

# COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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## SPEECH

BY

Rt. Hon. SIR ROBERT MENZIES,  
K.T., C.H., Q.C., M.P.,

ON

## TERTIARY EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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*[From the "Parliamentary Debates," 24th March, 1965]*

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**Sir ROBERT MENZIES** (Kooyong—Prime Minister).—I present the following report—

Tertiary Education in Australia—Report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia to the Australian Universities Commission (Volumes I and II).

I ask for leave to make a statement in connection with the report.

**Mr. SPEAKER.**—There being no objection, leave is granted.

**Sir ROBERT MENZIES.**—What I have now to say is being said this afternoon in another place by the Minister in Charge of Commonwealth Activities in Education and Research (Senator Gorton) who has the direct administration of these matters in my Department.

Honorable members will know that in August 1961, the Government appointed a distinguished Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Leslie Martin to consider the pattern of tertiary education in relation to the needs and resources of Australia and to make recommendations to the Australian Universities Commission on the future development of tertiary education. May I express the Government's gratitude to the members of the Committee for their work,

which has resulted in a report that will play an important part in the development of tertiary education and hence in the development of our country during coming decades.

When we appointed this Committee, we knew we had given it a very large task but I doubt that we realised just how large the task was. The Committee had the enthusiastic co-operation of Governments, institutions and sectors of the public with an interest in tertiary education. It was not until September 1964 however, that it was able to present its report to the Government—or, to be strictly accurate to present volumes I and II with a promise of a third volume later.

Volume I sets out the Committee's central argument and its proposals for the future pattern of Australian tertiary education. Volume II begins a survey of academic disciplines, particularly those with an important professional content. Volume III, which is not yet available, will conclude this survey and deal with certain other aspects of tertiary education but, we are assured, will not affect the recommendations contained in the first two volumes. Immediately apparent to members will be the wide range of subjects covered by the report and the importance of its recommendations not only

to the Commonwealth Government but also to State Governments, universities and the public generally. Many of the Committee's recommendations require action by the Commonwealth if they are to be implemented and in releasing the report as we now have it, I will announce the Government's attitude towards the principal recommendations.

In doing so I wish to emphasize two important points. The first is that the aspects of education discussed in the report are ones for which the States have normal constitutional responsibility. Therefore, while it is necessary for the Commonwealth to determine its attitude and to announce what it, for its part, stands ready to do, it will also be necessary for each State Government, in the knowledge of what the Commonwealth is prepared to do, to decide what it is prepared to do—and for consultation and discussion between the Commonwealth and each State to take place. The second point is that the Commonwealth is not to be regarded as having adopted any position in regard to any specific issue dealt with in the report except those on which I shall now state our views.

Amongst other things, the report makes recommendations as to additional aid to existing, and embryo, universities, as to assistance to students by way of scholarships, and as to a possible method of re-organising the control and content of teacher training. But the most important section of the report deals with what is virtually a concept new to Australia—the development of a broad comprehensive system of tertiary education, with an emphasis different from but complementary to, tertiary education at present provided by the universities. Because they are relatively simple, I propose to discuss first the less novel proposals of the Committee covering assistance to students and immediate assistance to universities, and to announce our decisions in these fields before moving on to consider the new proposals of major importance stemming from the work of the Committee.

In the field of assistance to students the Committee has recommended that the number of Commonwealth university open entrance scholarships should be kept under periodic review, but also states that such scholarships ought not to be awarded at a standard lower than that obtaining at the

end of 1963. The Government accepts, as it has in the past accepted, the necessity for periodic increases in these scholarships. The number available was last raised by 1,000—from 4,000 to 5,000—at the end of 1963, and we have decided that the number will be raised by a further 1,000—from 5,000 to 6,000—at the end of the present year. Such periodic reviews will continue in the future.

The Committee further recommends that all students at universities who successfully complete the first year of their university course at the first attempt, and who are otherwise eligible, should be automatically awarded Commonwealth later year scholarships. At present the number of these awards available covers rather more than two-thirds of the full-time students who meet these conditions. The Government does not feel it should accept this suggested unknown charge on future Budgets but it has decided to increase the number of later year awards by 250 at the end of the present year.

**Mr. Bryant.**—That is a fizzer.

**Sir ROBERT MENZIES.**—To me it is a novel idea that getting through your first year at the first attempt should qualify you for a scholarship. This is quite new to me.

**Dr. J. F. Cairns.**—The Prime Minister is still in the nineteenth century.

**Sir ROBERT MENZIES.**—I was born in the nineteenth century. I used to know a good deal about scholarships having won quite a few in those rather harder schools of competition.

**Dr. J. F. Cairns.**—We are not all as brilliant as you are, you know.

**Sir ROBERT MENZIES.**—Well, you must speak for yourself.

These later year awards, which at the inception of the Commonwealth university scholarship scheme were less than a hundred, have grown steadily since. The number available each year was last raised, from 780 to 1,280, at the end of 1963, and at the end of this year the number available each year will be raised from 1,280 to 1,530. Here, too, periodic reviews will continue.

In the field of the new look tertiary colleges to which I have referred, the Committee has recommended that there should be 2,500 new scholarships awarded to students who have passed matriculation or

an equivalent examination and that these should carry the same financial benefits as do Commonwealth university scholarships, plus a means test free allowance of £100 to each scholarship holder. We do not feel able to agree with the recommendation as stated but we have decided to make available in this field 1,000 new scholarships, awarded on the conditions suggested, but carrying the same financial benefit as Commonwealth university scholarships. The net result of these decisions is that, as from the end of this year, there will be 2,250 more tertiary scholarships available each year than has been the case in the past, the number available rising from 6,280 to 8,530—7,530 at universities and 1,000 at the new technical institutions.

These scholarships are recommended by the Committee to be available to students for full-time study only but the Government does not accept this recommendation. We believe there may well be many valid personal reasons why a student chooses to do a part-time course, and that no student who does wish to do such a course, and who has earned a Commonwealth Scholarship, should have his preference subject to a veto. Furthermore, the new Institutes of Colleges—I will say more about those in a moment—and the industrial leaders with whom they will no doubt confer, may desire to include part-time courses as part of their curricula, and in some States considerable emphasis may be placed on part-time as distinct from full-time courses. If this happens students should not be prevented from winning a scholarship to take up such courses. Our scholarships for tertiary education will therefore in the future, as in the past, be available for either full-time or part-time study as the scholarship winner chooses.

In discussing the financial benefits which such scholarships should carry the Committee confines itself to recommending that the living allowances and the means test applied to these allowances should be periodically reviewed. It recommends also that a text book allowance should be given to scholarship holders. We, of course, have always accepted the principle of periodic reviews of allowances and indeed, as a result of the last review, living allowances were increased as from January this year, and the means test applied to such allowances was liberalised. We shall continue to

apply this principle. A text book allowance, however, poses very considerable administrative problems because it would be necessary to ensure that any allowance did, in fact, go to books and equipment, and because requirements would vary considerably between universities, between faculties, and between years in any given faculty. Therefore all I can say as to this proposal at the moment is that we intend to ask the Vice-Chancellors of the universities to discuss with us the problems raised by the recommendation, and by the comment I have just made.

The Committee suggested that the universities study and report upon the feasibility of their having funds available for making loans to students in special cases of hardship. While recognising the desirability of loan schemes, we regard these as matters for the universities' internal administration. The Commonwealth therefore will not make special financial provision for student loan funds.

Moving to specific and immediate financial proposals regarding universities, the Committee has recommended that some additional capital funds should be made available to some universities, which it designates, during this 1964-66 triennium. These grants are designed to ensure that the new Universities of Macquarie in New South Wales and La Trobe in Victoria will be ready to begin operation at the beginning of 1967 as planned; that Bedford Park in Adelaide will be able to open in 1966 as planned; that site works will take place at the University of Newcastle and the Townsville University College; and that a start will be made in taking the preliminary steps for the establishment of a second university in Brisbane by 1970. In the cases of Macquarie and La Trobe, the grants are additional to the establishment grants of £1.1m. each for Macquarie and La Trobe. The Commonwealth share of these grants was appropriated by the Parliament for these universities in October 1963. That is the £1.1 million in the case of each. All of these are grants for definite projects which have been examined in detail, and recommended on, by the Universities Commission and are in a field which is familiar.

The sums recommended for each university are given in a list which, with the concurrence of honorable members, I now incorporate in "Hansard".

**Interim Capital Grants to Universities for  
1965 and 1966.**

	£
Macquarie University .. ..	1,000,000
La Trobe University .. ..	750,000
University of Adelaide at Bedford Park .. ..	400,000
Townsville University College ..	100,000
Newcastle University .. ..	100,000
Second university institution in Brisbane .. ..	100,000

They total £2,450,000, of which the Commonwealth share on a £1 for £1 basis, is £1,225,000. We stand ready to provide our share of this finance at once and will introduce legislation during the current session asking Parliament to appropriate it.

I turn now to consider the new concept which is the heart of this report. It is that Australia, during the next decade, should develop advanced education in virtually new types of colleges. These colleges would provide for those students who, though qualified, do not wish to undertake a full university course, or whose chosen course is not considered appropriate for a university, or whose level at passing matriculation indicated a small chance of graduation from a university in minimum time or minimum time plus one year. The recommendation for the development of these colleges and the recommendation that new universities should not be established—honorable members will see this in the report—taken together with other observations of the Committee, indicate a belief on its part that universities should grant entrance only to those matriculants whose standard of pass was good enough to indicate a reasonable likelihood of graduation in minimum time or minimum time plus one year.

The Committee suggests that the new colleges, to give advanced education, should be developed from, and around, the existing tertiary segments of existing technical colleges. But it is clear that what is envisaged is not merely a bigger and better college for teaching technical subjects, for the suggestion is that technology should be only one of the education fields in which these colleges should provide advanced instruction. In them there should be, says the Committee, appropriate courses in the liberal arts for "young men and women taking up administrative positions in commerce, industry, and government". There should be a common core of studies at tertiary level aimed at providing for all students attending

the college "breadth in education", and the development of "critical imagination and creative abilities". Students engaged in such common studies would major in technological courses or in other courses provided by the colleges to fit them for particular careers after they had gained their diploma.

These colleges should, recommends the report, be provided with funds for capital and recurrent purposes sufficient to permit expansion and improvement in buildings, in equipment, in the teaching staff required, and in general educational facilities. The funds are recommended to be provided, half by the Commonwealth and half by the States as to capital, and in the ratio—it is the existing one—of £1 Commonwealth to £1.85 State as to recurrent expenses.

We, for our part, accept the broad concept and stand ready to provide, during the 1967-69 triennium, the £1 for £1 grant for capital and the £1 to £1.85 grant for recurrent annual expenses up to the limits envisaged in the Committee's report. These appear to be approximately £4 million a year for capital from the Commonwealth and £4 million a year for recurrent expenses from the Commonwealth during that triennium. These grants, if matched, would mean a total of approximately £24 million for capital and £34 million for recurrent expenses for the colleges during that triennium.

Commonwealth financial support for these colleges will be confined to capital and recurrent expenses for the development of tertiary education only, and we define tertiary education as consisting of courses before entry upon which a student must pass matriculation or an equivalent examination. It will be confined to new development—that is, as regards recurrent expenses, to expenses incurred over and above what is, in the 1964-65 financial year, being incurred in this field by a State. And it will be confined to assistance for strengthening, and expanding, and introducing, diploma courses. We have noted the Committee's suggestion that at some time in the future the new Institutes of Colleges that it envisages may build on present proposals in order to provide post-diploma courses leading to degrees. But the support now pledged by the Commonwealth will not go beyond

supporting the basic concept of the Committee as to new type colleges with a variety of advanced courses leading on completion to a diploma. We wish to emphasise this point, Mr. Speaker, for we entirely agree with the Committee's statements that these new type institutions should "resist the temptation to copy the educational processes and curricula of universities" and that the responsibilities of these colleges to the community are "of a different kind" from those of universities. Our support is founded on acceptance of this principle, and we do not make our support available for the development out of these colleges of new universities. We do not look so far ahead as that. We see these colleges as designed primarily for teaching at the tertiary level and as catering for the diploma not the post-diploma student.

I now turn to the machinery which the Committee suggests might be set up in order to provide the means whereby Commonwealth and State support might be channelled to these new institutions. The Committee's suggestion is that each State should set up an autonomous Institute of Colleges which would admit a college to membership when, in its opinion, that particular college had achieved an appropriate standard. This Institute would be charged with the responsibility of supervising the expansion and development of technical and other tertiary education in the member colleges and with co-ordinating their work to prevent waste and overlapping. It would be this Institute which would suggest allocation of available funds between colleges in its own State. Subject to this supervision the member colleges themselves would each be governed by its own independent governing body. We are attracted to this proposition and are prepared, for our part, to endorse and accept it. But we think that acceptance and implementation of the proposal are matters for which the State Governments are responsible. We do not, therefore, make establishment of the Institutes a condition of assistance, though we do endorse the idea, and we will therefore be prepared to deal either with such Institutes or with a State Government direct should a State decide not to set up an autonomous Institute.

The Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education further suggests that the Institutes should make submissions, in the way in

which universities now make submissions, to an expanded Australian Universities Commission which would deal not only with universities but with the new Institutes as well. We do not endorse this suggestion. We feel that it would be better that we should leave to the Universities Commission its present responsibilities of advising the Government on proposals from universities and that we should arrange other methods of distributing grants to the new colleges. We therefore propose to have a separate advisory committee to which proposals from Institutes of Colleges—or from the State Education Department in any State which does not set up an Institute—will be referred, and which will make recommendations to the Commonwealth as to the distribution of Commonwealth funds after it has considered those proposals. As is the case with funds for universities, the funds available would be distributed throughout Australia on the basis of assessed need in any particular area.

I have no doubt that within the boundaries set out there will be great variations of methods of development among the States and indeed, if the Institutes and colleges are given autonomy, among the various colleges in a State. It may be that we will see develop colleges which, in this discipline or that, provide courses which are analogous to similar courses in the earlier years at a university, and which are either an end in themselves in that they lead to a diploma recognised as a really significant qualification, or which may lead—depending on the standard achieved by the student—to post-diploma transfer to a university, with credit for work done, and progress to a degree. It may be that we will see in the technical disciplines a diploma course which is still, as it is now, a course leading in itself to a significant qualification but which can lead to post-diploma study not in an existing university but in a foundation in each State which takes the best diploma graduates and conducts them to a Bachelor of Technology, or Master of Technology, degree in the single location where there can be concentrated the best teachers and the best facilities for practical research in conjunction with industry. Such developments, which can be determined only by discussion and agreement between the Commonwealth and each State Institute, are matters for hammering out in the workshop of ideas

which will be contributed by academic circles, industrial circles, public bodies, and the community and their representatives. But I repeat that the Government does endorse the general broad concept and for its part will provide £1 for £1 for capital and £1 for £1.85 for recurrent expenses to develop that concept within the bounds which I have specified.

Before leaving the subject, I must refer to an immediate specific recommendation which the Committee makes concerning Institutes of Colleges. It recommends grants, of which the Commonwealth's share is £2.5 million to be available in 1965 and 1966 in specified amounts to specified colleges. Honorable members will find their list of these Colleges, and the amounts recommended for each, in the appendix attached to this statement.

With the concurrence of the House, I shall incorporate the list in "Hansard".

#### Interim Capital Grants to Colleges for 1965 and 1966.

	£
Sydney Technical College .. ..	1,000,000
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology .. ..	1,000,000
South Australian Institute of Technology .. ..	250,000
West Australian Institute of Technology .. ..	1,000,000
Central Technical College, Brisbane	700,000
Bathurst College .. ..	100,000
Wagga College .. ..	100,000
Ballarat School of Mines and Industries .. ..	350,000
Gordon Institute of Technology, Geelong .. ..	150,000
Bendigo Technical College .. ..	100,000
Darling Downs College .. ..	150,000
Rockhampton College .. ..	100,000

The actual purposes of these grants have not been examined in detail and are not known to us, or to the States, in the way in which the actual purposes of the interim grants to universities are known, and they will require further discussion. We cannot therefore specifically endorse them as we do in the case of the interim grants to universities. But we, for our part, now stand ready to receive from the relevant States, or from autonomous Institutes of Colleges where States set them up, propositions for the expenditure at the named colleges of the amounts recommended for each college, and to carry on discussions with them on the approval of and the application of such amounts in those colleges. We do not,

however, stand prepared to make interim grants to the proposed boards of teacher education or to the "other institutions" recommended by the Committee.

We do not, ourselves, intend to establish a Commonwealth institute of colleges, for the three colleges operated by the Services have a specialised role, as has the Australian School of Pacific Administration. Nor do we propose to establish an Australian college of external studies to be responsible for all external studies throughout Australia since we believe that the existing universities can best provide courses for external students who need to study at university level and that other existing institutions can cater for those who wish to study at other levels.

The next important recommendation of the Committee is that the Commonwealth should enter the existing field of teacher training, both by way of an interim capital grant of £1.25 million and by way of £1 for £1 grants for capital and £1 for £1.85 grants for recurrent expenses in the 1967-69 triennium and after. Important as this field is, the Commonwealth is not prepared to enter it. It is one which has been the exclusive responsibility of the States and is, in each State, closely bound up with the State Education Department's judgment as to the training it wishes teachers in its schools to have, and as to the manner in which it decides to run its primary and secondary schools. Moreover, on the evidence of the State Education Ministers themselves, the amount of capital required in this specialised field, in order to bring standards up to what they would regard as satisfactory, is not large—amounting to a total requirement covering the needs of all six States of £1.25 million annually over a period of four years. And the recurrent expenses of the teachers' colleges—excluding salaries paid to trainees—are also, compared to the requirements of universities and colleges, not great. The impact of the Committee's recommendations as to the length of a teacher training course, and as to the standard required of a student before he embarks upon it, would vary widely between States and the removal of teachers' colleges from the control of State Education Departments is clearly one which is primarily for the States to determine. Therefore, while we do not in the least denigrate the importance of the Committee's recommendation in this field, we

believe that it is one where action can be, and should be, left to the State Governments which have before them the Committee's recommendations for adoption and action should they so decide. It follows, also, that we have not accepted the Committee's proposals for a separate scheme of scholarships for teachers' college students.

I now turn to some general recommendations as to universities, on which, at this stage, I wish to make our views plain. First, the Committee makes the firm recommendation that no new universities, other than those for which provision is made in this report, should be established during the period up to 1975. While we agree that during this period most of our effort as to new establishments should be concentrated on the proposed new type tertiary institutions, we feel that a firm decision against establishing any new university, looking so far ahead, should not be taken. The growth and distribution of population throughout Australia might, in the period under discussion, be such that a new university would be justified in this area or that. Consequently, while we endorse the general approach inherent in the Committee's recommendations, we are not prepared to say firmly that during the period no new university should be established. Secondly, the Committee recommends the reduction and gradual elimination of part-time and external studies at universities. As I have indicated, the Government does not agree with this recommendation and does not wish the Universities Commission to adopt such an approach in its discussions with, or its recommendations concerning, universities. We believe, as I have said, that there are many reasons for not discouraging the part-time undergraduate and we feel that part-time courses and external studies have a valuable part to play in providing refresher courses for graduates and in providing instruction at university level to graduates or non-graduates whether such people are seeking to obtain a degree from such part-time study or merely to master some one subject which they feel will be of assistance or benefit to them.

How much effort a university puts into part-time studies, or external studies, will be for the governing body of that university to decide but, for our part, we do not believe that any university which wishes to

to do so should be discouraged, and we are ready to continue to provide financial assistance for these purposes. Thirdly, the Committee suggests that universities should have enrolments which are not smaller than 4,000 or greater than 10,000. We agree that a university should have, or should have the reasonable prospect of achieving, an enrolment of at least 4,000; but we do not endorse the proposition that enrolments should not be more than 10,000. There is a substantial body of opinion which holds that much larger universities than one with an enrolment of 10,000 are occasionally necessary and desirable. We feel that the size of the university must be related, amongst other things, to the area it occupies and to the opinions of its governing body and we are not therefore prepared to endorse any arbitrary upper limit as to the size beyond which a university should not grow.

The Committee has recommended that the triennial grants to universities and also to technical colleges should be subject to review so that supplementary grants may be made when changes in salaries and wages justify them. We interpret this recommendation as being limited to reimbursing a university or college for increases in salaries paid directly by it to its employees. Such supplements have been the practice in regard to variations in academic salaries and the Government is prepared to consider recommendations for supplementary recurrent grants to offset increased costs arising from variations in awards affecting wages and non-academic salaries. However, we will need to be satisfied in each case that the increases cannot be provided from the normal recurrent grants. In other words, we do not want to break down the triennial system which has been so significant. We will make this our policy both for universities and for technical colleges in the 1967-69 triennium. These are all matters on which we wish our attitude to be clear both to universities and to the Commission for we would not wish future recommendations as to universities to be influenced by a mistaken idea of our attitude.

The final matter I refer to in this very long review—I apologise for its length—is that of allocations of funds to universities for purposes of research, and to scientific research generally. Honorable members will

recall that the Second Report of the Universities Commission recommended that during the calendar years 1964, 1965 and 1966, a total of £5 million should be provided for universities to support research activities at post-graduate level. Of the £5 million, half was to be provided by the Commonwealth and half by the States. The Commission had not, at the time of the report, reached a stage where it felt it could make recommendations for the distribution of these funds among universities and therefore confined its recommendation, in the first instance, to the distribution of £1 million in the year 1964. When introducing the Universities (Financial Assistance) Bill in October 1963, I accepted the recommendation for this initial distribution and said that I hoped the Government would shortly take an opportunity to look at the whole question of Commonwealth involvement in research in Australia. This we have now done. The universities were told, last year, that a further £1 million, or our share of it, would be available in universities during 1965 for the same purposes as in 1964, and I now announce that our share of another £1 million will be available in 1966, on the same basis as to distribution. After that date, we feel, the Commission should include provision for this form of research grant, bound up as it is with post-graduate teaching, in the general recommendations which it makes for capital and recurrent grants to universities.

Of the £5 million recommended for research activities in the 1964-66 triennium, this would still leave undistributed £1 million of Commonwealth funds and a matching amount from the States. We believe that this sum should be available for particular selected research projects to be carried out by individuals or research teams. We therefore propose to make £1 million available for such particular research projects and to set up an advisory committee to which we shall refer requests for assistance from such individuals or research teams. We will look to this committee for advice as to allocations, within the limits of the money available, for such proposals. The committee will receive proposals, in the main, from research workers in universities, although applications from persons working out-

side universities will not be debarred unless such persons are working for Government authorities. Commonwealth money from this fund will be available on the advice of the committee, subject, in each case involving a university, to a matching grant from the State in which the research is to be carried out. As I have said, these research grants are not intended for use exclusively in scientific disciplines, nor need the total amount be spent in the 1964-66 triennium.

While on this subject I take the opportunity to announce that we have decided that there ought to be a body to advise the Government on the most effective methods of co-ordinating, and achieving results from, expenditure on research through the universities, through the Government's own agencies, and through any other bodies to which grants are made by the Government. What we seek is a situation in which, the Government having decided what proportion of national income can go to scientific research, and having indicated its views of the general fields in which advances would, economically, most benefit the nation, some competent advisory body would recommend the allocation of available money among the various governmental research bodies, the universities, and others. We will therefore study the various methods which have been developed for this purpose in overseas countries.

The end desired to be achieved is clear, but it is also clear that the means to that end adopted by other countries vary considerably. But the best machinery for Australian conditions is not easily to be decided and the study I have announced will therefore take place to try to arrive at the best answer for us. In conclusion I state that we are ready now to receive proposals from the States in those fields where agreement is necessary for action and, they now knowing both the extent and the limits of our assistance, to carry on the discussions necessary for agreement to be reached, and action to be taken.

I present the following paper—

Tertiary Education in Australia—Report of Committee—Ministerial Statement, dated 24th March 1965—

and move—

That the House take note of the papers.