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Submission to the Partridge Committee of Inquiry into the Future Needs of Post-Secondary Education by Mount Lawley Teachers College, April 1975

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SUBMISSION TO THE PARTRIDGE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE NEEDS OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

MOUNT LAWLEY TEACHERS COLLEGE

APRIL 1975



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INTO THE
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by

MOUNT LAWLEY TEACHERS COLLEGE

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 In the short time available it has been impossible to prepare this submission in anything but general terms. However, the aim has been to comment on four major aspects of the development of tertiary institutions in this State:
- 1.1 restructuring of the bodies co-ordinating tertiary education
 - 1.2 co-ordinated development of overlapping areas of technical, further and tertiary education
 - 1.3 community college and open-learning operation of tertiary institutions for greater benefit of local communities
 - 1.4 accountability of institutions of advanced education in terms of vocational supply and demand and community benefit proportional to public funds invested in such institutions.

In addition, points will be made within the terms of reference as outlined by the Committee.

PLANNING

- 2.0 To submit fully documented recommendations on the possible "modification of existing institutions and development of new types of institutions etc." would require in-depth studies and research utilising more resources than have been available for this particular College Submission. Consequently, much that is expressed lacks the support of appropriately analysed data. As a general recommendation we urge new detailed statistical studies by a body such as the Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission to investigate needs and create a fresh total plan for the future development and planning of tertiary, technical and further education institutions. Such planning should aim to ensure not only that these institutions fulfil appropriate educational aims but that they also satisfy the direct demands and needs of society. Thus there might be better opportunities to ensure that public investment in post-secondary education is maximised.

3.0 RESTRUCTURING OF THE BODIES CO-ORDINATING TERTIARY EDUCATION

- 3.1 To undertake such necessary planning and co-ordination it appears that the present structure of and relationships between the various institutions concerned may have to be altered. For example, either the Western Australian Teacher Education Authority ought to become responsible only for broader issues of planning and co-ordination of colleges or the present Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission should be expanded to include the Western Australian Teacher Education Authority. The latter action would ensure maximum utilisation of the investment in buildings and staffing which has taken place in recent years. Future planning must take into consideration not only the proximate costs of education but more consideration must be given also to the actual conditions of the varying labour market. As quoted in the Sharp Report, "the development of vocational training and education policies in France and Belgium are also leading to major educational reforms, which seek to be general and vocational education and training into one system providing for entry and re-entry at regular intervals for adults and young people alike".
- 3.2 Obviously there is a need to include technical colleges, community colleges and colleges of advanced education along with the universities in any future planning. There has been an unprecedented proliferation of institutions recently, all concerned with the training of personnel in generally related areas. In teacher education in Western Australia there are eight tertiary institutions involved, as well as the Education Department's own teacher training organisations, while for the training of industrial personnel there is the Doig Centre for Community Workers, the Community Welfare Centre, The Department of Labour Training Centre and the Trade Union Training Centre. Recent growth of such institutions indicates either that the existing institutions are not serving the needs of society or there is a danger of needless duplication of resources.

4.0 CO-ORDINATED DEVELOPMENT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- 4.1 As a result of continuing technological and structural changes that are occurring in both the community and in industry, and with the accompanying effects in the labour market requiring a change in the occupational skills and knowledge there is a definite need to frequently update and expand both knowledge and skill of the work force.
- 4.2 There is an obvious need for individual tertiary institutions to have more autonomy in the area of day to day operation than the present systems of control allow.
- 4.3 The constraints on former teachers' colleges imposed by the Western Australian Teacher Education Authority, Western Australian Tertiary Education Commission and the Commission on Advanced Education often cause a network of administrative questions which frequently is unduly and unnecessarily complex. Such a situation is not a desirable concomitant of co-ordination, rationalisation and accountability of tertiary institutions.
- 4.4 In terms of courses and other matters of a long-term nature there appears to be a need to rationalise the allocation of courses and development of present and future colleges of advanced education. To give an example, it might have been more appropriate for the Degree of Nursing courses to be initially located north of the Swan River where almost all major hospitals and medical centres are presently located.
- 4.5 The rebuilding of Graylands Teachers College elsewhere than on the present site is a further example. As colleges become more community-oriented and the need for retraining and specialised education grows, location of new institutions both in metropolitan and country areas will become extremely important. With the possible advent of an Open University system or Open Tertiary Education system the development of strategically placed small tertiary institutions in country regions, all contributing to the same ends, may serve the needs of society far more effectively.

4.6 In terms of co-ordinating the functions of existing tertiary institutions it appears that the present Western Australian technical colleges and colleges of advanced education need to co-operatively develop areas of mutual interest. On one level, perhaps, the staff of the technical colleges could obtain higher level teacher education at the present teachers colleges; while at the student level the technical colleges could make use of some courses (or staff) available at teachers colleges and vice versa. On a regional basis, the time and associated costs of travelling, etc., could be reduced and the utilisation of staff and buildings enhanced. While the technical colleges may be envisaged, in part, as being 'feeder' sources to the colleges of advanced education the process need not be a one-way affair. A student commencing a course at a college of advanced education may find that he does not have the necessary ability or aptitude for the course he has undertaken and with the transferability of some units he may not be disadvantaged in undertaking another course at one of the technical colleges. Without doubt, entrance requirements in such a situation as that just mentioned would have to be investigated. The subject areas of transferability could be in areas of mathematics, English Expression, commerce (including accounting), economics, industrial relations and business management.

4.7 Similarly, there will need to be much clearer terms for transferability of course units not only between the colleges of advanced education and between such colleges and the universities but also between the technical and further education colleges and the tertiary institutions where units can be accredited. Greater co-operation may involve such specialist fields as, for example, the creative or the performing arts, where a particular campus has developed appropriate staff and facilities. Other institutions may wish to arrange for students to attempt appropriate units at the specialist institution. Many of these joint enrolment procedures are already in operation for students at the Western Australian Secondary Teachers College. Mutual recognition of some units by the Western Australian Institute of Technology or The University of Western Australia already exists. With the anticipated expansion of colleges of advanced education more planning and co-operation will be necessary to avoid depriving students of the right to study certain units in the institution more able to fulfil their needs than the college in which their basic enrolment has been effected.

5.0 COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OPEN-LEARNING

- 5.1 As already stated, with the continuing technological and structural changes that are occurring in both society and industry and with the accompanying effects in the labour market requiring change in occupational skills and knowledge, there is a definite need for already qualified persons to frequently update and expand both knowledge and skills. This means that the traditional concept of an initial period of vocational education and/or training on leaving secondary education can no longer be considered a complete preparation for the remainder of a working life. To enable those adults whose occupational and social progress is hindered because of lack of knowledge and skill, more emphasis should be placed on both retraining and mature age education. Furthermore, this implies that there will be a greater need for co-ordination and planning between each institution in order to meet the demands of society. In turn, this suggests the need for a manpower planning policy.
- 5.2 To overcome the challenges from society there has developed the concept of the community college and open tertiary education. Tertiary institutions in Western Australia have and should continue to give more consideration to these particular aspects.
- 5.3 A comprehensive system of open tertiary education and community schools need not only serve the needs of the government organised institutions but the needs of non-government organisations. Employees, trade unions and government could participate in the training and re-training of people. With the development of manpower policies and better methods and techniques of surveying the labour market the different natures of training will call for greater flexibility which may in turn require greater co-ordination between institutions. With the anticipated growth of the Department of Labour and other associated bodies concerned with both employment and unemployed problems the graduate market and non-graduate market should with the co-operation of all post-secondary education institutions lead to the elimination of the oversupply of graduates in a particular area.

5.4 For the purposes of general education and retraining, community colleges and open tertiary education would provide considerable flexibility. The optimum size of the geographic area and institution needs analysis. Colleges will have to be multi-purpose with basic courses, such as first Degrees in Arts, Applied Arts, Applied Science and Business Studies or Diplomas in Teaching, providing the core.

6.0 COMMENTS RELATED TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

6.1 Patterns of post-secondary education elsewhere in Australia and overseas, including continuing education and new non-traditional patterns of study.

6.11 There has been support for the establishment or development of "Sixth Form" colleges to give students proposing to enter tertiary institutions the opportunity of more appropriate preparation. Students should be encouraged to undertake employment or to give more consideration to employment opportunities before undertaking tertiary courses. For years the teaching staff of tertiary institutions have questioned the readiness for tertiary studies of some seventeen year olds who lack the maturity for undertaking tertiary courses. A year at a preparatory college or in the community would be advantageous.

6.12 Tertiary institutions should be 'open' to a broader segment of the community, enabling and encouraging students to continue their formal education at many points in their lives after the completion of their secondary school studies.

6.13 Provision should be made for qualified people to undertake refresher courses to update their knowledge and improve their skills. In some areas it may be more appropriate for staff to improve their qualifications. Time-limits applying to the currency of formal professional qualifications should be considered.

6.14 There is a need for the introduction of more sandwich courses, day release courses and other flexible opportunities for study. This would reduce the discrimination against part-time students.

6.2 The possible modification of existing institutions and development of new types of institutions to meet present and future educational and cultural needs of students at the post-secondary level are urgent considerations for the post-secondary sector.

6.21 The development of community-type colleges, with to some extent a multi-purpose offering of courses, may prove advantageous as indicated earlier. While an individual college may have a particular component or core of speciality, its facilities should be available for the general units of courses offered to students by other institutions. This would greatly reduce the cost and inconvenience for students who at present travel long distances each day, or study externally or are denied certain courses altogether.

6.22 Not all courses offered at tertiary institutions need be approved award courses. Recreationally oriented or personal development courses with or without a formal certificate on completion should be made available more widely. The provision of funds for this purpose is an urgent matter for the appropriate agencies.

6.23 More critical analysis should be given to the practice in Western Australia of centralizing tertiary institutions, particularly in reference to the re-siting of existing small tertiary institutions. Population density and community growth patterns should be considered in the development of new institutions in the Perth area. Diversification and specialisation of tertiary and other post-secondary institutions are needs which require to be reconciled for every post-secondary educational institution. Unnecessary duplication of courses and equipment must

be minimised without prejudicing the real needs of a community and society in general. For example, the three colleges, Mount Lawley, Churchlands and Nedlands could continue to specialise in Teacher Education but with accompanying provision for non-specialised courses in Arts, Applied Arts, Applied Sciences and Business Studies. Such development would at least provide the local communities served by these institutions with the option of commencing general tertiary studies with minimum inconvenience. At present such communities must look with some dismay on the expenditure of many millions of dollars of public funds to service single-purpose institutions.

6.24 There is an urgent need to re-examine the vulnerability of single-purpose tertiary institutions in the light of recent rapid fluctuations in demand for certain specially trained graduates. The tradition of life-time commitment to a particular vocation is fast disappearing in overseas countries in recognition of the wastefulness of a labour supply to adapt to the rapid changes to which modern societies are prone. At present, an unexpected change in predicted numbers required for a certain profession can amount to virtual disaster for an institution dependent on these student numbers for funding to maintain all aspects of its operation. The normal minimum three-year course for basic training for a vocation requiring graduate entry requires an institution to have much more than three years' warning of impending major changes in course enrolments. Additionally, it must be possible for such institutions to develop continually those courses which will anticipate the new demands which have replaced the obsolescent areas of vocational need. Failure to make provision for such simultaneous action could lead to serious questioning of the continued provision of public funds on buildings and staffing.

6.3 The relevance for post-secondary education of other resources in the community, including libraries, art galleries, museums, the performing arts and the media must be considered.

- 6.4 The following principles are some of those that ought to govern access to post-secondary education and transfer of students between institutions.
- 6.41 Because of the varying nature of courses and types of courses individual institutions should be left to establish entrance criteria within the overall concept of accountability.
- 6.42 Students should have access to specialist facilities and to specialist staff.
- 6.43 As mentioned previously, the possibility of the transfer of students is highly desirable. Transfer may be for reasons of wrong decision for personal or employment opportunities, development of further skill and knowledge or to gain access to specialised facilities.
- 6.5 The extension of provision for post-secondary education to country districts in Western Australia, having regard to the development of areas concerned and not simply to the economic viability of the institutions to be created, is an urgent matter.
- 6.51 It may not be advisable to establish teacher education courses in some country centres because of the lack of practice schools.
- 6.52 To overcome difficulties of availability of practice schools in other areas and the problems of student accommodation, range of units in courses, etc., satellite campuses of existing institutions could be established whereby the facilities and organisation of these institutions could provide ready support. In the longer term the extension of teacher education services over a wider area of the State would be facilitated.
- 6.53 The wisdom of developing single-purpose colleges of education into multi-purpose community colleges and of supplementing such colleges by a more co-ordinated

working relationship with technical and further education centres is of even greater importance in country areas than in the metropolitan region. It would seem imperative that a reationalised approach to the selection of future post-secondary campuses, building programs, staffing and development of courses for this area of education should be adopted for country centres.

- 6.54 With the present system of 'tied grants' it is becoming increasingly difficult for tertiary institutions in this State to maintain control of a significant proportion of their own educational policy decisions.

Apart from delaying or preventing the development of tertiary institutions in country centres of Western Australia, undue standardization may significantly reduce the important element of diversity which ought to characterize the operation of tertiary education in a State as large and as far removed from the focus of federal power as Western Australia is.

The history of Australian education can provide many examples of the benefits of diversity and innovation. These have frequently resulted from the expression of local conditions and community wishes in the educational policies of the separate States.

Standardization of tertiary education can be carried far beyond the levels justified in terms of economy or accountability to the nation as a whole. Western Australia could well have more to lose in this respect than any other State.

- 6.6 The need to establish shared facilities, especially in specialised areas such as libraries, research laboratories and computer facilities is unquestionable.

- 6.61 Needless to say, such sharing should aim to give maximum benefit to the institutions least well served at present in these areas. Disadvantaged institutions, particularly those in the early stages of development can fall further and further behind well-equipped established institutions unless they receive special assistance through shared facilities.

- 6.62 There are areas other than those designated which could well be shared among groups of smaller tertiary, further and technical education institutions. Specialized teaching required for music, drama, languages, dental and medical science, and specialized research facilities in physics, chemistry and other sciences, could also be shared. Expensive but important items of teaching equipment could be shared until institutions are large enough to afford separate purchases. Vehicle purchases are an example, especially courier vehicles, buses and four-wheel drives and light aircraft.
- 6.63 Certain support services could well be shared in order to maintain a steady use of expensive equipment. Examples would be printing presses and assorted plate-making machines, outside-broadcast C.C.T.V. services, external studies, despatch systems, photographic and cinematographic processing, computer servicing, television servicing, lawn-mowing, window-cleaning, painting, road paving and book-binding.
- 6.64 Student services such as medical and psychological counselling could be provided on a shared basis.
- 6.65 A critical area where sharing of professional resources could advantage smaller institutions is that of campus planning and project architectural consultants.
- 6.7 Appropriate means, and authorities, for future co-ordination and planning must be adopted to ensure the efficient and balanced development of post-secondary education in Western Australia.
- 6.71 It no longer seems necessary to continue with the Western Australian Teacher Education Authority in its present form. However, if it were altered in structure it would be essential to give existing colleges of advanced education a much stronger voice on the Tertiary Education Commission (or its equivalent).

6.72 Colleges of advanced education need a co-ordinating body with broader representation, with greater liaison with other government departments (e.g. Department of Labour), and other community organisations (e.g. employers, trade unions and theatrical groups).

7.0 FUTURE OF MOUNT LAWLEY TEACHERS COLLEGE

- 7.1 There has been a rapid development of community interest in the College since it was established just north of the City area. In the past, teachers colleges, as well as other tertiary institutions have recruited students from both country and metropolitan areas, regardless of the actual geographic location of any particular college. However, it is becoming more and more obvious that students will strongly prefer to undertake their tertiary education in institutions as close as possible to their own homes and to the secondary schools in which they gained their tertiary admission qualifications.
- 7.2 Mount Lawley College therefore has an obligation to investigate fully the needs of the local communities in the tertiary education sector. These needs must be reflected clearly in the College's planned development. This should not exclude those more general requirements of the State's tertiary field which it will be the College's responsibility to serve.
- 7.3 The College has indeed centred its planned new courses around the predicted needs of the areas immediately to the north and east of the City of Perth. The professional preparation of teachers will undoubtedly remain the dominant function of the College for many decades. However, it is considered that it would be both unwise and impractical for the College to continue to limit itself to the training of primary teachers alone. Teachers for secondary schools, early childhood education centres, special schools, community welfare institutions, training centres and a variety of other specialised situations should be able to receive at least their basic training at the College. Student enrolments have shown a significant tendency to be drawn from the surrounding geographical area and to be increasingly selected from a wider spectrum of the community age groups.

7.4 At State and Australian Government levels there have been repeated calls for in-service education for teachers who must adapt to new bodies of knowledge and more advanced techniques of teaching. The College seeks to meet these needs both for part-time and external students who are teachers in the field. Holders of old two-year training certificates can upgrade to a Diploma of Teaching by means of a 'conversion course'. Similarly, a Bachelor of Education conversion course is expected to be developed for teachers with only three year status. Graduate teachers (Diploma or Bachelor level) will be able to choose from a range of Graduate Diplomas of a specialised nature. Such courses in the fields of Special and Remedial Education and Aboriginal Teacher Education already exist at the College for this purpose. Approval for the planning of further diplomas in Educational Technology, Migrant (Intercultural) Education, Art Education, Music Education and Drama Education have been given at the State level. Other subject areas are planned.

7.5 In addition to this more diversified teacher preparation role the College must also offer a wider range of schools of study. In addition to Education there will be a School of General Studies or Arts and Sciences (to include Bachelor of Arts courses with emphasis in English and Social Sciences) in the immediate future. In the longer term the College's excellent new facilities in science, mathematics and the applied and fine arts will no doubt be utilised for courses in these fields of study. A vocational emphasis will be necessary where possible to ensure that graduates of such courses satisfy real community needs for persons with these particular qualifications. Ultimately, business studies of a general nature would need to be available to the local communities which the College serves. This trend towards multi-purpose development of former teachers colleges is a feature of colleges of advanced education in other Australian States.

7.6 Another major change in the development of the College has been the decision to introduce part-time and external studies.

These give the College greater scope to cater for the educationally disadvantaged tertiary student. No doubt many of them would be teachers posted to remote areas away from Perth. Other persons cannot attempt full-time studies for economic reasons and yet deserve to have access to a tertiary institution as close to their own homes as possible.

- 7.7 In achieving the above developmental objectives it is important that the College set an example of co-operation with other post-secondary educational institutions as well as endeavouring to discover and respond to real community needs. Not only is it important for Mount Lawley to forge strong links with the other existing tertiary institutions, so that mutual accreditation of courses and technical assistance can be shared; but there must be a functional relationship with the colleges of further and technical education. The old systemic approach to higher education must be phased out and replaced by integration and co-operation among institutions so that each consumer, the school leaver or the mature age student, may receive the best possible choice of courses within a minimum distance from his place of abode.
- 7.8 For some time the College has been reviewing the possibility of a change of name. The object would be to select one which is more appropriate to its function as a multi-purpose college of advanced education.