

THE COMMONWEALTH AND EDUCATION

Tabled in the House of Representatives

by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister

on 6th November, 1962.

Australia, in common with most other countries of the world, has seen, since the Second World War, an increased interest in and demand for formal education. Technical and economic progress depends upon highly trained personnel. The values in which democracy places its faith require opportunities for the balanced personal and social development of each citizen. The character and quality of our educational institutions are of concern to us all.

The most obvious aspect of the educational expansion in Australia has been the unprecedented increase since the War in educational enrolments. In the decade from 1951 to 1960 enrolments in all schools at primary and secondary level increased by 65%. During the same period, university enrolments increased by 76%. Technical colleges and teachers' colleges have shown similar expansion.

Along with this phenomenal increase in numbers has been a general diversification of educational provision. Changes are occurring in the structure of secondary education. Technical colleges and universities are introducing new courses. The ground to be covered in scientific studies is continually expanding. Awareness of Australia's place in the world at large and in relation to South-East Asia is leading to new emphases in studies in the humanities. Provision has now to be made to educate in our schools, technical colleges and universities large numbers of students from overseas. Higher standards are being attained, more children are going further in secondary education, higher proportions are being educated at university level, more post-graduate studies are being undertaken. All of these trends are exerting considerable pressures on our education system.

Not surprisingly, these important developments are associated with greater and greater demands on the resources of governments, although private organisations, the churches, industry and the individual citizen are all making valuable contributions. It is on the State Governments that the main burden falls since, under the Australian Constitution, the prime responsibility for education rests with the States.

In 1960, 1,600,000 of the 2,100,000 children attending primary and secondary schools in the six States of Australia were attending government schools. This was 65% more children than were in these government schools ten years earlier. Part of this increase has been due to the fact that a greater percentage of children now stay at school longer but, in the main, the increase has been due to population growth, chiefly by natural increase, although the arrival of immigrants has contributed a significant share.

Clearly, to provide for these extra numbers, more classrooms have been needed and more teachers have had to be engaged and trained. The States have responded to this challenge. Their school building programmes have been greatly accelerated, new teachers' colleges have been established and the teaching force greatly augmented. The costs of this expansion have been considerable and some figures comparing expenditure on various aspects of education in 1950-51 and in 1960-61 illustrate the rate of increase. In total, the States between them found it necessary to spend about £184 million on education in 1960-61 compared with about £46 million in 1950-51, a fourfold increase.

It is not the purpose of this document to detail the work done in education by the States or by other bodies. The States themselves are better able to do this. Its purpose is rather to draw attention to the fact that the Commonwealth Government, too, is deeply interested in education and contributes a great deal in one way or another towards its financial support.

It is recognised that education is a matter of great social importance and that there can be no richer investment than the intellectual and social development of our future citizens. It is also recognised that our educational costs must continue to grow with the healthy growth in our population and with the increasing demands for more highly trained personnel. But the fact that a matter is important to the nation does not mean that it should become primarily the responsibility of the Federal Government. Under the Australian Constitution, some matters are the responsibility of the Federal Government and some are the responsibility of the State Governments. Education is a matter that falls in the States' sphere of responsibility, not because of any lack of importance but because it is believed that State Governments are in a better position to assess local needs and provide for them. The proper role of the Commonwealth in this matter is to co-operate with the States, but not to take over their functions. Where the Commonwealth's responsibilities in other directions have involved it in some educational or training programme, it has tended wherever possible to make use of existing State facilities rather than establish institutions of its own. This is as it should be.

So far as financial support is concerned, the Commonwealth's approach has been to build up the States' general financial resources. In this way, funds that are provided federally are spent on education, no less so than they would if they were given as direct grants for this purpose. The difference is that, as things are, the States decide the purposes.

The year 1960-61 may be taken as an example. In that year expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Funds of the States (excluding expenditure on business undertakings) totalled almost £537 million. Of this amount approximately £279 million (or 52%) came from Commonwealth general revenue grants - previously known as tax reimbursement grants - and special grants made by the Commonwealth on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. This means that for every £ spent by the States about 10/5d. came from general revenue grants. In 1960-61 the combined State expenditure on education (excluding expenditure on research, art and cultural activities) was about £142 million. Thus, on the basis of 10/5d. in the £, a total of about £74 million was money provided through Commonwealth channels.

The other main component of the States' expenditure on education is in respect of buildings. This expenditure is derived from the Loan Funds available to the States for works and other purposes. In 1960-61 the States' gross expenditure from Loan Funds was about £215 million and of this about £42 million (or 20%) was spent on buildings for education. Again it needs to be remembered that the Commonwealth has directly assisted the loan market to assure the States of a total works programme which might be regarded as reasonable. The Commonwealth assistance to this programme in 1960-61 (excluding amounts provided for expenditure under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement) amounted to about £57 million (or 26% of the total). On this basis it might be said that the States' Loan Fund expenditure, including that on education, was assisted by the Commonwealth to the extent of 5/2d. in the £. This meant that the Commonwealth supported the States' Loan Fund expenditure on education to the extent of some £11 million.

What has been said above applies to State expenditure on universities, just as to any other educational expenditure. But in the case of universities it does not end there. The Commonwealth, in addition, makes grants to the States specifically for university purposes. In 1950-51 the Commonwealth began its present scheme of grants to the States for their universities. In that year the total of these grants was £.5 million; in 1960-61 the total was over £11 million. Over the same ten-year period State expenditure on universities has also greatly increased: from £2.5 million in 1950-51 to £17 million in 1960-61. If the Commonwealth had not given special support, the maintenance of the present scale of operation of universities would have involved the States in much greater expenditure on universities, possibly at the expense of other fields of education.

Apart from assistance provided for State universities, the Commonwealth maintains the Australian National University in Canberra. Expenditure for running costs and for capital works for this institution amounted in 1960-61 to over £3.5 million. There are other ways in which the Commonwealth assists universities. For example, the Commonwealth maintains the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Sydney and, in a number of other ways, supports university research and teaching in particular fields.

Commonwealth commitments in the university field seem likely to increase. The extent of Commonwealth assistance was greatly increased in 1958, arising out of the financial recommendations of the Committee on Australian Universities (the Murray Committee). For the years 1961 to 1963 the grants are in accordance with the financial recommendations of the Australian Universities Commission, the body set up by the Commonwealth as a result of the recommendations of the Murray Committee. A special committee was established, in connection with the Australian Universities Commission, to look into the needs of teaching hospitals, which are a fundamental part of the training programme of medical students. As a result of the recommendations of this committee, the Commonwealth has agreed to support, on a £ for £ basis, certain capital expenditure at teaching hospitals incurred because of their responsibility for training medical students. The question of support for recurrent expenditure is still under consideration. The Commonwealth has also set up a committee, again in association with the Universities Commission, to inquire into the needs of tertiary education in Australia. Its report is expected during 1963.

Support for universities is only part of the assistance given by the Commonwealth to the training in Australia of able students at the tertiary level. The other main segment of this assistance is the provision of scholarships to enable these students to undertake their courses. In 1961 nearly 13,000 such students were receiving benefits as Commonwealth Scholarship holders.

Under the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, which is controlled by the Commonwealth Scholarships Board, 4,000 new awards are given each year entitling the holder to the payment of compulsory fees and, subject to a means test, to a living allowance. That upwards of 17,000 young people have completed higher training with the help of this Scheme is of great importance for a community which has so many calls for highly trained men and women. The need does not stop at first degree level and this fact is recognised by giving strong encouragement to outstanding students to prepare themselves for more specialised work. This is done by means of a scheme of post-graduate awards which now enables more than 250 distinguished graduates to undertake higher studies in our universities. The Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme began in 1950-51 at a cost to the Budget of £.4 million, whereas

expenditure in 1960-61 on Commonwealth Scholarships, including post-graduate awards, exceeded £2.6 million. Other schemes are provided by the Commonwealth to assist former members of the defence services, and the children of deceased and permanently and totally incapacitated ex-members of the defence services.

There are Commonwealth grants to various professional organisations which carry out training programmes in their own fields, such as the Colleges of Nursing and Associations of Occupational Therapy. Some of these grants are on a matching basis with those of the States.

All this, of course, is apart from the many institutions and training programmes at the tertiary level which the Commonwealth maintains for its own employees, such as the defence services educational establishments and those of the Public Service.

The Commonwealth has a direct responsibility in the fields of primary and secondary education insofar as its own territories are concerned. In some of these the service is provided by State Departments of Education on the basis of the Commonwealth paying the costs. There are school services, parallel to those in Australian States, in operation in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory; in the latter case there are, in addition, Commonwealth schools for aboriginal children who have not yet reached the standard for admission to the normal schools. In the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and in the Northern Territory too, where education has the fundamental task of bridging the gap between a primitive and a modern culture, the education programme depends partly on the help of the Christian missions, who are given financial assistance towards the work they undertake. In some of the external territories, especially Papua and New Guinea, part of the educational cost is borne by the local revenues. In all, however, primary, secondary and technical education in the various Commonwealth Territories, internal and external, is costing the Commonwealth almost £5 million a year.

An important contribution to primary and secondary education is made by the Australian Broadcasting Commission which provides radio and television programmes for schools. This is an example of the way in which a Commonwealth authority is working in close relationship with State Education Departments, and with advice of their officers, to supplement in an important way what is being done in schools. These programmes, together with University of the Air, are handled by a special department within the Commission. Expenditure on these activities amounted to over £280,000 in 1960/61. Not only the University of the Air but the general broadcasting activities of the Commission undoubtedly contribute a great deal to the education of adults in the community. Another way in which the Commonwealth has helped adult education is by its continued financial support of "Current Affairs Bulletin" by way of an annual grant for this purpose made to the University of Sydney.

Children who come to this country as migrants receive, as they are entitled to do, appropriate education in the schools of the State in which they live. However, an important aspect of the assimilation of adult migrants in Australia - an adequate grasp of the English language and introduction to Australian ways of life - is provided with the co-operation of the States on the basis of the Commonwealth bearing the costs. These migrants are encouraged to study on the voyage to Australia, and, after arrival, in evening classes which are set up wherever there is a need for them. Correspondence lessons and radio programmes are also provided.

Australia is vitally concerned with the Colombo Plan Technical Co-operation Scheme. Since this Scheme began, some 4,000 overseas students

have come to Australia for training and, in addition, Australia is furnishing experts and equipment to other countries. At the 30th June, 1961, over 900 Colombo Plan students were studying here. In addition, over 1,800 students were studying in their own countries under a correspondence scholarship scheme. Several other schemes supplementary to the Colombo Plan are in operation, including the Australian International Awards, the Asian Visits Fund, the Korean Training Scheme, SEATO Aid, and, since 1961-62, the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan.

A major recent development is the British Commonwealth Scheme for Educational Co-operation, part of which is a Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan under which Australia offers 100 awards, mainly for post-graduate study. There are also other awards offered to educationists from the newer countries of the Commonwealth. As with the Colombo Plan, there is provision of experts in the educational field. This is not a one-way traffic. Australia, herself, benefits substantially under this Scheme since already no fewer than 82 Australians have been able to accept awards for study in universities in other Commonwealth countries.

In connection with the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, Australia provides training programmes for some students holding United Nations awards. In 1961, over 80 students studied in Australia under this programme.

An interesting recent development in connection with Australia's international educational interests is the broadcasting by Radio Australia of English lessons for Indonesians, using material prepared by the Commonwealth Office of Education. By the end of 1961 more than 120,000 requests for regular lesson booklets were being met.

Australia's membership of Unesco involves it not only in an annual contribution to the organisation but also in associated activities in Australia of educational and cultural importance. Many regional and national seminars have been held, and valuable studies and publications have been sponsored. These have been developed by the co-operation of a wide cross section of interests in the Australian community and have stimulated developments in important educational and related fields.

It is not easy to draw a hard and fast line between purely educational activities and those such as the National Library of Australia which, while having an educational role, have, at the same time, a more broadly cultural significance. Grants are made to such organisations as the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. This kind of assistance extends to learned societies, such as the various historical societies and the Australian Academy of Science. Research activities are also assisted, as, for example, those of the Social Science Research Council. Cultural and community activities in Commonwealth territories are extensively assisted. However, the costs associated with this wide variety of activities have not here been included as educational costs.

It should not be forgotten that the Commonwealth encourages education by granting certain taxation concessions. An example of this is the deduction allowed for income tax purposes for expenses incurred (to a maximum of £100) in connection with the full-time education of children under 21 years of age, estimated to cost the revenues of the Commonwealth about £14 million a year. A further concession is the deduction allowed for each dependent child between the ages of 16 and 21 years who is receiving full-time education at a school, college or university. This is estimated to cost revenue about £750,000 a year.

It could justly be claimed that the scope of Commonwealth educational assistance is even wider. The expansion of knowledge is one of the two main activities of the universities, and is carried on co-extensively with teaching. However, there are some Commonwealth instrumentalities which are sharing, with the universities, this exploration of the fields of human knowledge, often in close association with the universities. Amongst these are the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, the Atomic Energy Commission, the Bureau of Mineral Resources, and the research establishments connected with the defence services. Expenditure on these organisations by the Commonwealth is almost £30 million a year.

The Table at the end of this statement sets out, for the financial year 1960-61 and, where available at the present time, for the financial year 1961-62, the expenditure of the Commonwealth Government which is clearly educational. It does not include science and scientific research, mentioned above, nor does it include cultural activities, general broadcasting and television services, the provision of milk for school children, or training activities carried out by the Commonwealth for its own purposes. These activities between them would, if included, account for more than an additional £46 million. Again, the cost to Commonwealth revenue of taxation concessions in relation to education has not been included. Leaving these aside, however, it will be seen that, in 1960-61, apart from the £85 million which the Commonwealth may be said to have contributed to the States' expenditure on education, the Commonwealth itself in that year spent over £26 million directly on education. The amount which the Commonwealth may be said to have contributed to the States' expenditure on education in 1961-62 is not at present available, but, as the attached Table shows, direct Commonwealth expenditure on education in that year increased to approximately £33 million.

It will be seen, from what has been written above and from the tabulation which follows, that, despite the fact that education is primarily a State responsibility, the Commonwealth is making a very substantial contribution to educational expenditure in this country.

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Summary

A.	<u>Estimated Commonwealth Component of States' Expenditure</u>	<u>1960/61</u> £000	
	Education proportion of General Revenue Grants	74,000	
	Education proportion of Commonwealth Assistance to Loan Funds	<u>11,000</u>	
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>85,000</u>	
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B.	<u>Commonwealth Expenditure</u>	<u>1960/61</u> £000	<u>1961/62</u> £000
	Direct Educational Expenditure	9,453	11,889 *
	Grants	11,274	14,212
	Scholarships	3,648	4,058 *
	International Education	<u>2,259</u>	<u>2,613 *</u>
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>26,634</u>	<u>32,772 *</u>

Details of above Commonwealth Expenditure

	<u>1960/61</u> £000	<u>1961/62</u> £000
1. <u>Direct Educational Expenditure</u>		
Australian Capital Territory:		
Current expenditure	914	1,069
Capital expenditure	1,501 **	1,103
Northern Territory		
Current expenditure	403	550 *
Capital expenditure	226	363 *
External Territories (Commonwealth proportion only)	1,682	2,280
Commonwealth Office of Education	203	217
Australian Universities Commission	28	29
Australian National University		
Current expenditure	2,529	3,200
Capital expenditure	1,044	2,020
School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine etc.	115	121 *
Australian Forestry School	40	40 *
Australian School of Pacific Administration (Teacher training)	20	33 *
Australian Broadcasting Commission - Education Department	281	310 *
Migrant Education	425	504
Lady Gowrie Child Centres	<u>42</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Total - Direct Educational Expenditure</u>	<u>9,453</u>	<u>11,889 *</u>

* Estimated

** Includes capital expenditure on Canberra University College, subsequently shown under Australian National University.

	<u>1960/61</u> £000	<u>1961/62</u> £000
2. <u>Grants</u>		
Grants to the States for University Purposes	11,227	14,161
Direct Grants to State Universities	30	31
Professional Training Organisations (Nursing, Physiotherapy, etc.)	10	13
Australian Council for Education Research	7	7
<u>Total - Grants</u>	<u>11,274</u>	<u>14,212</u>
3. <u>Scholarships</u>		
Australian Capital Territory Scholarships	16	14
Northern Territory Scholarships	29	31 *
Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme	2,619	2,996
Ex-Service Training Schemes	212	154
Soldiers' Children Education Scheme etc.	731	824
Scholarships in Forestry, Agriculture, etc.	38	37 *
Assistance to other Scholarship Schemes	3	2
<u>Total - Scholarships</u>	<u>3,648</u>	<u>4,058 *</u>
4. <u>International Education</u>		
Colombo Plan Technical Assistance	1,572	1,767
United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance	287	371
SEATO Aid	165	100 *
Australian International Awards	29	25
Commonwealth Educational Co-operation Scheme	50	134
Asian Visits Fund	21	25
Korean Training Scheme	8	23
UNESCO	115	133
Teaching Material for Short Wave Radio Lessons in English	12	15
Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan	-	20
<u>Total - International Education</u>	<u>2,259</u>	<u>2,613 *</u>

* Estimated