Feature:

Equity and Diversity in Mass Higher Education: Some policy issues

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Abstract

This paper documents the policy dilemmas which resulted from the deregulatory/regulatory mix characteristic of the policy regime instigated by the Dawkins reforms in higher education. More specifically, it focuses on the dilemmas for equity and diversity, while at the same time acknowledging the significance for equity of the expanded provision and the importance of federal requirements for institutional level equity initiatives. However, it is also argued that the marketisation of higher education and the emergence of status hierarchies between institutions work against equity. The significance of the role of research to this institutional differentiation is also illustrated. In a sense, the paper analyses the impact of the move from elite to mass provision of higher education upon both equity and diversity.

Some policy issues: An introduction

The Dawkins (1987-1992) revolution in higher education in Australia, while contributing to a substantially expanded provision of higher education places, also precipitated a number of policy dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a new policy regime which has also sought to provide more efficient and effective higher education geared to the government's macro and micro economic reform agendas. As has been documented for other policy domains under the federal Labor Government, there is the potential for efficiency demands, either through inadequate resourcing or 'more for less' pressures, to reconstitute or weaken the equity aspect of this equation. The specific 'genius' of the Dawkins revolution was to expand higher education participation at a time of economic recession within the post-Keynesian funding capacities of the federal government through a mixture of focussed public and increased private funding (Maslen and Slattery, 1993). And it should be noted that equity has retained a stronger presence in federal educational policy than is the case in many other comparable OECD nations. The federal policy statement, *A Fair Chance for All: Higher Education that's within Everyone's Reach* (1990), is perhaps the clearest expression of such a presence. However, it is the funding framework and its related mixed economy policy regime of national steering and market pressures, which has resulted in the policy dilemmas which are the focus of this introductory essay to this issue of *Australian Universities' Review* on the theme of 'Equity and Diversity in Mass Higher Education'.

The new policy regime in abolishing the binary university/college of advanced education divide has reduced the numbers of higher education institutions to about 35, all of which are now universities and much larger institutions. It has changed the relationship between the major public funding source, the federal government, and the institutions, through abolishing the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) and instigating a new 'steering at a distance' (Kickert, 1991) mechanism via profiles which controlled discipline and level mix within institutions. The profiles also required, amongst other things, the articulation of institutional equity plans. At the same time, the Government has demanded that the institutions become more entrepreneurial in their own activities so as to support expanded provision and the achievement of diverse institutional goals. The state, as such, did not fully finance the move in Australian higher education from elite to mass provision (Trow, 1974); rather, partial student fees (HECS) and entrepreneurial/market activities of the higher education institutions themselves also contributed. In addition, government funds themselves have increasingly become attainable only through entrepreneurial behaviour by the institutions (Cooperative Research Centres, ARC, Quality Grants, etc).

Henry (1992, p.401) has succinctly and evocatively encapsulated this policy regime as consisting of 'a mix of regulatory sticks and deregulatory carrots'. In recent times, these dual centralising/decentralising and public planning/market forces tendencies have been manifest across many of the policy activities of the state, which has been restructured along corporate managerialist lines. A similar reconstitution has occurred inside the institutions themselves with the move away from collegial to quasi-market managerial practices (Marceau, 1993, p.5). It is this policy mix in a period of post-Keynesian funding constraint, when combined with the hegemonic conception of what a university is, which is the source of many of the policy dilemmas which are the focus of this paper. Likewise, Marceau (1993, p.30) has observed that the apparent organisational convergence of systems of mass higher education throughout much of the OECD reflects these 'dual pressures of increased numbers, together with broadened social access, and of a tight budgetary environment'. Institutional autonomy has become largely synonymous with the pursuit of such market activities. Paradoxically, commissioned research might very well reduce institutional autonomy (Marginson, 1993, p.19).

The deregulation pressure has the long term potential for reducing the federal government's capacity for policy steering in the higher education sector with the reduction in public *vis-a-vis* private funds. For example, in 1983 ninety-one per cent of university funding came from government, while by 1991 this had been reduced to sixty-seven per cent (Marginson, 1993 c, p.20). As Marginson (1993 c, p.20) puts it for the 1983-1991 period, 'Private funding, including the HECS, has risen from one dollar in ten to one dollar in three'. While all institutions have now to rely upon private funding to a greater extent, Marginson notes that the newer institutions have the greatest dependence upon fees and charges, with the older, established universities drawing a much higher proportion of their overall income from donations, bequests and investment income (1993 c, p.21). The elite, older institutions may be able to reduce their dependence upon the public purse and thus be more able to amplify their autonomy from government policy regimes. This would have implications for equity, particularly given the different degree and student mixes across the institutions making up the Unified National System (UNS) and the emergence of league tables or status hierarchies within the so-called "unified national system". Inter-institutional, rather than inter-sectoral, differentiation is a feature of post-binary systems of higher education, which often accompany the move to mass provision (Scott, 1984, 1993).

The reduction of public support *vis-a-vis* private-entrepreneurial resourcing has also witnessed pressure upon research activities. The entrepreneurial pressure upon higher education institutions to seek private funds through commissioned research and consultancies has the potential to disfigure the traditional functions of universities, namely the promotion of the "common good" and the advancement of knowledge. Marginson (1993 b, p.136) notes also the risks for private investors in funding basic research and the related private under investment in both basic and applied research. This has seen pressure in Australia for the universities to carry out both basic and applied research because of poor private sector commitment. Consequently, as Marginson (1993 b, p.139) observes, 'There is a serious danger that, in developing its commercial research and short-term project capacity, higher education will cannibalise the basic research capacity on which all other research rests'. Furthermore, he notes how the competitive bidding for research funding through the ARC tends to 'favour projects in the band between strategic basic research and applied research of an innovative nature' (p.140). There is the potential for the reduction of university support for long-term, curiosity-driven research in a context where industry in Australia does not commit enough funds to applied research. There is also need for thought to be given to the role of research in a mass system of higher education and the balance of research roles between universities and industry.

The variety of pressures on university research activity is exacerbated by substantial "approved" research activity being the *sine qua non* of the definition of a contemporary university within the Australian Unified National System of higher education. Despite the move to mass provision, research activity has remained central to the idea of a university in the Australian context. Such a perception is a fairly recent development, given that Australia's first solely research university, the Australian National University, was only established in 1946 and that a research focus within the (older) universities was basically a post World War Two phenomenon. In a sense, the transformation of many of the former Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) into universities was symbolised largely by the new access to public research funds for academics in these institutions. (The abolition of State level coordinating and accrediting bodies for CAE course provision was also another important factor. This abolition increased the steering capacity of the federal government across the spectrum of higher education institutions.) Once again the funds available for an expanded higher education research community were not adequate to ensure that all, or even a majority of academics, would achieve some financial support from federal government research funding bodies. This situation saw academics in the pre Dawkins universities under intense competition for research funds and those in the newer institutions competing for expanded, but nonetheless, scarce funds under more difficult circumstances with inadequate and deteriorating research infrastructure. Such a scenario produced discontent across the system. It also raises questions of the legitimate role of research in the contemporary university and within the mass system. The first round of the "Quality process" has also reinforced the perception that substantial research activity is central to the definition of a "quality" university, even though the 1994 second round with its focus upon teaching might redress this balance a little, given the widespread claim that teaching was something done very well in the former Colleges of Advanced Education.

The question of the relationship between research and teaching in the UNS is an important one which needs to be addressed and which has implications for the degree of diversity within the system. Debates about the centrality or otherwise of research to high quality higher education teaching are also relevant here. There has been some suggestion that the mass system has broader goals than the production of an academic elite and as such the research /teaching link is no longer a necessity (Scott, 1993, p.47). However, such a point of view raises questions as to whether or not higher education institutions should produce more than 'technical cognitive elites' (Barnett, 1993, p.35), as well as questions about the appropriate balance between knowledge production and reproduction functions within the mass system. Given the research funding reality, however, the two activities, teaching and research, clearly are not informing each other across all the institutions within the UNS or across all the activities within a particular institution. The result is some institutions which are largely research and teaching institutions and others which are largely teaching institutions with some research at the margins. The former category can also probably be divided between those older institutions which teach and research medicine, law, engineering and the "hard" sciences, as well as humanities and some social sciences, and the newer post 1960s institutions which tend to be more social science, humanities, interdisciplinary and "soft" science in their focus. This kind of institutional diversity raises questions about parity of esteem between these groupings of institutions. These questions are in some ways comparable to the old parity of esteem debate precipitated in England with the establishment of the tripartite system of secondary education, consisting of grammar, secondary modern and comprehensive schools, following the 1944 Education Act. There is some evidence, for example, Anderson and Vervoorn (1983), Abbott-Chapman, Hughes and Wyld (1991), to suggest that students from the most elite backgrounds attend the most elite faculties (for example, law and medicine) in the older more elite institutions, while those from more disadvantaged backgrounds attend the newer universities and participate in courses leading to the emerging professions such as teaching and nursing. Expanded access to what type of higher education then emerges as a significant issue. Equality and diversity between and within universities also becomes a concern.

A number of related and contingent factors precipitated the move from elite to mass provision of higher education which was one important focus of the Dawkins reforms. At one level, there was the impact of the globalisation of the economy and Australia's policy decision to attempt to compete within this international economy in a non-tariff-protected manner. Such a policy decision witnessed the resurgence of a more micro-economically focussed human capital perception of all sectors of education, including higher education (Marginson, 1993 b; Lingard, Knight and Porter, 1993). Education was to produce the multi-skilled, creative and flexible workers necessary to the micro-economic reform of workplaces in the direction of post-Fordist arrangements. Higher education and expanded participation had a significant role to play here, along with a focus on particular disciplines. Research geared to the "national interest" and the creation of a "clever", rather than lucky, country was also expected to make a significant contribution to this economic transformation through the internationalising of a knowledge-based Australian economy.

The other side of this policy direction was the resultant collapse of the full-time teenage labour market, a fact formally recognised in the *Participation and Equity* policy statement on upper secondary schooling released in early 1984. The subsequent abolition of unemployment benefits for 16 and 17 year olds basically amounted to a *de facto* raising of the school leaving age. These circumstances, combined with a policy attempt to increase retention to the end of secondary schooling, resulted in very substantial pressures upon access to higher education which, across the early to mid eighties, did not expand in a parallel fashion to match the increased school retention rates. The question of unmet demand then became an important policy issue. What the Dawkins reforms did was hugely expand participation in university education through the abolition of the binary system and the provision of more places partly funded through the HECS mechanism. So, for example, there was a growth of more than fifty-three per cent in student places across the period from 1983 to 1991, from 348,577 students in higher education in 1983 to 534,593 in 1991 (Baldwin, 1991, p.53). Despite this very substantial growth, there was still substantial unmet demand.

Now a number of observations need to be made about this expansion of participation in higher education. Firstly, some contingent equity probably results as the number of places expands (Abbott-Chapman, Hughes and Wyld, 1991), that is, more students from disadvantaged backgrounds probably gain access as Year 12 retention rates increase and the number of higher education places expands. This is probably another step in what Raymond Williams (1962) has called the 'long revolution', proceeding towards a more democratic and socially just society. However, access and equity programs, as outlined in the federal policy statement *A Fair Chance for All*, are required to target specific disadvantaged groups so that the student population in higher education matches more closely the composition of the population at large.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that as the numbers participating in higher education have grown, and thus as the numbers with a degree in the labour market also grow, the value of a degree in income terms *vis-a vis* average incomes declines. In Hirsch's (1976) terms the possession of a university degree becomes less of a 'positional good' conferring advantage in the labour market. The expansion of higher degree participation is one consequence, entailing all the potential problems of credentialism (Maglen, 1990). Marginson (1993 a, p.3) documents how in 1968-69 the relative income return to degree holders was 1.79 times average incomes, whereas by 1989-90 this had dropped to 1.30. However, Marginson does note that there are probably some degrees which have retained their positional advantage, for example medical degrees, but it should be noted that the students in such courses tend to come from the most privileged backgrounds (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983). Lower returns in relation to income for TAFE graduates is also probably one factor in the unmet demand equation. Increased demand for higher education places, in the context of declining income returns, places some dent in the traditional human capital explanation of expanded provision (Schultz, 1961) and offers greater support for the credentialism and positional good conception of education (Marginson, 1993 a, p.8). However, this situation is probably an indication of two things: that credentials are almost mandatory for participation in the full-time labour market; and that without post school qualifications one is very disadvantaged in labour market terms.

There are other policy issues in relation to equity which arise from the increased retention to Year 12 and expanded participation in higher education. This reality has induced a policy preoccupation with post-compulsory issues, for example the nature of the curriculum in post-compulsory schooling, the appropriate sectoral balance between university and TAFE participation rates, the nature of training and the links between general and vocational education, and pathways between the various post-compulsory options. Such a preoccupation has meant some neglect of the needs of that group of young people who do not complete Year 12 and it is this group which needs to become a greater focus of equity policy, for they are usually from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (Holden and Dwyer, 1992). The Commonwealth's *Students at Risk* program focuses on this group, but in many ways such students have been forgotten with the policy emphasis on retention and connection of schooling to the labour market.

Much has been written about the microeconomically focussed human capital theory which underpinned the Dawkins education reforms in all sectors of education and particularly the reforms of higher education. Increased levels of education for more individuals were seen as the starting point of a restructured economy and underpinned many of the reforms. Such a view also underpins the current government policy approach that expansion of publicly funded higher education is largely at an end and that there is now a need for an expansion of TAFE participation in labour market terms and in terms of the government's budget expectations. Policies to increase retention to Year 12 were based on a number of policy goals, including reduction of the numbers coming onto the labour market and an upward skilling of the labour force. Similar goals underpin the expansion of higher education participation and the current debate about the appropriate sectoral balance between university and TAFE numbers.

As suggested earlier, and below, increased levels of education in the population can be seen as much in credentialling terms as in human capital ones. Credentials are utilised as positional goods within the labour market. Here, the main connection is between credentials and the labour market, rather than between these credentials and the actual labour process (Ashenden, 1988, p.15). There is thus no necessary relationship between credentials and worker productivity. As Marginson (1993 b, pp. 127-128) argues, 'This is the chief fallacy in Labor's economic policies in higher education: that higher education is automatically productive in the economic sense, so that an expansion in the output of education is sufficient in itself to generate improved economic performance'. Further, Marginson (1993 b) argues that the supply of educated labour does not of itself create a demand for such labour. The actual utilisation of educated labour in the economy remains another question. Indeed, there is something of a contradiction here between the government's interventionist policies in higher education and their deregulatory approach to the economy (Marginson, 1993 a b). Higher education in its current human capital terms may fail in the same way as it failed in the 1960s.

Some definitional considerations

This section will attempt briefly to define the three concepts central to the theme of this issue of *Australian Universities' Review*, namely, equity, diversity and mass higher education.

It is important to note that equity in higher education is usually defined in access terms. This contrasts with the more progressive definitions normally applied to schooling which consider performance and outcomes, as well as access. Thus equity requires measurement of the performance in and outcomes from schooling of specific socially defined groups, such as working class or lower socio-economic students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, girls, those from non-English speaking backgrounds, those with disabilities and so on. On one account then, equity in schooling is thus defined in terms of more equal outcomes for these groups. This is a "stronger" outcomes definition, rather than a "weaker" access definition of equality of educational opportunity. Indeed, it is ironic that it is these measures of outcomes of schooling which determine the extent of access to higher education. In contrast, equity in higher education has to this point centred on issues of access. Such a measure of equity would require the representation of these groups in higher education institutions in the same proportions as they are represented in the total eligible population. This was a goal articulated in the Dawkins White Paper. The equity and access programs in Australian higher education institutions, which have resulted from the policy statement, *A Fair Chance for All*, and the federal requirement that equity plans and those for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students be a compulsory component in institutional profiles, have ensured some documentation of equity in higher education defined in access terms. It should be noted, however, that *A Fair Chance for All* sought in its own words to promote not only 'equity of access', but also equity of 'participation and success' (DEET, 1990, p.6). We do need more data on performance and outcomes for disadvantaged groups. Such data should become available as targeted students under equity programs work their way through their courses. This data might very well place some real question marks over general selection procedures for higher education overall.

Measurement of equity in higher education in terms of access would suggest that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds still remain very under-represented (Williams, Long, Carpenter and Hayden, 1993; Abbott-Chapman, Hughes and Wyld, 1991). Thus, Williams et al (1993, p.98) document that 'Year 12 graduates from the most wealthy 25 per cent of families enter higher education at rates some 20 percentage points above those of students from "poor" families'. Females are represented in higher education in much greater numbers than in the past, making up about 51 per cent of total student numbers, but are still segmented into certain courses and still remain under-represented at the postgraduate level. Some evidence would suggest that those students from non-English speaking backgrounds access higher education in proportionally greater numbers than do Australian-born students (Williams et al, 1993). The Baldwin White Paper (1991, p.41) indicates a 40 per cent increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments for the period 1988-1990, with a further increase of 80 per cent by 1993 over the 1990 figures. However, while such students now make up about .7 per cent of the student body, they are still not represented proportionate to their numbers in the total population.

In relation to diversity, Scott (1993) has argued that the move from binary to post-binary (or unified in the Australian context) systems of higher education results in new processes of differentiation. Within binary systems, the differentiation is largely cross-sectoral, while within post-binary, mass arrangements, the differentiation is of both an inter and intra institutional kind, as government policy systematises higher education and larger institutions with changed management structures emerge. Academic drift within binary divisions is, of course, a factor in the collapse of such sectoral divisions; witness, for example, the impact in Australia of WAIT's conversion to Curtin prior to the Dawkins reforms. Scott (1993) has also argued that the creation of the binary system in the British and Australian contexts could be seen as the first post-war attempt to expand provision through the creation of equal, but different (and cheaper?) higher education institutions, while the move to post-binary structures is the next chronological step in the move to mass provision. He has also suggested that the post-binary differentiation relates to intellectual, structural, professional and managerial factors (1993, p.47). The fragmentation of knowledge and related 'epistemic egalitarianism' (Barnett, 1993, p.35), along with opposition to unifying metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984), all of which relate to the condition of postmodernity (Harvey, 1987), are factors in this inter and intra institutional differentiation. The professionalisation of more occupations (Scott, 1984), and what Barnett (1993, p.35) calls the impact of 'state-directed operationalism' on higher education which demands more multi-skilled workers, contribute further to intellectual balkanisation.

As indicated in the Baldwin (1991) White Paper, *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990s*, the government's policy focus in higher education has moved from expanded provision, restructuring and equity and access, to questions of quality and diversity. That White Paper expressed the hope that amalgamations and the abolition of the old binary divide has now created a more diverse system and more diverse institutions. The loose-tight coupling associated with the steering at a distance mechanism utilised by the government, was also supposed to encourage institutional diversity and there is some way in which such developments would be appropriate in a mass system. However, the autonomy which the institutions have pursued appears to be more a market or entrepreneurial autonomy, which has worked to encourage the institutions to market themselves in particular ways and establish new institutional hierarchies within the putatively Unified National System. Central here is the difficult task of achieving equality, yet diversity, between the various institutions which make up the UNS.

Martin Trow's (1974) paper for the OECD on the transition from elite to mass higher education provides definitions of elite, mass and universal higher education participation. While in one sense such definitions are largely arbitrary, they are very commonly used to classify developments in the higher education systems of nations. More relevant here, they do appear to provide some purchase on understanding developments in a higher education system such as that in Australia and particularly the impact of the Dawkins reforms. According to the Trow classification, the elite description applies when less than fifteen per cent of a given age cohort enter university in any one year; the mass appellation applies when the figure is between fifteen and thirty-five per cent, while the move beyond mass to universal access is said to apply when more than thirty-five per cent of an age cohort enter higher education. The Trow framework really deals with access questions, rather than issues of participation (Karmel, 1993, p.64). From 1989 to 1992 in Australia 'the proportion of an age cohort enrolling in higher education for the first time, either on leaving school or later, hovered around thirty-six per cent (thirty-one per cent for males and forty-one per cent for females)' (Karmel, 1993, p.64). Thus it could be suggested that Australia has almost moved beyond a mass system to universal access. However, such a suggestion is clearly belied by the extent of unmet demand for higher education places in Australia. Participation of 17-19 year olds in higher education in Australia has expanded considerably across the decade 1982-1992, increasing from 9.6 per cent of this age cohort in 1992 to 15.9 per cent in 1992 (DEET, 1993). While recognising the need to be cautious with cross-national comparisons of access to higher education, given the varying definitions of such education, it could probably be hypothesised on the basis of US and Japanese experience, that unmet demand might collapse when access moves beyond about fifty per cent of the age cohort. Keeping in mind the need to be ever wary of a reductionist conception of "ability" (Henry, Knight, Lingard and Taylor, 1988, pp.190-204), one could hypothesise that this might be the point at which the "Robbins' target" of access, whereby all those with the ability and willingness to benefit have access to higher education, will have been achieved, at least within contemporary conceptions.

Research evidence (Williams et al, 1993) shows that about 53 per cent of 19 year olds who had participated in higher education were from the top quartile of academic achievers at the Year 12 level, with another 32 per cent from the second highest quartile. This indicates that almost one in two of the highest "academic achievers" do not participate in higher education . Williams et al (1993, p.97) observe on these figures, 'we are looking at a degree of talent wastage that is not easy to justify'. One can speculate about the link between such 'wastage' and socio-economic disadvantage.

The papers in this *Australian Universities' Review*

The first three papers by Gale and McNamee, Ramsay, and Bowen deal with questions raised by *A Fair Chance for All* in the context of the new policy regime in higher education. All three papers acknowledge the significance of federal policy initiatives, and the potential for coercion in the federal financial control of higher education, as important factors in implementing equity programs across the system.

In their paper, 'Just out of Reach', Trevor Gale and Peter McNamee examine equity programs in higher education institutions and within them the tensions which result from the role higher education is expected to play as a link between the government's economic and social policies. While some institutions pursued equity initiatives prior to the policy compulsion imposed by the Commonwealth, they acknowledge the significance of compulsory reporting on equity initiatives as part of the profiling process as central to embedding national equity concerns throughout the system. Gale and McNamee document how the regulatory/deregulatory mix in contemporary higher education policy frames equity initiatives at the institutional level in specific ways. In particular, they note the impact of the revolution in management practices within the institutions and the related pressures for both greater efficiency and effectiveness. They suggest, amongst other things, that these pressures produce a 'fixation for targets', comparisons of costs of equity programs across institutions, the selection at the point of access of "disadvantaged students" who are most likely to succeed with least institutional intervention, and an emphasis upon access questions to the detriment of concerns for pedagogy, curriculum, and the cultural capital deeply embedded in the structures and practices of most higher education institutions. They also point out how the most disadvantaged students who gain entry through equity initiatives usually tend to access the least prestigious courses in the least prestigious institutions.

The paper by Eleanor Ramsay, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity) at the University of South Australia, and the first such appointment at an Australian university, also acknowledges the successful impact of the federal government's strategy of steering at a distance. This has ensured all higher education institutions in Australia have equity plans and programs geared to improving the representativeness of the student body in terms of the population at large. She also notes the significance of marginal dollars (equity funds) within financially

straitened institutions in ensuring such compliance. However, her argument is that the very corporate managerialist techniques which have been the basis of this success, also simultaneously endanger the long term effectiveness of equity programs in higher education. This is the case, she suggests, because corporate managerialism emphasises action and outcomes to the detriment of analysis. Apart from access and equity programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Ramsay argues that there have not been enough analyses and theorising about how higher education institutions operate so as to exclude disadvantaged students in the first instance. What is required is an analysis of how higher education institutions through their structures, practices, cultures, curricula and pedagogy work in ways to exclude the disadvantaged. Ramsay also makes some comments about the proposed move by the federal government to mainstream equity funds, rolling them into general operating grants. She argues that mainstreamimg of equity within the universities is important, but that there is also the need for vigilance to ensure that when equity becomes everyone's business, it is not weakened because it is nobody's business.

The proposed mainstreaming of Commonwealth equity funding and its potential impact upon equity programs at the institutional level are also the foci of Maureen Bowen's paper. Specifically, she canvasses strategies which might facilitate the mainstreaming of equity at the institutional site so as to ensure that commitment to equity is not weakened following the mainstreaming of funds. Currently there is a link between the extent, quality and success of institutional equity plans and strategies and degree of federal equity funding. With the mainstreaming of equity funds, Bowen notes the absolute necessity for institutions to indicate their commitment by including equity in their mission statements and planning processes for the whole institution and ensuring ownership of equity throughout the institution. The latter, she argues, is the more difficult to achieve and in this respect she agrees with Ramsay that institutions need to look at their curriculum and pedagogy to ensure a commitment to equity defined as more than simply access.

While these three papers acknowledge the success of the federal government's equity initiatives in expanding higher education access for targeted disadvantaged groups, there is still much unmet demand for higher education places. Unmet demand, or more pertinently the policy management of unmet demand, is the focus of the paper by Leo Bartlett and Leonie Rowan. The paper is concerned with the ways in which the 'statistical truth' about unmet demand has been collected and mainstreamed. It seeks to emphasise the unspoken assumption which underpins the discourse of unmet demand and the government's policy solutions which a crisis in demand necessitates. The authors see a number of related factors contributing to this excess of demand over places available, despite the huge increase in places which accompanied the Dawkins reforms. These factors include the collapse of the teenage labour market and related increased school retention to Year 12, the success of higher education equity initiatives, changes in the perception of the "representative" university student, and the creation of the UNS, which made university education more accessible, particularly to rural students. They document a number of federal policy initiatives which have sought to contain the political issue of unmet demand. Here they list the provision of distance education, the creation of the Open Learning Network, attempts to "cool-out" the university aspirations of year 12 students and "warm-up" their TAFE aspirations, and the creation of multiple pathways through school, TAFE and university. An economy moving out of recession also has some impact, as indicated by the small drop in demand for places for 1994.

Miriam Henry and Sandra Taylor consider these new pathways in their paper. They note that the Finn, Mayer and Carmichael trilogy signalled a new Commonwealth policy focus on post-compulsory schooling and training, and that there was a need to broaden both in the interests of microeconomic reform and equity. The latter would be assured by keeping options open for all young people through the creation of multiple pathways. In post-compulsory schooling one way of attempting this is via the Mayer generic competencies and through a greater convergence of general and vocational education. They note how the opposition to these developments has basically been about the potential for the academic to be contaminated and narrowed by the vocational, indicating for them the persistence of an academic/vocational divide. Henry and Taylor report on their research in progress which looks at Carmichael's Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) pilots and report how in one school the academic/vocational divide has been reconstituted as a spectrum, so that all students were given the chance for gaining entry to university, TAFE or both. However, not all of their findings were so positive as to the linkages between institution-based reforms in the pilots and the equity aspects of the broader agenda. They also note that the Dawkins focus on higher education reform prior to turning to TAFE has subsequently made it more difficult to reform the TAFE and broader training agenda, particularly when the complexities of federalism in the training sector are recognised. Overall, they are cautiously optimistic about the equity potential in the federal government's education and training reform agenda. However, given broader economic developments, they raise the important question of "pathways into what"?

The abolition of the binary and creation of a unified national system of higher education has impacted upon academics and their work and their industrial union, now the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), which resulted from the amalgamation of FCA and FAUSA. This is the topic of John McCollow's paper, 'FAUSA and the Rise and Fall of the Binary System of Higher Education in Australia'. He illustrates how FAUSA through the pursuit of 'dual closure' defended its members from encroachment from above, for example, government policy, and from below, for example from CAE academics. In terms of the latter, the defence was of the elite status of the universities and as such questions of more equitable access to higher education were rarely considered, nor were the status hierarchies of academic knowledge challenged. However, McCollow notes the increasing tension between the industrial and educational policies of FAUSA and its schizophrenic simultaneous pursuit of emancipatory and elitist strategies. McCollow also considers the tensions which will emerge in the new union as marketisation (and possibly enterprise bargaining) precipitates new hierarchies of institutions and the possible emergence of a new binary with TAFE.

John Knight considers the 1993 *Higher Education Budget Statement* in relation to equity, diversity, quality and the Dawkins policy regime. Knight notes how the *Budget Statement* indicates the new policy focus on TAFE and the need for more school leavers to consider vocational training, which might better suit their needs, as well as those of the labour market. Echoing the 1991 Baldwin White Paper, *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity*, there is a recognition that the rapid expansion of higher education places is over and that it is time for consolidation and a focus on quality and expanding participation in vocational training. The *Statement* outlines 'equity of access' and 'diversity of provision' (p.1) as central to the government's policies in higher education, but within a framework of fiscal constraints and a limiting focus on quality issues. It also argues that 'growth with equity in participation' has been achieved following the implementation of Dawkins White Paper reforms. The steering at a distance mechanism is deemed to be productive of institutional diversity, which is defined as 'encouraging universities to diversify their student intakes, course offerings and research orientations on the basis of their institutional strengths and community requirements' (p.2). Knight also notes how the commitment to fiscal stringency has seen the introduction of student fees (HECS), the deregulation of fees at the postgraduate level, full fee paying overseas students, institutional entrepreneurial activities in relation to research, consultancy and short courses, in response to the government's demand that universities 'broaden their income sources'. Related is the encouragement now of more students into TAFE which is cheaper to provide than higher education. Knight describes this policy mix as a 'post-Keynesian Laborist adaptation of the social wage to "hard times"'. He also examines the character of steering at a distance and the loose-tight coupling between the federal government and each of the institutions which make up the UNS.

There is now an emphasis upon the self responsibility of the institutions with the government relying on what Kickert (1991) refers to as 'ex-post steering' accountability through output measures.

The final paper in this issue of *Australian Universities' Review* on the theme of equity and diversity in mass higher education is by Colin Symes and Susan Hopkins, entitled 'Universities Inc.: Caveat Emptor', in which they document and analyse the way advertising has become a strategic component in the marketisation of higher education. If the universities are to seek private sector funding and attract students to fee-paying courses, their marketed image becomes an important factor in producing the diversity and differentiation in the system which is desired by the federal government. However, this is more a market-driven diversity and autonomy, which simply encourages entrepreneurial activities and the creation of institutional hierarchies. They illustrate how advertising constructs three categories of institution within the UNS, firstly, the "real" universities which celebrate scholarship and academic excellence, secondly the "real world" universities which emphasise the employability of their graduates, and thirdly, the "student-centred" institutions which stress their responsiveness to student needs. Furthermore, Symes and Hopkins demonstrate how this differentiation via advertising stresses employment advantage and 'rarely pays heed to the cultural benefits of university education', another indication, they suggest, of the extent to which 'consumerist values have colonised most sectors of western society'.

Conclusion

As has been indicated throughout, there have been many achievements of the unified national system of higher education, not the least of which is the expanded participation of young Australians and the embedding of targeted equity programs across the system. However, a number of policy dilemmas, particularly in relation to equity, have been precipitated by the mix of regulatory and deregulatory relations between the government and the institutions which constitute the UNS. The dominant conception of what a university ought to be, and questions of the legitimate role for research in a mass system, as well as the type of research to be pursued, remain unaddressed policy dilemmas. There is a way in which the Dawkins reforms (1987-1992) reflected the period of "high" economic rationalism in which they were instigated. However, as has been shown throughout this paper, they also sought a more equitable provision of higher education and in their context were a creative response. Higher education of a particular type was thought necessary to the achievement of Australia's economic future, which led to an emphasis on specific courses and research in the national interest. However, it now appears that many of the most significant questions facing Australian society are of a different kind, albeit with economic implications. This may be seen in the move towards a republic and in Australia's initiatives to establish trade and cultural links with Asia. All of this is being attempted by a society which simultaneously values difference and equality.

In 1987, Manning Clark observed of Australia that, 'History has blurred the vision of Eden, allowing Mammon to infest the land. A turbulent emptiness seized the people as they moved into a post-Christian, post-Enlightenment era. No one any longer knew the direction of the river of life. No one had anything to say.' One democratic goal of mass higher education should be the proliferation of more public intellectuals and more individuals and groups who have something to say about the significant social and cultural questions facing Australia. Clark also recognised that , 'With the end of domination by the straiteners, the enlargers of life now have their chance' (1987, p.500). Maybe it is time to give the 'enlargers' a turn at addressing the policy dilemmas outlined in this paper.

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