



F76/201

14

PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

24 SEPTEMBER 1976

TEXT OF ADDRESS GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER AT THE OPENING OF
THE WARRNAMBOOL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

It gives me great pleasure to open the first academic building on the Sherwood Park campus of W.I.A.E.

The building and its extensions will house virtually the whole college complex - its library, student facilities, its lecture theatre and lecture rooms and staff administration offices.

The Liberal National Country Party Coalition supports the decentralised provision of post secondary education.

Country students should not be compelled to move to metropolitan areas to get a post secondary education.

A balance must be maintained between metropolitan and country education. Educational opportunities should be open to all people.

We must also ensure a rational and coordinated use of our educational resources.

W.I.A.E. has made significant contributions to the south western region. It now offers not only degree and diploma courses but also further educational opportunities to part time and external students employed in the region.

W.I.A.E. has developed considerably in the past few years.

Total enrolments have climbed from 170 in 1970 to 837 in 1976. In 1977, it is estimated enrolments will rise to 955.

In this period, funding for the institution has also expanded. The Commission for Advanced Education in its latest report has recommended further increases: 1976 - recurrent funds - \$1.906 million 1977 - recommendation - \$2.054 million.

This is an increase of about 7% which is higher than the average 5% increase for institutes of advanced education.

In 1976 the capital funds allocated to the institute were .75 million. The Commission's recommendation for 1977-79 is \$2.575 million.

This capital programme in particular is evidence of the support for the continued development of W.I.A.E.

The Commission's financial recommendations for W.I.A.E. should be considered by Cabinet in the next few weeks.

The Government also has before it a report from officials on the tertiary education assistance schemes.

As the Treasurer announced in the budget speech, the Government's decisions on T.E.A.S. will be announced in October and implemented from the beginning of the 1977 academic year.

I should note in passing that it was the Labor Government which set the allowances which have been operating through this year.

The Institutes of Advanced Education have a great contribution to make to the future of Australian society.

Our society is inevitably one of change - sometimes very rapid change. Technology is developing rapidly. We are able to utilise the power of science most effectively.

Concepts of education are changing. There is a vigorous debate on the purpose of education and its appropriate function in our society.

Our educational system must adapt to the needs of people for job mobility, for retraining. It must be appropriate to the needs of people in the exhilarating new age we are entering.

As evidence of the importance we place on education, in the recent budget education was one of the very few areas to receive a real increase in funds. We also restored triennial funding.

The Government is also, however, acutely aware that there is a widespread concern about the functioning of our schools and post secondary institutions.

We have taken the view that an examination of education is now required. Accordingly, the Government has decided to establish the most important inquiry into post-secondary education since the Martin Inquiry over a decade ago.

Having particular regard to current circumstances, this inquiry will also examine the broader issue of the relationship between education and employment.

Education needs to equip a person for a satisfying and rewarding life. One fact of the greatest importance in achieving this objective is satisfying and rewarding work.

This Inquiry will provide a perspective on educational planning up to the year 2000.

The Committee of Inquiry is being directed to have particular regard for the Government's objectives of: widening educational opportunity; expanding educational and occupational choice; developing quality and excellence in all spheres of education and encouraging community participation in education and training matters.

Education is not only concerned with imparting technical skills. It needs also to impart a quality of judgement. The great challenge to educators - is to combine the teaching of skills with that broader understanding.

The development of Australia will depend greatly on the quality of our educational system and the values our educators impart.

Unless our educational institutions teach tolerance, a sense of personal responsibility, a respect for others and for their freedoms, and above all a maturity of judgement and rejection of dogmatism, it is certain that the great ideal of a society based on freedom and human dignity will remain finally beyond our reach.

Education, and the appropriate pattern of the educational system, will, whatever our views, be one of the major issues facing the Australian people for the foreseeable future.

00000000000000