economic terms their benefits to participants, to governments and to society generally deserve recognition and support. Chapter 5 of the Report discusses this in greater detail.

Any consideration of funding policy would need to take into account the very real fears expressed in some submissions that increased funding might result in increased government control of the fourth sector. This may result in a loss both of independence and of flexibility on the part of providers. There is, however, a general recognition that organisations will need to be accountable for funds received:

There is a body of opinion, among some who are our members, to the effect that all suggestions of government funding of U3As should be eschewed. The argument is that acceptance of such funding would involve acceptance of government controls and adherence to current government policy and would hence jeopardize the independence of each U3A, which is prized very highly ... Since so much of the adult and community education movement is also based on voluntary or semi-voluntary organisations, the same concerns presumably arise elsewhere.³⁵

Without wishing in any way to pre-empt the decisions of any policy body established for the fourth sector, the Committee suggests that the following funding related issues should be among those considered by such a body:

- a review of funding levels to the fourth sector;

- a review of the user pays principle as it is applied in the fourth sector;
- a reappraisal of the close link between funding and narrowly specified vocational outcomes;
- the need for accountability and control to remain at the community level;
- a move to triennial funding;
- the allocation of funding for additional child care;
- the need for continuation of the existing practice whereby adult basic education is provided free of charge to participants.

The issues are complex and warrant more detailed consideration than is possible in a Report of this kind but it is no exaggeration to suggest that failure to address them promptly could threaten the future viability of the adult and community education sector.

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Chapter 9

TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Training Needs of Adult and Community Educators

In its submission to the Committee the Victorian Council of Adult Education identified three particular groups of fourth sector workers for whom on-going training was important — the administrators, the teachers, and the members of management committees. The Council also noted that:

Adult and community educators are ... scattered around Australia in dispersed centres with small staffing establishments. They frequently enter the sector with little or no theoretical experience in the field and they gain their practical experience in a very 'hands on' manner. The sector is also characterised by a shortage of funds for staff training ... and a reluctance by workers to attend programs at a distance because of the pressure of work and the burden it throws on their colleagues. Their training needs are for short-term, immediate programs of relevance.¹

As far as management committees are concerned, the growth of the adult and community education sector and the increasing complexity of its operations mean that the demands on the largely voluntary membership of such committees is becoming increasingly onerous:

One example should suffice. In 1986 one adult education group in northern Victoria had a ... staff of five ... and an annual turnover of about \$220,000. Five years later as a result of government grants the group employs twenty people and has a turnover near \$600,000. The executive committee remains fairly much the same size with the same people ...

It is imperative that these people ... receive training that will enable them to carry out their tasks with efficiency and effectiveness. In the case of government grants, there may well be a need to build a component into those allocations to enable training to take place ...

The transfer of government operations into the community sector (which is what grants really entail) with the consequent benefits to government of flexibility and minimal public service infrastructure should bring with it the will and capacity to assist organisations with the skill to handle the new responsibilities being thrust upon them ...

It may well be appropriate for the Commonwealth to support the development of training packages, based on open learning principles, that would have applicability across the community-based sector as it is not always going to be possible to deliver trainers to all such agencies.²

Few adult and community educators in Australia have professional training as teachers of adults. Many have entered the field from some other profession but what they have lacked in formal training as educators they have made up for in enthusiasm and commitment. But one professional association highlighted a dilemma in such cases:

This of course raises again the issue of standards, outcomes and quality control, when you have people who are educated in a discipline unrelated to adult education. This is not to say they can't be effective trainers, as some people have natural talent and learn from their experiences. It is to say that quality will vary enormously.³

Many adult educators work for little or no pay. Their dedication is such that burn-out rates are high, especially in the community based sector. Greater emphasis on professional training might be expected to reduce stress levels and burn-out as well as raising teaching standards in the fourth sector. Many of these teachers, both voluntary and paid, have attended short courses on a range of topics of particular relevance to them such as managing an adult education centre, teaching and learning strategies for adults etc. It is imperative that such training programs accommodate the working conditions of their potential clients with maximum flexibility in such things as the mode of study, form of assessment and so on. Inservice activity, whether attended by paid staff or volunteers, is likely to prove possible only where adequate arrangements are in place to provide for relief staff — again, largely a question of funding.

Demand for training courses is high. Indeed in a survey conducted by the Queensland Organisation for Adult and Community Education adult and community educators ranked training courses and staff development at the top of the list of ways in which the government could better support them. Of the courses currently available some are run by TAFE, others by the universities, usually with support from adult education bodies, for example the New South Wales Board of Adult and Community Education, and some by provider groups themselves. Many of these courses are not accredited but adult educators have expressed interest in having such work recognised and are likely to press more strongly for this in future. Nevertheless, the Committee appreciates the significance of the following comment from the UTS Faculty of Education:

A common question in the field is what should be the balance between award and non-award courses. Some worry about over-professionalisation and creeping credentialism. Others are more concerned about quality assurance and real value for the adult education dollar. Clearly, adult education would suffer if a rigid system of employment based solely on formal qualifications was introduced. However, the growing significance of adult education as an instrument in attaining national and social economic goals means that the entire enterprise can no longer be sustained by recruiting only gifted amateurs and then denying them the opportunities for professional growth. Professional development has an important role to play.⁴

The recent emphasis on industry training resulting from award restructuring and the implementation of the Training Guarantee Act is likely to boost demand for training by industry-based trainers and private training companies. Demand for formal training is increasing particularly on the part of adult educators working for academic institutions,

government bodies and more formally structured community organisations. Many adult educators are beginning to regard the acquisition of qualifications as an important factor in "legitimising" the sector in the eyes of governments and the other education sectors. The lack of a professionally paid career structure based on qualifications is seen by many to undermine the credibility of the whole enterprise. In Victoria a significant step has been made with the introduction of an industrial award for adult educators — the Victorian Adult Education (PACCT) award — with improved recognition of work value and appropriate reimbursement.

Many community based agencies rely almost totally on volunteers and demand for formal training from this group is likely to remain small. Most do not have the time or the financial resources to undertake such training. Many volunteers believe that their work is in itself an exercise in training.

It is unlikely that any pressure will be brought to bear on volunteers to acquire formal tertiary qualifications, although the move to greater participation in short courses and in service training can be expected to continue. An interesting perspective was put by the Australian Association of Social Workers which claimed that:

Most agencies would not want to relinquish the opportunity to train their own volunteers because training is deeply inculcated with the values and philosophies of the agencies. Where more general training programs across volunteer agencies have been tried, unless the agencies are closely linked with the trainers, the programs have been unproductive and in some cases damaging.⁵

While factors such as the relative lack of a career structure for people wishing to work full time in the field of adult education work against the establishment of effective training practices, time constraints and other priorities remain prime reasons for limited involvement in professional development and training:

Paradoxically, one of the greatest barriers to ... engaging successfully in formal training programs is the enthusiasm and the strong sense of social mission which [adult educators] characteristically bring to their work. In the absence of adequately supported block time release for study, this commitment frequently acts against their successfully completing higher degree or diploma studies, which are often seen by them as more self-indulgent and of lower priority than the rest of their work.⁶

... there seems little point in providing expensive and elongated training programs unless there are career opportunities in teaching adults or in the administration of adult educational organisations. There seems little sense in creating career opportunities in government bureaucracies established to administer an educational sector already vibrant and requiring not more control or co-ordination but simply more resources at the local level.⁷

Until recently, formal accredited training of adult educators was available in only a small number of higher education institutions such as the former Sydney College of Advanced Education and the University of New England in New South Wales; Deakin

University, La Trobe University and Hawthorn Institute in Victoria; Griffith University in Queensland; and the former South Australian College of Advanced Education (now the University of South Australia).

These institutions, some now part of amalgamated institutions, remain at the forefront of the professional development of adult educators in Australia.

Part of the Sydney College of Advanced Education has merged with the University of Technology, Sydney. Its Faculty of Education is a major provider of professional development for adult educators with sixty academic staff devoted to adult teaching and learning and the only two professors of adult education in Australia. Its courses range from short, in-service programs for practising adult educators to Doctorates and in 1991 it had 1,500 students (1,100 equivalent full time students).⁸

The University of New England has offered award courses in adult and community education at its Armidale campus since 1963. Its focus is on formal awards and, through its Distance Education Centre, study towards these awards is available to practitioners anywhere. Both the University of Technology and the University of New England have strong research programs.

In Victoria, Deakin University and the Hawthorn Institute of Education (now part of the University of Melbourne) remain important providers of training for adult educators. Deakin has a significant distance education component and a wide range of professional upgrading and in-service courses in which 9,000 students are currently enrolled. The Hawthorn Institute works closely with professional associations, industry training bodies and private companies to develop short courses of professional continuing education in addition to the provision of post graduate awards for practitioners. It encourages access to its courses through multiple entry points and recognition and credit for prior learning. Because the majority of current participants are employed it uses multiple delivery modes — for example block courses offered full time for one week, evening classes, off campus courses, weekend programs etc. The University of Melbourne is also working cooperatively with the Council of Adult Education to evaluate and research education and training influences on adults.

Griffith University at Mount Gravatt has been preparing teachers for TAFE Colleges since 1972 offering the range from Diploma to Doctorate in Adult and Vocational Education. An Associate Diploma in Human Resource Management, offered in the evenings, is now available to adult and community educators already working in the field. Some credit towards the Associate Diploma may be given for short course work of equivalent standard and in turn the Associate Diploma can earn credit towards an undergraduate Degree. The annual intake for this four year part time program is 25. In 1990-91 there were 400 applicants. The Committee would encourage the funding of extra places in these types of programs to accommodate the needs of community-based adult educators.

In South Australia the University of South Australia's Centre for Human Resource Studies, with thirty full-time staff, provides both formal degree, diploma and non-award short courses for adult educators in three main streams. These are targeted to educators and trainers in industry, educators and trainers in TAFE and community educators. With the university officially designated as a Distance Education Centre, courses in all streams are available to external students.

In response to the increased demand for training and professional development on the part of adult educators a number of universities are moving into the field for the first time. The Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong, for example, will be offering a graduate diploma in adult education and training from 1992. This is being designed to meet the professional development needs of people already working in the field. The School of Education and the School of Business at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia will also be offering new awards from 1992 at associate diploma, bachelor and post graduate diploma levels. These courses will also be targeted to people already working in adult education. Demand for shorter courses will be met through provision of the above awards in a series of short modules delivered both on and off-the-job and employing industry based tutors and trainers.

The Northern Territory University has offered degree and diploma courses for people in industry moving into TAFE as instructors, and Darwin's Batchelor College has introduced Diplomas and Associate Diplomas in Adult Education with a focus on the needs of Aboriginal educators. The Committee was pleased to learn of the impact that this initiative is already having in the Territory.

In general universities focus on formal award courses. Some also provide short courses and professional continuing education courses. TAFE also provides each of these types of courses but its emphasis is on relatively narrow, vocational skills development. Some of the larger provider agencies, notably the Council of Adult Education in Victoria, run a range of short courses targeted particularly but not exclusively to tutors and volunteers.

These developments are encouraging, but much remains to be done:

The more disadvantaged educators and the educators of the most disadvantaged adults are under-represented in formal award courses of professional development. There is an urgent need for more short duration but intensive training courses for the administrators and organisers of adult education. An effective cadre of trainers of adult educators needs to be developed and maintained to facilitate the "inservicing" of the vast numbers of part-time, often volunteer, tutors who fuel the adult education machine.

At present the inadequacy of the resources allocated to the professional development of adult educators is seriously hampering development of the field ... It would seem that ... the training of adult educators and the educators of adult educators should be a DEET priority area and should be allocated an appropriate proportion of the expansion profile available in the higher education sector.⁹

The Committee recommends that, in the development of a national policy for adult and community education, consideration be given to the establishment of a professional development fund — along the lines of the Higher Education Staff Development Fund — whereby adult educators may receive financial support to enable the upgrading of their professional qualifications and for other training and development purposes.

Access to professional development learning materials such as textbooks, journals and so on is a major problem for many adult educators, particularly those working in community organisations:

Textbooks are mainly written by English or American adult educators and not always totally relevant for the Australian situation ... Overseas ones are not readily available in some libraries and have to be requested on Inter-Library loan ... Community educators are very poorly catered for.^{1b}

Research into Adult and Community Education

Research into adult and community education in Australia is a sadly neglected field both within academic institutions and outside them. This neglect is both a consequence and a cause of the general lack of recognition and funding accorded to this sector by universities and governments. The inadequacy of the research is exacerbated by, and in part attributable to, the lack of a national data base or even of nationally consistent statistics, where these exist at all. The failure of the field to produce such information is understandable given its very limited staffing and resources. It is unable adequately to demonstrate the cost effectiveness and other benefits of the sector, particularly compared with those of the other sectors for which very detailed information of this type is available.

The scholarly study of adult education is crucial to:

- policy development;
- curriculum development;
- our understanding of the way adults learn;
- the encouragement of good practice in the field; and
- the training of adult educators.

The Committee applauds the work that is currently being carried out in places like the University of New England, University of Technology Sydney and the University of South Australia and considers that the recent appointment of two professors of adult education has major symbolic as well as practical importance. However such initiatives

can only flourish when they are nurtured by a fertile local environment of adequate data and skilled field-based researchers. As well, they must reach out into the international research community:

... Australia is the poorer for having no centres equivalent in status to those at the University of British Columbia, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Syracuse University, Northern Illinois ...

The problem is a circular one. Having no university centre of true international stature there is no magnet to draw local or overseas scholars of note. In turn this leads to a dilution of research effort, and to a further marginalisation of adult education ... [which] in turn makes it difficult to argue that adult education is a distinctive field of scholarly discourse, thus further weakening its claim in the academy.¹¹

Such research as is now undertaken in higher education institutions is of a high standard but there appears to be little attempt at coordination between universities. Notwithstanding the best efforts of the scholars involved and organisations such as AAACE the research tends also to be inadequately reported, which reduces its impact upon the wider field. It has also resulted in over reliance on research and models reflecting overseas rather than Australian experience:

... there is little concentration of research and teaching — especially at the advanced graduate level — and this inevitably affects the public profile of adult education, reduces our ability to provide high level direction to adult education policy, and diminishes the sense of contributing to a unique Australian perspective — if there is one — on adult education theory and practice worldwide.¹²

However some submissions to the Committee highlighted some more encouraging signs in the universities regarding research:

Australia, until very recently, has had only a small number of academics and graduate students in adult education ... Consequently, the research tradition in adult education found ... [elsewhere] ... has not developed. Moreover, most of the research which was completed was of the provision and policy type. Little attention was paid to questions of adult learning. Today this situation is beginning to change ... [and] ... this process would be greatly assisted by the establishment of a key centre for teaching and research in adult learning.¹³

The importance of the nexus between scholarship, research, good practice and the training of adult educators was highlighted in a submission from the University of New England. Moreover the submission argues that such a nexus should be secured at the day-to-day level of the practitioner in the field. Thus research is not to be the sole preserve of the university scholar. It must be part of every adult educator's skills:

... research is central to the development and maintenance of good ACE practice — good in the sense of its being optimally effective, efficient, sensitive, skilled, intelligent, principled and firmly grounded in the economic, political and social issues that confront Australian society. In all aspects of practice in the field —

policy, planning, administration, evaluation, teaching and research itself — good practice is dependent upon sound descriptive, interpretative and predictive information and theory, that is, upon the products of research ...

This interdependence between valuable research and good practice emerges most strongly in the training of ACE practitioners and researchers ... [Trainees should be] encouraged to develop inquiring and critical approaches to their work through engaging in formal research inquiry as part of their training.¹⁴

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth establish, with support from the States, a National Institute of Research, Innovation and Teaching in Adult and Community Education. The precise structure and functions of the Institute should be determined by the proposed Commonwealth Advisory Committee to the Minister, to reflect the close relationship between research and the practice of adult education. The adult education community should have significant control over the program and activities of the Institute.

The question of the field's contribution to research in adult and community education remains a vexed one. The Committee witnessed at first hand the meagre resources available to adult education providers and acknowledges that their priority is to service provision rather than research related activities. However, the argument for good practice being informed by research is a strong one, and the Committee would encourage providers to enhance their efforts in this regard. The benefits would accrue to both local practice and the overall status and clout of the sector.

The Committee recommends that, as a stimulus to research by practising adult educators, the Commonwealth provide over each of the next five years two Adult Education Research Scholarship Grants comparable to average weekly earnings.

Despite the apparent lack of field-based research activity the Committee was pleasantly surprised at the number of individual adult educators who were able to refer to the results of local surveys and other studies which they had undertaken, often as part of their work towards a formal qualification. Such material, unfortunately, rarely saw the light of day beyond its immediate academic purpose. This is clearly a waste of valuable effort and deprives other practitioners, researchers and policy makers of potentially useful information. Several submissions, and many witnesses appearing before the Committee highlighted the need for the dissemination of such material across the sector.

The Committee recommends that the Department of Employment, Education and Training commission a report into ways in which a clearinghouse function could be effected in the adult and community education sector. The function should build upon existing networks

within the sector to provide for the dissemination nationally of ideas and developments in curriculum, teaching methods and other matters of professional concern to adult educators, and might be a responsibility of the proposed Institute.

Another major difficulty confronting the Committee as it attempted to measure adult education activity across the country was the lack of comparability between the limited statistics available from State to State. Such statistics as were available were often constructed to accommodate the peculiar requirements of a particular agency and were thus difficult to equate with data from other sources. If governments at both State and Commonwealth level are to make reasonable decisions about resource allocation to adult education, and if providers are to be expected to be accountable to governments for their activities, a coherent, comprehensive and properly funded mechanism for the collection of statistical and other information must be established.

Overall research in Australia in adult and community education has been ad hoc, often undertaken in isolation from and ignorance of other studies, is generally inadequately reported, poorly funded and rarely translated into better practice. There is no on-going collection of even the most basic data concerning patterns of participation and who is providing what, let alone to what effect and at what cost. The Committee believes that a major effort must be made both by governments and adult education agencies to establish the necessary research and information infrastructure. Without it the sector will be condemned to a marginalised existence and Australia will have failed to capitalise upon a potent education and training network.

The Committee recommends that the Australian Education Council engage a consultant to advise on a mechanism for the collection of standardised national statistics on participation in adult community education. This mechanism should avoid the imposition upon providers of burdensome record-keeping.

REFERENCES

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2. *ibid.*
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6. Submission 202.
7. Submission 281.
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9. *ibid.*
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Chapter 10

A NATIONAL POLICY FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Context

A major concern of this Report has been to document the scope and contribution of the adult and community education sector to the educational, economic and social well-being of the nation. The Committee considers that the sector's role is not well understood and is generally undervalued by those not directly involved. Governments, bureaucrats, and peak organisations tend not to recognise the potential of the sector to contribute to the major national goals in employment, education and the economy. Without a more informed appreciation of the work of the sector it will remain pitifully under-resourced, ignored by those who shape employment and education policy and denied the opportunity to demonstrate what it has *already* achieved or *could* achieve. To overlook the sector in this way severely limits the development of efficient and equitable approaches to education and training. Traditional structures and strategies are simply not sufficient to meet the challenge.

Earlier in the Report we documented the size of the adult and community education sector. We noted its rapid expansion and pointed to the recent dramatic impact on the sector of developments such as award restructuring and the findings of International Literacy Year. We have referred to the Government's concern with the development of a "clever country" and its stated commitment to "lifelong learning" and we have emphasised the effectiveness of the sector in reaching groups and individuals untouched by more traditional approaches to education and training. The models adopted by the fourth sector — typically small scale, locally run, learner-centred programs conducted in non-threatening, familiar environments — really work. They attract and retain people for whom attendance at any kind of education or training program is a major undertaking.

Another section of the Report has described the role of State and Territory governments in the management, funding and delivery of adult and community education. It also acknowledged the important role of regional and sometimes local structures in this process. The Committee foresees a continuing State and Territory responsibility for the sector while encouraging a more active Commonwealth role.

Why a National Policy is Needed

The unique contribution of the fourth sector has been achieved despite minimal resources, variable levels of official recognition and a lack of overall policy direction. It is unlikely that the sector will be able to maintain this extraordinary performance without greater support. The Committee contends that it is now time for the Commonwealth Government to act.

The Government must recognise that a commitment to the "clever country" and "lifelong learning for all" requires a willingness to embrace a larger vision of how people get their education and training in Australia. If we as a nation are serious about our economic and social justice goals, we must get serious about adult and community education. It is a distinctive and valuable sector of education and training whose contribution justifies its recognition by way of a national policy.

There are some indications that the present Commonwealth Government is moving in this direction. Its Policy Statement on Higher Education, released in 1988, stated:

Adult and community education is a fundamental part of the education and training system. The principle of lifelong education is now accepted as fundamental to achieving social, cultural, technological and structural change, and to our future economic development ...

The role of adult and continuing education will become even more important in the future under the influence of demographic and other pressures and other changes in the social and industrial structure.¹

Despite these professions of support Australia still lacks a national policy. The omission is accounted for by the University of Technology Sydney as follows:

Because the sector lacks an impressive physical presence and operates in non-formal settings, often working with some of the nation's more powerless adults, its true value to the Australian nation is not recognised. Given the importance of the goals adult education serves and the increased Commonwealth government support for these goals, the legitimacy of the sector as a valid component of the total education enterprise must be accepted.²

A number of benefits are likely to result from the development of a national policy. Chief among these is general government recognition of the valuable work of the sector. The need for such recognition was the most consistently stated requirement of all who contributed to the Inquiry regardless of whether they were educators or students, and no matter what their State or place of origin and the organisation to which they belonged. Most viewed the development of a national policy as a means of securing such recognition.

A national perspective is important, in this sector as in others, in promoting access and equity in service provision across the country and minimising educational disadvantage. There is a national interest to be served in enhancing "the quality of educational provision, effective and economic use of resources, the creation of an educated, civilised and humane society".³

There will be other benefits too. The Commonwealth Government will, for the first time, be in a position to speak with authority at international meetings on adult education. Until now it has been constrained by the lack of any policy or strategies to implement one — the only member of the OECD to have failed to take such a step.

At home development and implementation of a national policy will assist governments to guide (but not dictate) the sector's further growth and development. It will also ensure that its many links with the other major sectors of education are acknowledged and strengthened to their mutual benefit. At present these links are largely overlooked because adult and community education is not formally represented in the relevant policy forums. National education and training policy suffers as a consequence.

Already the Commonwealth spends considerable sums on adult and community education and training through portfolios such as agriculture, health, immigration and so on. These could be made much more cost effective if agencies would only recognise that their programs could benefit from using adult education networks and strategies, and from working with and through local community education providers. The Committee was pleased to note that such cooperation is already happening in some instances, usually as a result of connections forged at a local field level, despite the lack of policy support.

The need for government recognition was the most consistently stated requirement of all who contributed to the Inquiry ...

More generally, establishment of a national policy on adult and community education has the potential to raise the consciousness of the public at large to the sector's importance and value and to promote its achievements. It can give focus and support to a sector which has traditionally been overlooked by governments and made peripheral to decision making processes even though its activities are often profoundly affected by government decisions. Developing a national policy is also likely to encourage development of consistent and complementary policies in those States and Territories which now lack them thus enhancing the status of the sector at that level also.

Formulating a National Policy

In the fourth sector more than most it is imperative that a national policy be arrived at by consensus between the Commonwealth, States and Territories. It is equally important that all main provider groups, both government and non-government, have a major input to the discussions and are in broad agreement with the policy arrived at. If this is not done, the establishment of a national policy may prompt divisions within the sector thereby weakening it.

It may take some time to seek the views of providers and participants given their numbers and geographical dispersion. But obtaining their agreement will not prove as daunting a task as may appear likely to those unfamiliar with the sector. The Committee has been agreeably surprised by the remarkable degree of unanimity among those individuals and organisations presenting submissions and appearing at public hearings.

From unpaid literacy tutors in remote parts of Queensland to Sydney professors of education, from TAFE teachers on Northern Territory prison farms to the heads of statutory authorities in Victoria, the message is the same. Above all they want recognition for the work of the sector embodied in a national policy.

They also want additional resources to improve and extend that work and to ensure that the services provided by the sector remain accessible to all who would like to participate in them. Beyond that they draw attention to:

- the need for a national data base to inform future policy development and describe the work of the sector;
- the importance of improving the training and conditions of educators;
- the value of more research into adult learning;
- the establishment of a national credit bank.

Adult educators are also realists. They do not expect to achieve all of these things overnight. They point out however that the establishment of a national policy would demonstrate governments' — and particularly the Commonwealth's — good will and commitment to the sector, while a relatively small injection of funds to a sector so poorly resourced would have a far greater impact than would much larger sums allocated to the other education sectors. They believe that adult and community education agencies support the Commonwealth Government in many of its programs and that the Government should provide appropriate support in return.

The Committee recommends the immediate establishment of a high level Working Party to develop a national policy on adult and community education, drawing upon the findings of this Report, to be launched by mid-1992. The Committee suggests that the Working Party be convened jointly by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Conference of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET).

The States and Territories should seek the views of their local government and non-government adult and community education providers and participants in anticipation of the Joint Working Party initiative. The Commonwealth should, as a preliminary, take advice from the Advisory Committee whose establishment is recommended below.

Structures at Commonwealth and State Level

One of the major strengths of the adult and community education sector, as we have noted, is its accessibility, flexibility and responsiveness to its clients. These qualities derive in a significant degree from its diversity — of locales, programs, philosophies, methods. They have flourished largely because of the sector's lack of bureaucratic structures. But this lack has also served to inhibit its development.

The Committee is therefore emphatic that any Commonwealth or State/Territory structures must be limited only to what is necessary to ensure adequate recognition, consideration and resources for the sector. In particular the Committee insists that such structures shall not ignore, impede, distort or dominate local or regional initiatives which the Committee regards as the basis for the sector's success.

As well the people called upon to work through these structures to promote the sector's interests must be sufficiently well supported to carry out that task effectively. Every attempt must be made to enshrine the principle that decisions taken within these structures are properly informed by local opinions and priorities.

The Committee explored a range of options as to what Commonwealth structures would best exercise an advisory and advocacy role to the Minister about the promotion, development and funding of adult and community education. Given the size of the sector (which already has more students than either of the other post-school sectors and is growing more rapidly than either) and by virtue of its current and potential contribution to the major economic, educational and social goals of Australia, there is more than adequate justification for the creation of an additional Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training. The Committee notes that a precedent for the creation of additional Councils exists with the establishment of the Australian Language and Literacy Council, announced in the Australian Language and Literacy Policy released in September 1991.

However the Committee believes that a final decision on the most appropriate structures should flow from a clear articulation of a national policy and of the particular roles of the Commonwealth and States/Territories in adult and community education.

The Committee recommends the immediate establishment by the Commonwealth of a formal Advisory Committee on Adult and Community Education to assist the Minister in policy formulation and other matters related to the sector. This Advisory Committee should be of the type provided for in Section IV of the Employment, Education and Training Act, 1988, and its membership shall reflect the diversity of the sector. The Advisory Committee shall:

- **report to the Minister, via the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), on the role of the Commonwealth in adult and community education, in particular concerning the priorities,**

strategies, targets and resources associated with the provision of adult and community education by both government and community-based agencies;

- **formulate a draft Commonwealth policy and contribute to the development of a national policy by the States, Territories and Commonwealth under the auspices of the AEC and MOVEET;**
- **monitor the implementation of national policy and report to the Minister on the extent, efficiency and equity of its implementation;**
- **provide advice regarding desirable changes to existing Commonwealth structures and policies which would facilitate the implementation of national policy; and**
- **liaise with other Councils of NBEET to encourage a coordinated, mutually supportive approach to the provision of adult and community education by the schools, TAFE and higher education sectors.**

This Advisory Committee should comprise not fewer than nine and not more than eleven members, one of whom shall be a member of NBEET, and the remainder being representatives of the identifiable types of organisations involved in adult and community education — community colleges, neighbourhood and community houses, university extension departments, adult education centres, WEA, CAE, U3A, TAFE etc. Suitable secretariat and support services will need to be provided for the Advisory Committee.

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training designate an office within the Department to be responsible for the implementation of Commonwealth policy in adult and community education, and to ensure that adult and community education has a permanent presence within the Commonwealth bureaucracy. The office should have close links with related areas, notably those dealing with vocational education and training, with adult literacy and with migrant education.

Such an office would maintain a profile for adult and community education within the Department which it has conspicuously lacked under current arrangements, where responsibility is dispersed among a range of Divisions, all of which have other priorities. The Committee wants to ensure that the interests of adult and community education do not get buried under those of the formally organised sectors. The office could perhaps provide the secretariat services to the above-mentioned Advisory Committee. The office

would also be a focus for communications with adult and community education organisations in the States and Territories and provide Commonwealth representation on the Conference of Senior Officers in Adult Education and at international forums.

State Structures

There are major differences between the States/Territories regarding structures which serve adult and community education. The Committee acknowledges that these differences are the legitimate products of diverse histories and policies and that they will continue to evolve in response to the particular conditions and needs of their respective communities. However lack of coordination — though perfectly understandable given the number, variety and geographical dispersal of services — remains a major problem for the adult and community education sector. An urgent task for policy makers is to improve coordination without resorting to cumbersome, expensive procedures or administrative arrangements.

The Committee is well aware that activities and resources in the adult and community education sector frequently come within the portfolio concerns of more than one State government Minister and often cross the range of human services portfolios. In these circumstances a coherent approach to adult and community education at the State/Territory level would seem to require formal cross-portfolio liaison, either at Ministerial or senior officer level.

The Committee recommends that each State and Territory establish a formal consultative mechanism across human services departments, at Ministerial or senior officer level, to coordinate and monitor policy on adult and community education.

Notwithstanding the diversity between States and Territories the Committee considers it desirable that there should be a focus for adult and community education within one government department/agency rather than spreading it among a number, to the confusion of providers and users alike. The Committee was particularly impressed with the statutory arrangements that exist in New South Wales and Victoria. These facilitate the coordination of provision and funding among provider groups, the identification of gaps in provision and the assessment of the needs of particular target groups as well as the impact of specific Commonwealth or State programs. The Committee also commends those States which have developed or are in the process of developing regional councils for adult and community education.

The Committee recommends the development by all States and Territories of a network of regional councils of adult and community education with the intention that, as far as practicable, decisions

which have a direct bearing upon local providers — particularly those relating to the distribution of resources — be devolved to the regional level.

REFERENCES

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2. Submission 251.
3. *Evidence*, p.119.



ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION A Definition

In the Background Paper to its Inquiry, the Committee described adult and community education as the "fourth sector" of education. This fourth sector is distinguishable from the other three sectors — schools, TAFE and universities — although some overlap exists, as will be described later. The purposes of school, TAFE and the universities are reasonably well understood by the general public. Their structures are familiar, they are supported by substantial bureaucracies and legislative frameworks, and the education they provide is spelled out in terms of accredited curricula and formal awards.

Adult and community education has evolved in a less structured way, largely without bureaucratic and legislative support, in response to a diversity of needs, needs which the other sectors, by and large, have been unable or unwilling to meet. Moreover, the fourth sector is often where innovative approaches to education first take root. The old maxim that necessity is the mother of invention is particularly relevant here. These factors all contribute to the difficulty of trying to pin down exactly what constitutes adult and community education:

Adult and community education ... is the growing edge or the knife edge of education. In any culture you look at, the most pressing need in education is being handled by adult and community education ...

Adult education takes different forms ... There is training where a task is broken down into skills ... there is popular education ... perhaps a group of battered wives who are meeting in a neighbourhood centre and they form a self-help group ... That is one cutting edge, but it is not the only cutting edge ...

Again the adult education you will undertake is where your most pressing need is. A very well educated person can have a need for an adult education course.¹

As will be described later, participation in adult and community education is expanding rapidly in response to the demands of individuals and communities for whom the other sectors are inaccessible, inappropriate or irrelevant. The sector will continue to grow and change as new demands are made on it. Nevertheless, a definition of some sort must be attempted and it must take into account the diversity of providers, participants and programs which are involved.

The Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE) identifies four broad areas of adult and community education as follows:

Adult basic education

encompasses literacy, numeracy, communication skills, basic science, humanities, social science and so on up to the equivalent of Year 10.

General / liberal adult education

undertaken primarily for personal enrichment and general interest, to help people realise their full potential as individuals and members of a democratic society, and to be well informed about issues confronting society.

Job, occupational and career related education and training

includes industry and trade union training, special purpose training for organisations, and professional and technical update, carried on largely for the purposes of enhancing career opportunities and enterprise efficiency, effectiveness and profitability.

Public education

being processes by which bodies of various sorts seek to inform and educate the public at large, or specific sectors of the public, on key issues, including both campaign-style (e.g HIV/AIDS awareness) and community-involvement processes (e.g. land conservation, parenting skills).

AAACE admits the simplification involved in such categories, and recognises the validity of claims to further categories, such as Adult Special Education. Any definition must take the above into account without simply becoming a list of "the sorts of things that happen in the fourth sector".

Several submissions highlighted key characteristics of adult education which should be communicated through a definition. These included the emphasis on empowering people, on placing the student at the centre of decision-making about what kind of educational experience is required and how it will happen. These submissions invariably contrasted the way adult and community educators go about their task with the way things are done in more formal organisations. They argued that schools, TAFE colleges and universities are often dominated by rigid course structures, timetables, hierarchies and competition. While taking the point of these arguments, the Committee considers that it would be risky for the adult and community educator to claim a monopoly on responsiveness, flexibility, care, social justice and so on. The issue is rather one of degree.

Any definition of adult and community education must also acknowledge the range of types of providers. A representative list of providers includes the following:

Formal educational institutions

include schools, TAFE colleges and universities, who offer programs to adults as re-entry, standard or extension offerings.

Government departments and agencies

often act as funders, but occasionally as direct providers to their clients, and also as providers of education and training to their own workforce.

Community providers

comprise non-government, non-profit organisations, usually under local community control, which range from single focus to general educational provision. Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres, Community Adult Education Centres, Universities of the Third Age, church groups, Workers Educational Association, Community Colleges, are all manifestations of community provision. Many are characterised by a heavy reliance on volunteers, and a predominantly female, very underpaid workforce. "User pays" is a general principle of operation.

Private providers

usually regard themselves as in business to market education and training, and have traditionally served a market demand for sporting, craft, music, cookery, stenographic and language skills. The advent of the Training Guarantee Act has resulted in dramatic increases in private providers serving the industry training and professional update market.

Labour market organisations

encompass the world of work, where the major players are employer organisations, unions, professional associations, industry training bodies and enterprise associations. Their education and training activities are almost exclusively directed at improving occupational or organisational performance, and enhancing the skill levels of their respective membership/workforce.

The usefulness of any definition depends largely on how applicable it is across the board. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), with its longstanding commitment to lifelong education, has sought to standardise terminology so as to assist statistical work and description in an international context. UNESCO has chosen to:

... employ the definitions given in the International Standard Classification of Education.[ISCED] ... The chief reason for using these definitions is to transcend the confusion created by the variety of existing definitions. Besides, the ISCED definition is broad enough to encompass most other definitions of adult education.²

ISCED defines "education" as "organised and sustained communication designed to bring about learning", and adult education as "organised programs of education provided for the benefit, and adapted to the needs, of persons not in the regular school or university system and generally fifteen years of age or older. The term ... is synonymous with 'Out-of-School Education' and includes literacy education".³

It goes on to classify adult education according to "ordinary" or "special education", the latter being "specially designed for exceptional students who, due to physical or mental handicap, extra-ordinary mental capacity, or special circumstances (e.g. a migratory or unusual way of life), must be provided with special aids or special teaching facilities."⁴

Moreover, adult education may be "formal" or "non-formal". Formal education is "that for which students are enrolled or registered (regardless of the mode of teaching used)". Non-formal education is that for which none of the learners is enrolled or registered.⁵ The UNESCO Statistical Manual provides a comprehensive method for describing and measuring adult education programs — their length, intensity, how to describe students in terms of their level of participation, fields of study, issues of certification and so on. The details need not concern us here, but it is important to keep in mind the value of a definition which is internationally accepted.

Although few submissions specifically addressed the problem of defining adult and community education, a number stressed its non-formal, non-award nature. The implication was that non-formality was an essential feature of adult and community education which somehow ensured that it would be accessible, attractive and flexible. However many adult and community education providers have formal enrolment procedures and course structures and still attract thousands of eager participants. It seems therefore that any definition of adult and community education should embrace both formal and non-formal educational activities.

A similar argument can be mounted in favour of including both award and non-award provision under the definition. While there has been a strong tradition of non-award provision in the sector, it is clear from several submissions that students are increasingly requesting certification, not just a statement of participation, to help them win a job.

An interesting perspective on this — and indeed the whole issue of how one defines adult and community education — has been raised in an article by Deborah Davison and Helen Gribble. The authors express concern that adult education, where participation is predominantly female:

is also defined in negative terms — what it is not rather than what it is. The terms non-formal, non-award, non-vocational, non-accredited, non-mainstream and non-funded define adult education in relation to other education, putting it into a position which parallels womens societal position in relation to men. When women do get a specific mention it is usually as a 'disadvantaged' group.⁶

Thus any definition should avoid the trap of using negative ways of describing what is the case. Davison and Gribble also argue that:

the language of Australian adult education has concentrated on terminology which is gender inclusive ... Ironically this language renders women, and other cultural groups which make up 'the whole community', almost invisible.⁷

Important as this observation is, it is difficult to see how it can be addressed in a definition which seeks to be deliberately inclusive not only of gender, but of types, modes, levels and sources of provision. The issue of the numerical ascendancy of women in adult and community education is one which was raised in a variety of contexts during the Inquiry.

At least two submissions argued against the apparent separation of *adult* education from the notion of *lifelong* education. The Committee regards *adult education* as a distinction within, rather than a separation from, the continuum of lifelong education. It is a worthwhile distinction to make, because at present it is only the front end of the

continuum — primary, secondary and tertiary education — that has attracted the attention of policy makers and secured the bulk of education's resources. The focus on the adult end of the spectrum is justified, because until adult and community education is accorded its proper place in government policy and resource allocation, the notion of lifelong education will remain as meaningful as one hand clapping.

UNESCO has more pragmatic reasons for distinguishing adult education from regular education:

It is generally useful to make a distinction ... since their programs are intended for different segments of society, the "younger" generation and the "older" generation. In some countries there may even be two parallel systems ... each with its own administrative structure and budget.

A distinction ... is also necessary to maintain the inter- State and inter-country comparability of educational statistics. Besides, an indiscriminate mixture of statistics on regular and adult education would be quite misleading in view of the fact that the units of measurement in the two categories are not comparable, e.g. duration of study.⁸

As well as the fact that it is plainly helpful to consider adult education as a distinct category it is reasonable to argue that since adulthood constitutes around eighty percent of a lifespan, it is a category which actually makes up eighty percent of lifelong education. There seems little point therefore in labouring the distinction between the two.

The above issues, while all bearing upon the question of what we mean by the phrase *adult and community education*, are not in themselves sufficient for us to arrive at some kind of definitive statement. We need some kind of theoretical loom on which to weave our threads of description and argument. *Theory* is a risky word, but is intended here in the sense conveyed by the Oxford definition of theory as an "exposition of principles". It is apparent to the Committee that adult education is strongly characterised by a distinctive set of principles about the whys and hows of adults' learning. There is also a fairly cogent philosophy underpinning the commitments of adult educators and the motivations of their students. It is important that these are given due weight in any discussion of adult and community education, and particularly in any struggle towards defining it.

The following does not pretend to be a record of the ideas and philosophies which make up the practice of adult education. Rather, it seeks to express those key notions about:

- what it means to be an adult engaged in education;
- the values and purposes tied up with that involvement; and
- the nature of the environment that enables it to flourish.

At the basis of adult education lies the assertion of education as a peculiarly human activity which distinguishes us from other species. It is the deliberate act of transmitting human culture through successive generations, of preserving, cultivating and stimulating our growth as human beings. Education is a deliberate act, which conforms to notions of organised and sustained communication as opposed to ad hoc, random or

chance imparting of information. This activity called education happens today in a variety of ways and contexts and embraces the range of human concerns from the purely practical to the purely theoretical. Importantly, it is increasingly perceived as an activity for life.

As education systems have evolved, important new ideas have come to be linked to this basic concept. One important idea in the vocabulary of modern education, and which adult education has been keen to embrace along with the schools sector, is that of empowerment, both personal and communal. Such empowerment is not achieved as a result of something which is handed down from teacher to learner. Rather, and most importantly, empowerment is the result of a process, an educational encounter, designed to generate power from the learner, to promote the learner's own goals, in ways which are compatible with the learner's preferred ways of working.

The label "adult" is meant simply to distinguish from "youth". But it also expresses a complex of conventions about the degree of maturity a person is presumed to have reached, not only physically, but in terms of responsibility and accountability for one's actions, the level of independence enjoyed, certain expectations of civic duty, and certain legal and social rights or privileges, and so on. Adult educators have tended to draw particular implications from this complex of conventions which, along with research into the cognitive styles of adults, strongly influences the way they go about their role as adult educators.

The perspective is one which correlates with the best educational practices of teachers across the various sectors of education. This perspective:

- places the learner at the centre of the educational experience, as opposed to the content of the learning or the expertise of the educator or the accepted ideas about a particular field of study;
- acknowledges the independence of the learner as a mature human being and regards learners as capable of, and responsible for, making decisions about their own learning needs;
- emphasises holistic considerations which take account of the social situation of learners, their life experiences, dispositions or disabilities; and
- de-emphasises notions of the educator as authority and promotes a relation of equality among the participants.

Most of our conventional theory about education relates to the familiar versions of the process that we know about from school, the TAFE college or the university. As this Report makes clear, what constitutes education in a neighbourhood house or learning centre often lies quite outside these familiar concepts and assumptions. A useful definition of adult and community education must take this difference into account without devaluing what goes on in the other sectors.

Thus defining what we mean by the phrase "adult and community education" will necessarily involve a level of complexity from which we should not shy away. In order to do justice to all the considerations above — the diversity of provision, the need for comparability across sectors and between countries, the philosophy, motivations and methods of adult educators, the adult status of the learners, the commitment to democratic

learning processes — a fair degree of complexity of definition is justified. To pretend that a very simple definition is possible, or even desirable, is to avoid giving the task the seriousness that it deserves.

The purpose of definition is ultimately a practical one, however, and must be intelligible and useful in an Australian educational context. This context is characterised by systematic attention to schools, TAFE and higher education, and benign neglect of any educational activity which does not easily fall into existing structures or systems. The Committee proposes the following definition:

Adult and community education is an activity oriented towards lifelong learning which:

- **makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs;**
- **involves complex but coherent forms of cooperative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge;**
- **is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university; and**
- **is fundamentally a learner-centred and needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants.**

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GLOSSARY

AAACE	Australian Association of Adult and Community Education
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTAID	A company associated with ACT-TAFE
AEC	Australian Education Council
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Migrant Education Service
ARIS	Adult Basic Education Resource and Information Service
ATS	Australian Traineeship System
BACE	Board of Adult and Community Education (New South Wales)
BAE	Board of Adult Education (New South Wales) — the precursor of the BACE
BEVFET	Bureau of Employment, Vocational and Further Education and Training (Queensland)
CAE	Council of Adult Education (Victoria)
CAEC	Community Adult Education Centre
CAEP	Community Adult Education Program (South Australia)
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CNLC	Community and Neighbourhood Learning Centre
CPE	Continuing professional education
CSV	Community Services Victoria
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEIRT	Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (Tasmania)
DETAFE	Department of Employment and Technical and Further Education (South Australia)
DEVETIR	Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations (Queensland)

DFE	Division of Further Education (Victoria)
DILGEA	Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
ELT	English Language Training
ESFC	Employment and Skills Formation Council
IAD	Institute of Aboriginal Development
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LAC	Local Advisory Committee
MOVEET	Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training
NAEP	National Aboriginal Education Program
NBEET	National Board of Employment, Education and Training
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NTB	National Training Board
PACCT	Professional, Administrative, Clerical, Computing and Technical [Staff] (Victoria)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
U3A	University of the Third Age
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VOAEL	Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy
WBEP	Workplace Basic Education Project
WEA	Workers Educational Association

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Accreditation is the process of giving official approval to a course or training program by an external accrediting authority. Accreditation is meant to provide assurances to a student that the standards of the course are appropriate, either to the qualification to which the course leads, or to the licensing requirements of a particular occupation.

Certification is the provision of a certificate or award, usually as a result of some assessment process.

Articulation is the formal linkage between different levels or fields of study, intended to facilitate horizontal or vertical movement across courses or awards.

Credit portability, or credit transfer, refers to arrangements whereby credit earned for skills and knowledge gained in one educational setting is given recognition and status in a new educational setting. This is to avoid a "time served" approach to qualifications, and to overcome the inefficiencies and duplication involved when people have to repeat a course of study.



LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

- Sub.1
Creely, Barry J., QLD
- Sub.2
Anderson, William Donald, WA
- Sub.3
Wilson, Noel Henry, NSW
- Sub.4
Fauser, Mr Geoffrey, SA
- Sub.5
Harrie S. Hannaford Senior Citizens' Centre, NSW
- Sub.6
Barton, Mrs Mary, QLD
- Sub.7
Richards, Mrs A., NSW
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Neale, A.J., NSW
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Mitchell Park High School, SA
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Haydon, A.P., SA
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Brooks, John, NSW
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Hammond, Yvonne, ACT
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Warrane/Mornington Neighbourhood Centre Inc., TAS
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D'Cruz, J.V., VIC

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Women's Employment Development Programme - Western Region, SA

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Lysaght, Ms Joan, WA

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University of the Third Age, Sunshine Coast Incorporated, QLD

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St. George & Sutherland Regional Evening Colleges Inc., NSW

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TravelLearn Australia, QLD

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Forster-Tuncurry Adult Education Inc., NSW

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Wynter, Vivienne, QLD

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Hall, Dr C. Michael, NSW

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Goodwood Community Centre, TAS

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Conference of Senior Officers in Adult Education, WA

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McIntyre, R.G, NSW

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Bureau of Employment, Vocational and Further Education and Training, QLD

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Whitecross Inc. Family Relations Centre, QLD

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National Electrical and Electronic Industry Training Committee Ltd, NSW

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Monash University, VIC
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Kogarah Community Aid and Information Centre and Hurstville Adult Leisure Learning Centre, NSW
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Town of Narrogin, WA
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Small Business Corporation of South Australia, SA
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Tasmanian Retail Industry Training Board Inc., TAS
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Cosmos Recreation Services, TAS
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University of the Third Age, Gawler/Barossa Branch, SA

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NSW Association of Community Adult Education Centres, NSW

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Marriage and Family Centre, South-West Region, NSW

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Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, ACT

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Riverina Community College Inc., NSW

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Newport College of TAFE, VIC

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Carroll, Jim, ACT

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Personality and Human Relations Education Inc., NSW

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Centre for Agricultural Technology, QLD

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TRY Activities Centre, VIC

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Hedland College, WA

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Alstonville Adult Learning Association, NSW

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Leura Literature Adult Discussion Group, NSW

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Nungalinga College, NT

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Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, WA

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Rural Training Council of Western Australia (18 March 1991) represented by:

Mr A.P. Whalsten, Chairman

Mrs H. Wheeler, Training Development Executive

Western Australian Department of Agriculture (18 March 1991) represented by:

Mr S.J. Hossen, Regional Economist

Western Australian Farmers Federation (18 March 1991) represented by:

Mrs S.G. Thorn, President, Grain Legumes Oil Seeds - Seeds Section and member of the Education Committee of the Western Australian Farmers Federation

Kellerberrin Regional TAFE Office (18 March 1991) represented by:

Mr E.E. Newman, Regional Coordinator

Merredin Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated (18 March 1991) represented by:

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Wheatbelt Aboriginal Corporation (18 March 1991) represented by:

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TAFE Aboriginal Access (18 March 1991) represented by:

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Country Women's Association (18 March 1991) represented by: Mrs I.M. Hall, former Divisional President, representing State President

Mrs G. Armstrong, Secretary, Eastern Division

Central Agcare Inc. (18 March 1991) represented by:

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Western Australian Higher Education Council (19 March 1991) represented by:

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Western Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (19 March 1991) represented by:

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Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation of Western Australia (19 March 1991) represented by:

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Agriculture and Horticulture in TAFE (19 March 1991) represented by:
Mr W.K. Waterhouse, Head of Industry Division

Learning Centre Link (19 March 1991) represented by:
Ms H. Dymond, President
Ms R.J. Terry, Education Coordinator

Adelaide

Office of Tertiary Education (20 March 1991) represented by:
Ms P.A. Madsen, Chairperson, South Australian Ministerial Advisory Committee,
Community Adult Education Program

Australian Association for Adult and Community Education (20 March 1991) represented
by:

Mr P. Willis, Chairman, South Australian Branch and Lecturer in Centre for Human
Resource Studies

Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (20 March 1991)
represented by:

Ms M.E. Sobotka, Executive Director

Mrs K.M. Barnett, Member, Management Committee and Coordinator of Prospect
Neighbourhood Centre

Workers Educational Association of South Australia (20 March 1991) represented by:

Dr D.G. Binnion, Education Officer

Mrs V.C. Lee, Education Officer

Adult Migrant Education Centre (20 March 1991) represented by:

Mr E.F. Wilson, Deputy Head, Professional Support

Ms M. Sanders, Lecturer

Dr A.P. Haydon (20 March 1991), Adelaide, South Australia

Aboriginal Community College (20 March 1991) represented by:

Ms L. Holt, Principal

Mr W. Wilson, Deputy Principal

Mr P. Morgan, Student

Miss L.M. Rankine, Student

Mrs A. Alfred (20 March 1991), Leabrook, South Australia

Mrs Y. A. Black (20 March 1991) Prospect, South Australia

Mrs P. Garrido (20 March 1991), Brompton, South Australia

Miss N. Gulsen (20 March 1991), Modbury, South Australia

Ms C. Rivera (20 March 1991), Cheltenham, South Australia

Mr A.C. Ryan (20 March 1991), Rostrevor, South Australia

Northern Area Education Department (20 March 1991) represented by:

Mr B. Aukett, Project Officer

The Parks Senior Campus (20 March 1991) represented by:

Mr E.J. Bruce, Coordinator

Mrs C.M. Kounadis (20 March 1991), former student

Inbarendi College (20 March 1991) represented by:

Ms L. Stevens, Elizabeth West Adult Campus

Mr S.J. Harrison (20 March 1991), Firlie, South Australia

Parks Community Centre (20 March 1991) represented by:

Mr J.C. Mitchell, General Manager

Ms C.M. Vicary, Acting Team Leader, Community Development Team

Noarlunga TAFE College (20 March 1991) represented by:

Mr G. Coombes, Associate Director

Canberra

Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (8 April 1991) represented by:

Mr G. Daw, Assistant Director

Mr M.S. Gilhotra, Adult Migrant English Program Section

Ms G. Urbanski, Acting Director, Adult Migrant English Program Section

Isabella Plains Neighbourhood House (8 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs T.J. Stewart, President

Riverina Community College (8 April 1991) represented by:

Miss R.L. McPherson, Principal

Ms T.V. Ryan (8 April 1991), Numeralla, New South Wales

Australian Capital Territory TAFE (8 April 1991) represented by:

Mr D. Arkle, Head, School of General Studies

Ms B. Dawson, Head, Outreach Department, Narrabundah Campus

ACT Consumer Forum for the Aged (8 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs K. Bourke, Chairperson

Mr P. Free, Committee Member

Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University (8 April 1991) represented by:

Dr G. Caldwell, Director

Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (8 April 1991) represented by:

Dr A.D. Crombie, Executive Member

Ms S. Thomas, Executive Member

Mr B.L. White, Executive Member

Sydney

Adult Education Development Council (22 April 1991) represented by:

Ms M. Enemark, Secretary

Continuing Education West, University of Western Sydney Nepean (22 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs K.E. Tilbrook, Director

Coordinating Agency for Training Adult Literacy Personnel in Australia, (CATALPA) University of Technology, Sydney (22 April 1991) represented by:

Dr M.J. Baynham, Co-Director

Ms H. Scheeres, Co-Director

Ms R. Wickert, Co-Director

University of Technology, Sydney (22 April 1991) represented by:

Professor D.J. Boud, Head, School of Adult and Language Education

Professor R.J. McDonald, Dean, Faculty of Education

University of New England, Armidale (22 April 1991) represented by:

Dr R.G. Bagnall, Coordinator, Adult Education Program and Chairman of Australian Association of Adult and Community Education Research Network

New South Wales Association of Community Adult Education Centres (22 April 1991) represented by:

Ms A. Gribble, President

New South Wales Board of Adult Education (22 April 1991) represented by:

Dr E.S. Swinbourne, Chairman, and Chairman of Organising Committee for International Conference on Government Roles in Adult Education of 1988

Mr J.M. Lumley, Acting Executive Member and Secretary of Organising Committee for International Conference on Government Roles in Adult Education of 1988

New South Wales Council of Adult and Community Education Organisations (22 April 1991) represented by:

Mr A.T. Duncan, President

Mrs S. Phillips, Secretary, and General Secretary of Workers Educational Association of New South Wales

Brisbane

Queensland Organisation for Adult and Community Education (23 April 1991) represented by:

Mr P.H. Meggitt, President

Mr N. Baikaloff, Treasurer

Dr B. Limerick, Executive Member and Editor of Newsletter

Mrs D.A. Morgan, Member

Mr D.G. Mathiesen (23 April 1991) Borallon Correction Centre

Australian Association for Volunteering (23 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs D.A. Morgan, President, and Executive Director of the Volunteer Centre of Queensland

Mackay Regional Council for Social Development (23 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs C.T. Daveson, Member

University College of Southern Queensland (23 April 1991) represented by:

Mr J.C. Elms, Lecturer

Mr W.H.F. Couchman, Research Officer, Student Association

Atherton Tablelands Community Adult Literacy League (23 April 1991) represented by:

Mrs J.M. Ottone, Coordinator

Mrs U. Watson, Caboolture, Queensland

Mr F. Ryder, Booval, Queensland

Melbourne

Council of Adult Education (20 May 1991) represented by:

Dr S. Randell, Director

Ms D.M. Berlin, Assistant Director, Education Programs

Mr P. Crudden, Assistant Director, Policy

Mr L.R. Smith, Chairman of the Board

Mr R. Mason, Principal Officer, Policy and Planning

Ministry of Education and Training, Victorian Government (20 May 1991) represented by:

Ms M. Sussex, General Manager, Division of Further Education

Ms R. Scully, Regional Manager, Division of Further Education

Ms H. Gribble, Senior Policy Officer, Division of Further Education

Ms H.E. Kimberley, Executive Officer, Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres of Victoria

Mr E.R. Dennis, Representative of Community Based Providers of Further Education Network, Association of Further Education Centre Committees

Hawthorn U3A Incorporated (20 May 1991) represented by:

Ms H.M. Drake, Executive Secretary

U3A Network - Victoria (20 May 1991) represented by:

Dr J.A. McDonell, Honorary Secretary

Northern Metropolitan Council of Further Education (20 May 1991) represented by:

Dr V. Goodwin, Deputy Chairperson

Ms S. Beshara, Council Member

Ms C. McCormack, Council Member and Coordinator of Diamond Valley Learning Centre

Monash University (20 May 1991) represented by:

Mr A. Pritchard, Registrar

Mr M.D. Watson, Senior Assistant Registrar

Mr G.F. Moodie, Distance Education Manager

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (20 May 1991) represented by:

Dr J.N. McLeod, Project Worker

Rural Women's Network (20 May 1991) represented by:

Ms D. Dorsman, Delegate

Mrs B.J. Noy, Delegate

Ms H. Sheil, Delegate

Social Biology Resources Centre (20 May 1991) represented by:

Mrs D.B. Sargeant, Director

Ms S.K. White

School of Education, La Trobe University (21 May 1991) represented by:

Dr L.E. Foster, Reader

Dr M. Rado, Honorary Research Fellow

Launceston

Australian Maritime College (21 May 1991) represented by:

Sister E. Vagg

Mrs R.K. Wilson (21 May 1991), Scottsdale, Tasmania

Mr J. Wilson (21 May 1991), Scottsdale, Tasmania

Northern Disability Support Services Inc

Mr J. Lees, Past President

Mrs A. Williams, Manager

Hobart

Goodwood Community Centre (22 May 1991) represented by:

Mr L.R. Anning, Chairman

Mrs J.P. McLeod, Coordinator

Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, Tasmanian Branch (22 May 1991) represented by:

Mrs S. Haas, Chairperson

Mr J.L. Nicholls, Secretary-Treasurer and also representing the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses

ABC Radio (22 May 1991) represented by:

Ms J.P. Stapleton, Education Producer

Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (22 May 1991) represented by:

Mr K.L. Stacey, Director, Division of Adult Education

Ms R. Pugh, Acting Principal Adult Education Officer

Mrs K.R.J. Edwards, Acting Coordinator, Workplace Basic Education

Department of Premier and Cabinet (22 May 1991) represented by:

Ms D. Rathbone, Senior Policy Analyst

Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union (22 May 1991) represented by:

Mr D. Adams, Branch Organiser

Darwin

Northern Territory Department of Education (13 June 1991) represented by:

Ms K.A. Phelan, Deputy Secretary, Technical and Further Education

Dr D.W. Watts, Chairman Northern Territory Employment and Training Interim Authority

Northern Territory University (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr G. Shaw, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education

Mr A. Arnott, Lecturer, Faculty of Education

Ms M. Palmer, Lecturer in Adult Literacy, Faculty of Education

Australian Institute of Management (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr R.L. Pares, Chairman

Mr J.H. Godfrey, Immediate Past Chairman

Northern Territory Open College of TAFE (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr C. Russo, Principal

Mr C. Smith, Senior Lecturer, Curriculum Development

Northern Territory Confederation of Industry and Commerce (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr P. Barley, Work Change Adviser

Mr C.J. O'Halloran, Traineeship Liaison Officer

Australian Automotive Industry Training Council (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr B.S. Cooper, Executive Officer

Northern Territory Tourism Industry Training Council (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr R.J. Hutt, Executive Director

Alice Springs

Barkly Open College of TAFE (13 June 1991) represented by:

Mr G.M. O'Sullivan, Regional Coordinator, Tennant Creek

Mrs J. Irvine, Regional Coordinator, Alice Springs

Mr K. Gardiner, Senior Lecturer, Elliott

Mr G. Carpenter, Council Member

Mr D. Curtis, Coordinator, Julalikari Council, Chairman of Barkly Regional Council

Batchelor College, School of Health, Central Australian Campus, (13 June 1991) represented by:

Ms L. Shilton, Area Lecturer

Miss M. Spiers, Area Lecturer

Mrs J. Tye, Area Lecturer

Mr M. Warcon, Aboriginal Tutor

Mr R. Downes (13 June 1991), Alice Springs

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (14 June 1991) represented by:

Mr R. Ocomore, Human Resource Consultant

Miss A. Ruska, Journalist

Mr M. Booker, Cadet Journalist

Centre for Appropriate Technology (14 June 1991) represented by:

Dr B. Walker, Director

Mr J. Bray, Chairman of Board of Management

Mr K.W. Seemann, Research and Training Coordinator

Mrs D. Nelson, Research Assistant and member of Board of Management

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Back row: Senator D. Foreman, Senator R. Bell, Senator P. Calvert, Senator W. Crane
Front row: Senator O. Zakharov, Senator T. Aulich (Chair),
Senator J. Tierney (Deputy Chair).
Absent: Senator N. Sherry.