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EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

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Occasional Paper 9
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Adelaide 1985
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Title: Education and Youth Employment in Australia during the Great Depression.

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The present paper is an historical study of youth employment and education during the depression years in Australia. It analyses policy with respect to employment and in particular post-school and technical education during the worst economic crisis faced in the present century. Readers will draw their own conclusions as to similarities between depression policies and solutions and those occurring during the late nineteen seventies. The paper reviews the extent of youth unemployment at the time, measures to identify and assist youth most seriously affected, the range of education and training schemes introduced, apprentice training policies, the special difficulties experienced by females, the question of raising the school leaving age, and reform in secondary and more particularly technical education.

The overriding conclusion drawn is that although Australia was unable to finance desired changes during the nineteen thirties, the plans, policies and programmes of the period paved the way for substantial developments during and after World War II.
Introduction

On first reflection a study such as this on education and youth employment during the Great Depression in Australia would seem an especially fruitless exercise. For obvious reasons, the Australian states at the time were obliged not only to suspend developments in train before 1930; they had considerable difficulty even holding on to achievements of that period. Yet the very severity of political and economic constraints during the nineteen thirties threw into relief the most fundamental values of Australian society where the education and welfare of its youth were concerned. Compassion for those experiencing the distress of the time prompted the emergence of a rich variety of ideas, plans and programmes for Australian youth that profoundly influenced educational and social developments for some decades to follow. Depression policy movements then merged closely with policies forced upon Australian governments during World War II. Indeed, apprehension about a post-war recession kept alive the range of thinking that by the end of the 'thirties constituted coherent plans for the virtual transformation of significant sectors of Australian education. These achieved national significance owing to the priorities generated by war-time and post-war reconstruction planning.

This paper analyses the crystallisation of educational policies to deal with youth employment problems of the depression years. It focusses especially upon post-compulsory and technical education since these areas most prominently reflected political determination to avoid a recurrence of the depression conditions. Not surprisingly, ideas and policies of the depression years assume special relevance to policy-makers tackling difficulties arising from the recession of the late 'seventies, when levels of youth unemployment revived memories of the worst depression in Australia's history.
Political and Social Contexts

Although the focus of this paper is on youth employment, some consideration of the wider impact of the depression is needed for the sake of contextual understanding. The Australian economy quickly felt the impact of the collapse of world markets in 1929-30 because the nation was not only reliant upon agricultural exports but also heavily overcommitted in overseas loans. Faced with the necessity of reducing this debt, Australia in 1931 adopted the Premiers' Plan, which reduced government spending by twenty percent. For the Scullin Labor Government in Canberra, the consequence was to lose the December elections to the Lyons United Australia Party, which continued in office throughout the decade. As for the states, the financial crisis of 1931 brought down every party then in power at the subsequent elections, whether Labor or conservative in complexion. On financial policy, however, all parties adopted very conservative measures that emphasised balanced budgets, careful management and general austerity. Economic recovery, which started about 1933, occurred without the benefit of Keynesian theory, although modest public works and relief measures were instituted as the financial situation improved. Between 1935 and 1937 Australia quickly recovered to pre-depression levels of economic activity, although agriculture remained stagnant. Secondary industry meanwhile staged what Mauldon and Polglaze termed "truly remarkable progress". Unemployment dropped to 8 percent by 1938, just before the outbreak of World War II.

In the recovery period, public works, unemployment relief, assistance to the wheat industry and wages policies were mainly notable for their caution. After 1932 the states each established economic (unemployment relief) councils to recommend welfare and works projects partly funded from Commonwealth (federal) money for unemployment
relief. But the amounts concerned were very modest, and by 1935 the economy had recovered sufficiently for the relief works to be scaled down. Wages remained depressed throughout the decade of the 'thirties, although falling costs and charges probably ensured that people in employment did not suffer unreasonably. Indeed, the main impact of the depression fell upon the unemployed, for whom social legislation and relief measures were sadly deficient. Educational policy then, needs to be assessed against a background of balanced budgets, savagely reduced government expenditures, conservative social policy initiatives and tentative levels of assistance to aid economic recovery. This was no Roosevelt "New Deal"; nor was it the militant state socialism of Nazi Germany. In the circumstances it is perhaps the more remarkable that Australian educational policies associated with employment frequently embraced imaginative initiatives and substantial public investigations. Even if solid results were slow to emerge, owing to the financial and constitutional constraints at the time, the basis was established for much of the war-time and post-war activity in Australian education.

Youth Employment in the Depression Years

It cannot be claimed that Australians themselves were very clear during the depression period about the extent or the causes of youth unemployment. Indeed, the necessary statistical data, even after the 1933 census figures became available, was far from helpful. But as regards overall unemployment, Walker in 1936 provided statistics, based on the census and other data, that effectively demonstrate the seriousness of the general problem. His table reproduced below summarises the percentages of unemployed in 1933.
Australia: Percentage Unemployed by Census and Trade Union Returns, in 1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Census June 1933</th>
<th>Trade Union Return</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.W.</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic.</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld.</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.A.</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.A.</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas.</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C'wealth</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Walker, E.R., Unemployment Policy, with Special Reference to Australia (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1936), p. 65.

In refining the employment situation as far as youth are concerned, one clearly identifiable group was the apprentices since registrations plummeted at the onset of the depression. On the average, apprentice numbers shrank to about half the numbers reported in 1928/29. To illustrate, registrations in New South Wales, 2,280 in 1929, fell to 1,299 in 1930 and 587 in 1933. The 1928 levels were not matched again until 1937 (1783). Afterwards registrations increased quickly owing to special measures adopted by the State Government of the day. Figures for Victoria, where the Apprenticeship Commission came into being only in 1928, indicate a low point of 505 apprentices employed in 1931 and 690 in 1932. Thereafter, numbers quickly rose, to 922 in 1933, 2,113 in 1936, and 4,526 in 1939. Queensland's apprentice numbers, 826 in 1929/30, shrank to a low of 322 in 1931/32, and thereafter again rose to total 1,213 in 1939/40. In Western Australia apprentice registrations, 613 in 1929, fell to 118 in 1931 and did not recover until 1936 and 1937. South Australia's registrations of apprentices and
probability of lesion occurring.


entering unskilled occupations in 1935, rising to 27.9 percent in 1939. This last group became the focus of much official concern later in the depression decade.

All these figures, as mentioned previously, were very "slippery", though they undoubtedly point towards "real" unemployment among school leavers, boys and girls combined, in excess of 40 percent at the height of the depression. Victoria's published figures followed similar patterns to those in New South Wales, though the statistics did not include leavers from the State's junior technical schools. In this connection, however, Giles and Lyall from Victoria in 1932 produced a thoroughly researched study of the absorptive capacity of Victorian industry for the use of vocational guidance personnel.7 In South Australia, Charles Fenner in 1934 produced useful analyses based on the 1933 census which indicated for his State percentages of unemployed youth (boys and girls) in the regions of 42 percent for 14-15 year olds, 50 percent for 15-18 year olds, and around 45 percent for the age group 14-22 years. For boys only, the relevant unemployment figures reported were: 36 percent for 14-15 year old, 54 percent for 17-18 year olds, 67 percent for 21-22 year olds, and approximately 50 percent for all boys and young men between 14 and 22 years of age. Since these figures included among "employed" boys, those who were "helpers receiving no wages" and "part-time workers", the severity of the situation can easily be comprehended.8

The dimensions of the youth employment problem, while still far from accurate, were nevertheless clarified somewhat by the surveys described. More accurate figures were simply not available. As a consequence, much political and philanthropic activity, particularly in the early stages of the depression, lacked any firm statistical base. It dealt with situations as they arose and relied heavily upon
voluntary effort that was coordinated and sometimes subsidised by the state governments. A first step, however, was to build out from vocational guidance machinery being established late in the nineteen twenties, and to link this where possible to labour exchange and welfare agencies. Only a few of the latter were in existence before 1930.

Vocational Guidance and Youth Labour Markets

Towards the end of the 'twenties, vocational guidance had attracted mounting attention as post-primary education gained strength in the Australian states. In the building of a new society out of the terrors of World War I and the return to economic prosperity, secondary education figured prominently in egalitarian policies. This coincided with considerable advances in intelligence testing and educational psychology that promised much in the selection and training of young people for occupations. Conceived in times when the economy and employment were relatively healthy, the vocational guidance movement became something of a savage irony in the worst days of the depression decade. Yet then more than ever, politicians and educationists saw in vocational guidance at least one avenue to alleviate the distress facing young people felt to be the segment of society most at risk and deserving better. Humanitarianism combined with social engineering based on the new psychological sciences to produced an inflated faith in vocational guidance that received international support from such bodies as the International Labour Office. In Australia, this became linked during the depression years to a clear understanding of the need for the closest links to be established between vocational guidance and counselling, and the labour market into which youth were being tipped.
New South Wales led the way when in 1925 a Vocational Guidance Association formed under the vigorous leadership of University of Sydney Psychology lecturer A.D. Martin. He played prominent roles in the decision of the Department of Public Instruction in 1926 to open a small vocational guidance bureau, and also in the formation of the Australian Institute of Industrial Psychology to produce standardised tests for vocational guidance. The education authorities introduced a system of record cards and records of occupational destinations of school leavers that proved helpful during the depression years. In 1932, the State's Department of Labour and Industry absorbed the Bureau, with Martin as its chief organiser. Afterwards, in 1936, the Education Department's Bureau was reconstituted on a small scale. But the division of responsibilities between the two organisations proved unsatisfactory - Martin himself described it as "a cleavage". A Parliamentary Select Committee chaired by J.M. Baddeley in 1939-40 tackled this latter problem by recommending the formation of a division of guidance within the public service so as to coordinate counselling activities in the schools and the Department of Labour and Industry. Expansion of facilities was strongly advocated.

On the broader employment front, the New South Wales government in 1932 built upon a foundation laid originally by the Young Citizens' Club, sponsored by the Sydney Rotary Club. The State's Department of Labour and Industry thereafter became responsible for coordinating and fostering the activities of twenty two branches in metropolitan Sydney and three other Young Citizens' Clubs in the coalfields areas. The clubs devised ways to occupy youths in "worthwhile" activities as well as find useful work. Between 1933 and 1937, the clubs reported having placed 18,776 youths in employment. In 1957, when the organisation was terminated because of a substantially improved employment situation,
the clubs' work was transferred to the junior section of the State Labour Exchange. At this point the Government also created an Employment Council, of which James McIntyre (the Apprenticeship Commissioner) was chairman. This Council in turn had its antecedents in an Employment Research Committee established in 1933, which investigated and reported on many aspects of youth employment in the State. The Employment Council, reconstituted in 1938, continued this research work and between 1938 and 1940 published a series of reports providing statistical analyses and policy advice to government on youth employment problems. Chairman of the reconstituted body was Alex Mair, the State Premier, with McIntyre also a member.

Victoria, like New South Wales, constructed a base of youth employment policy out of pre-depression vocational guidance initiatives as well as voluntary agency work during the early depression years. Chief Inspector of Education J. McRae introduced the State's vocational guidance scheme in 1929, involving 2,700 schools under the Education Department. The scheme encompassed a cumulative record card system for all pupils, starting in Grade VI and continuing through the post primary grades, coupled to a labour market guidance system operating through school advisory committees comprising teachers and employers. At district level, some 40 advisory councils in 1932 coordinated the activities of the school committees. G.R. Giles, who supervised the system at state level, contributed useful studies (with John Lyle) into the capacity of Victorian industry to absorb youth, as well as compiling records of the employment destinations of school leavers.

As for job placement, Victoria's government subsidised and assisted the work of voluntary organisations, and in particular the Boys' Employment Movement which acted as a placement agency for boys working closely with the Vocational Guidance Councils mentioned.
previously. These arrangements were extended to the main provincial centres as well as metropolitan Melbourne.\textsuperscript{19} Other bodies closely associated with the scheme were the Y.M.C.A. and church-based committees. As the crisis stages passed, the voluntary work reverted to the official organisation for vocational guidance. This was undoubtedly better planned and established than in most other states and it paved the way for substantial expansion at the outbreak of World War II.\textsuperscript{20}

Queensland's work for unemployed youth deserves special attention, partly because unemployment in the State during the depression was rather less than elsewhere in Australia, partly because the state had a basis of unemployment insurance in the 'twenties that put it well ahead of other states, and partly because Queensland's population was mostly located in rural areas rather than in the metropolitan centre at Brisbane. The Department of Public Instruction in 1929 created a small section to establish a vocational guidance scheme organised on a school-based system of vocational information and counselling.\textsuperscript{21} But the scheme came into operation in 1931, at the height of the depression years, and so failed to cope with the worsening situation. At this stage the State's Department of Labour and Industry, operating under The Income (Unemployed Relief) Tax Acts from 1930 onwards, took measures to assist a range of activities for unemployed people, including youth, and in particular to establish a Juvenile Employment Bureau.\textsuperscript{22} This was inaugurated in 1935 as part of the then Premier's "Revival Employment Scheme for Boys and Girls". Policy at the time drew analogies between the need to market produce from farms as well as maximise production, and the desirability of marketing the "human products" of the schools:\textsuperscript{23}

"In future, it was definitely to be the duty of the Department of Public Instruction to assist boys and girls to find positions offering suitable employment suited to their individual qualifications and attainments."

\textsuperscript{19} Source: The state's records on vocational guidance.

\textsuperscript{20} Source: Australian government report on unemployment in World War II.

\textsuperscript{21} Source: Department records.

\textsuperscript{22} Source: State archives.

\textsuperscript{23} Source: Premier's speech at the inauguration of the scheme.
Chaired by J. Hill, Inspector of Technical Colleges, the Bureau comprised seven members drawn from technical schools, the Department of Labour and the Department of Agriculture. It contained commercial, industrial and rural sections, with the industrial section located in the apprenticeship office and under the control of Chairman of Apprenticeship Committees A.E. Hall. Under the Bureau, various initiatives taken earlier to foster commercial, farm and industrial employment were coordinated and brought into closer liaison with relevant industries. The Central Bureau, at Brisbane, was complemented by branches opened in the main (and heavily populated) provincial centres. Rural schools were expected to function as agencies of the bureaux around the State. These put youth registered with them in touch with employers, and jobs were arranged by mutual agreement. Associated with the scheme were 200 farm scholarships and 50 forestry scholarships which provided allowances to young people placed on farms and with State forestry authorities. In 1935 the forestry scholarships were absorbed into the Commonwealth's Juvenile Forestry Employment Scheme, under which Queensland received £30,000, on a matching formula between the governments.24 Throughout the depression period, Queensland found it easier to place boys in farming employment, whilst in industry the main avenue of placement was the apprenticeship system. This was reported as filling all vacancies available and setting the scene for post-depression recovery. Commercial employment proved much harder to find. To illustrate, in 1938, the Bureau reported placing 72.1 percent of its youth on farms, as compared with 16 percent in commercial and 18 percent in industrial employment. A year later the relevant percentages of placements were 68.6 percent, 22.1 percent and 21.7 percent.25

On farm employment for youth, the Bureau carried on the work of the Rural Employment Committee which had been formed in 1933. This
Committee, in spite of a healthy placement record, experienced considerable difficulty in persuading parents to release their boys for farm work, which was seen as degrading, as legalised exploitation of minors, and as breaking up family units. The Committee and later the Bureau therefore endeavoured to break down this resistance by investigating the farmers involved, medically testing youths to ensure physical fitness, and following up when possible with guidance and advice to the farm "trainees". Although conscious of the "dead-end" employment potential for the farm schemes, Committee members nevertheless contended that "... the Department [of Labour and Industry] has some very definite results to offer showing that there is slowly growing a sense of landmindedness, and that boys have and can make good for themselves if they are willing to adopt the land as a career." What is evident, despite the resistances described, is that the Bureau schemes proved quite successful in coping with the initial surge of youth unemployment and in creating imaginative linkages between youth and the actual employment opportunities in the State. At the grass roots level, connections established between government and voluntary/citizen groups appeared to mobilise local initiatives and personal commitments.

Under the Bureau, the original schemes were gradually extended. In 1936 the Bureau launched efforts to ease the way for boys involved to find their way into farms of their own. To encourage mobility, rail passes also were introduced for youths travelling to farms. A year later the Bureau with Government assistance introduced a system of subsidised farm employment to supplement the farm scholarships. These attracted widespread support from individual farmers as well as philanthropic and church organisations. Throughout its operations, the Bureau cooperated with the Department of Public Instruction in connection with appropriate training schemes - but these will be described in a later section.
By 1939 the Bureau's schemes were losing impetus as enlistments in the armed forces cleared new occupational opportunities for young people generally.27

In South Australia, vocational guidance was introduced in 1929 under the coordination of superintendent of Technical Education Charles Fenner.28 The scheme differed from those in Victoria and New South Wales in being organised around the principals and teachers in "super primary" schools who acted as counsellors or assistant counsellors. These people gathered information from record cards and report forms used throughout the State to produce "merit" lists of school leavers, who were then registered for placement. W.J. Young was appointed as employment officer with responsibility for linking the guidance task with employment opportunities. Once the depression deepened, however, the job placement record of this office was so poor that Young was transferred to another position. It was pointed out at the time that 80 percent of girl school leavers found their way into their own or others' homes, whilst amongst boys 85 percent found their way into "odd jobs" - "board and lodging, shops and offices, clerical work, railways, service stations, navigation, messenger services, and industrial and agricultural work".29 Records of job placement meanwhile indicated that the vast majority of school leavers found employment by their own efforts, backed by school reports. The employment office seemed almost superfluous in this situation.

Fenner's analysis of youth unemployment in 1933 has already been reported. On this, Fenner argued that little positive could be achieved until the economy generally improved. Yet at the same time, avenues for employment in agriculture were constantly diminishing. Fenner drew the conclusion that such policies as later entry into the workforce, shorter working hours, earlier retirement and falling birth
rates might somewhat alleviate the situation. Lengthening the period of compulsory education, for example, would permit schooling to catch up with employment trends. But ultimately the gap between industry and the schools (including the technical schools) would need in his view to be bridged more comprehensively. 30

In this last connection, South Australia's remedies were rather similar to those prescribed for Western Australia: to regenerate the economy generally but more especially to develop secondary industry as a state-wide political drive. In 1939 a Select Committee of the House of Assembly on Unemployment Relief Works pin-pointed South Australia's neglect of secondary industry until the mid-'thirties when the State Cabinet had established an Industries Assistance Corporation to attract new industry and retain existing manufacturing firms in the State. Success in these ventures convinced the Select Committee that in such broad industrialisation strategies ultimately lay the key to economic and (thereby) employment recovery. 31

Western Australia introduced forms of vocational guidance during 1929, partly as State Education Department responses to Labor Party and Teachers' Union initiatives regarding extended post primary education in the State. Though the scheme drew upon experience in the State's Psychological Laboratory (opened in 1927), nothing as elaborate as occurred in New South Wales or Victoria was introduced. To some extent this reflected Departmental skepticism about a sufficient range of jobs being available for school leavers without the existence of substantial manufacturing industries. What vocational guidance had been introduced, ground to a halt in 1930. During the depression years such citizen bodies as the Boys' Employment League, church-based youth committees and the Youth and Motherhood Appeal Committee set up semi formal employment exchanges for young women and boys and also provided
material sustenance and wholesome entertainment. These committees and societies found, as in Queensland, that farm employment was the most productive avenue for youth employment, even though there was some parental and youth antagonism to it. Reversal of the urban drift, by then well in evidence across Australia, nevertheless claimed the support of Western Australian politicians and philanthropists concerned. Meanwhile the State Government, as had South Australia's, concluded from experience of the State Economic Council that the only realistic way to generate employment was through general economic recovery, and also that this would only occur if the State could successfully diversify its economic base to include a substantial manufacturing sector. Secession from the Commonwealth of Australia (in 1933) was another option canvassed, although this was more a response to frustration and anger than realism. At the end of the 'thirties, Western Australia had already launched policies to foster purchases of local state products, to attract secondary industry and promote employment. A bill to introduce a State Bureau of Industry and Economic Research, introduced in 1938, nevertheless failed to receive Legislative Council support.32

Employment and Training: The Emergency Period and After

Vocational guidance blended with labour market information services and placement was one side of the first reaction to youth unemployment in Australia. Another side concerned training and educational schemes of different kinds. These lay outside apprenticeship programmes, which are dealt with later, and also the conventional education system, even though the latter was involved and later policies accorded in higher priority. Official and voluntary ventures combined to help young people denied access to apprenticeships and other forms of junior and semi-skilled employment. "Dead-end" employment became a
concern, since jobs for 14-16 year olds proved easier to find even under depression conditions than were jobs for older age groups, for whom higher wages were mandatory. Significantly too, structural changes, due to mechanisation and automation in industry and the "remarkable" development of secondary industries, were recognised as presenting different training challenges as compared with earlier years when agriculture absorbed large proportions of the workforce.

Coupled to education and training concerns were those related to the psychological, social and political stability of youth severely affected by long-term employment. "Worthwhile" use of leisure, good citizenship, self pride and moral rectitude assumed importance as values equal to the gaining of marketable skills to the organisations involved with youth unemployment. It might well be argued that philanthropic compassion was even stronger as a motivation than apprehension about the possible radicalisation of the younger generation in a time of social and economic distress. This political element lay just below the surface of much rhetoric employed at the time. But it materialised mainly among the less credible and highly conservative spokesmen. Little genuine support emerged, for example, for the creation of youth labour camps, although they were floated as possibilities by odd commentators anxious to quarantine the young from contact with the less politically and morally desirable influences around them. Rural training schemes nevertheless carried something of this tenor. Youth camps, however popular in Nazi Germany, were objects of suspicion in a country that grew increasingly fearful of militarism.

As far as the conventional education system was concerned, an early reaction to the employment situation was for enrolment in "super primary" education to rise as parents sought shelter for their children. This was particularly marked in New South Wales where a "banking up" of
upper post primary pupils occurred during 1931 and 1932. As the depression lifted, school leavers again increased in number. A similar pattern emerged in Victoria between 1929 and 1930. The early trend accentuated post-primary enrolment increases generally across Australia that accompanied state secondary education growth and egalitarian policies during the nineteen twenties. Indeed, depression policy debates about raising the school leaving age, modifying post-primary curricula, extending vocational guidance and rejuvenating technical education all need to be weighed against the background of rising community demand for post primary education during the nineteen twenties.

In the technical schools, each state introduced emergency day classes, which were conceived from a number of motivations. One was to "keep young people off the streets"; another to give dismissed apprentices the chance to continue their training. For most however, the classes provided pre-employment or full-time pre-apprentice type training. It was hoped too that keeping young people in education and training would ensure the supply of trained workers once the economy entered its recovery cycle. In New South Wales, free education for a period of 12 months was extended in 1932 to selected boys and girls. Victoria followed a similar path, to provide full time day instruction for unemployed youth after they finished the conventional junior technical school course. 300 joined the classes in 1931, assisted by waivers of fees in special cases. As for trade apprentices, free day classes were introduced for those with interrupted indentures, whilst evening classes also catered to the needs of many youths out of work. In Victoria, as contrasted with New South Wales, total enrolments in junior and senior technical schools suffered in the early depression years as a result of fees being introduced after a major State Government inquiry in 1931.

The agencies concerned with youth employment described earlier,
linked closely to initiatives from the various state departments of labour, also introduced classes for young people concerned. In New South Wales the Young Citizens' Associations arranged instruction in such areas as woodwork, motor car repairs, ticket-writing, bookkeeping and commercial work, sometimes conducted in local technical schools. The YMCA also introduced classes, subsidized from State Government funds, for typists and home workers. The Department of Labour and Industry meanwhile conducted a farm school at Scheyville (near Windsor) offering an eight week course to boys referred to it. It could accommodate 130 boys, but the demand for places dropped quickly after 1933. Young girls were assisted by the Young Citizens' Associations, the YWCA, church and other agencies with instruction in sewing and other domestic skills. Another avenue for training started later in 1938 involved the New South Wales Forestry Commission, which placed 50 boys aged between 16 and 18 years at the Wallaroo Forestry Camp to be prepared for reafforestation work.

Victoria, dominated by the capital city Melbourne, offered classes similar to those described in New South Wales, under the aegis of the Boys' Employment Movement, the YMCA and the YWCA, the churches and other citizen groups. These agencies also provided leisure activities, including cinema shows and sporting opportunities. Girls, assisted by their own version of the Boys' Employment Movement, received instruction in sewing and domestic economy. Demand for the emergency courses quickly fell away, however, from about 1933. The Boys' Employment Movement experimented with placement and training for farm employment. The scheme, despite catering for 922 boys in 1934, was far from an unqualified success. In 1935 a farm school was opened at Bendigo, and the State Forests Department also established a training camp at Noojie catering for boys aged between 16 and 18 years of age.
The latter scheme used federal government grants for reafforestation projects.39

Queensland's predominantly agricultural economy was evident in the schemes introduced for training its unemployed youth. The Department of Labour and Industry from 1930 coordinated charitable activities through the Social Service League, which by 1933 encompassed 54 branches, 28 of them in Brisbane. The League opened a women's section in which single women found work and assistance, and in 1931 it set up a Housecraft Training School teaching cookery and dressmaking, hygiene and home nursing. 857 girls had attended classes by 1933.40 As for rural training, the Department of Labour and Industry in 1931 opened the Riverview Training Farm, which was started with help from the Salvation Army. 347 boys had been through the Farm by 1935, of whom 271 had been placed with farmers.41 The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock in 1933 opened the St. Lucia Training Farm, which by 1935 had trained 216 boys in a six month course. The Department of Labour and Industry from 1932 also operated a programme of subsidies to farmers offering on-the-job training to boys placed with them. By 1935 the scheme had placed 615 boys on farms, 340 of whom remained in employment after the initial training period. The Christian Brothers Agricultural College at Abergowrie in North Queensland from 1934 also offered farm training.

As far as technical education was concerned, the Departments of Labour and Industry and of Public Instruction from 1931 cooperated in offering vocational Training Classes. Similar to day training classes in the other states, "the purpose of these classes was not only to equip unemployed lads with a useful trade but to utilize their spare time in some useful occupation and thus save them from the ill-effects of idleness on youth".42 By 1935 the classes, conducted at Brisbane and
the main provincial cities, had claimed 2,582 students, among whom more than half were eventually placed in employment.

All these schemes fell within the coordinating responsibilities of the Juvenile Employment Bureau established in 1935 and described elsewhere. Overall, the State's Department of Labour and Industry performed a major coordinating function during the depression years. In 1935 the Department with some justification compared its achievements with the range of options recommended from a World Youth Congress held at Geneva in September. Especially noteworthy in the Queensland context was the documentation of youth employment problems provided by Leonard Morris in his annual reports on technical education. In particular, he emphasised the drift towards urban employment in Australia's most rural population. This he saw as demanding substantial improvements to labour conditions on the land on the one hand, and a greater emphasis, on the other, on technical education for secondary industry.

In Western Australia the Boys' Employment League - counterpart of Victoria's Boys' Employment Movement - and other religious and philanthropic bodies offered job placement and training opportunities outside the Technical Education Branch of the State Education Department. Not surprisingly, given the West's predominantly agricultural economy at the time, farm employment - as in Queensland - provided the most fruitful source of employment for boys. Particular farm based schemes - the Ugly Men's Association and the Catholic orphanages - were also successful in this regard. In the city of Perth, the League and associated bodies introduced some training, particularly for girls in domestic skills, and they also provided food, clothing, shelter and leisure activities. The Youth and Motherhood Appeal, which closed in 1935, raised £25,000 which the organising committee proposed to distribute for purposes of prospector training, farm work, kindergarten
training, vocational classes in technical schools and domestic work. Even so the response was disappointing, since fewer youth than anticipated came forward and the money was too little to cope with requests from the competing concerns involved. Harold Boas, chairman of the Boys' Employment League and later chairman of the State's Economic Council indicated that Government action was necessary not only in alleviating youth unemployment but more especially in boosting the economy generally.45

Apprenticeship Systems

In the context of youth unemployment, the effect of depression conditions on apprentice registrations and opportunities, whilst severe, in no way matched the effect on youths generally. Yet from the viewpoint of the acquisition and retention of skills in the Australian workforce, the authorities concerned were naturally alarmed. In particular, they worried lest the economic recovery period should be unduly lengthened because of losses to the skilled labour force. Other more humanitarian issues also were at stake. Because of the age structure and other legislative and administrative constraints on apprenticeship, youths who missed apprenticeship opportunities during the worst years of the depression were unlikely to obtain another chance at a later stage. They would therefore become a "lost generation", doomed to dead-end "high risk" occupations and perhaps even to join the ranks of the permanently unemployed. Hence, in all discussions about youth unemployment, apprenticeship training problems were critical issues. Because of relationships between apprenticeship training and technical institutions, the future of technical education generally also was closely tied to remedies proposed and introduced.

The situation was the worse for having followed a decade of
reform in apprentice training that brought about improved planning and administration of apprentice training in Australia, coupled to substantial advances in the provision of technical education for apprentices.46 South Australia in 1917 had led the way with its Technical Education of Apprentices Act which introduced the principle of compulsory day release of apprentices for technical education, in the employer's time and at his expense. By 1927 when the Adelaide Technical College opened, there were 14 trades involved in the scheme. In New South Wales, the Board of Trade after passing of the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act of 1919 produced a Report in 1922 that was highly critical of apprentice training arrangements in the State. The outcome was the establishment of Conciliation Committees to oversee apprentice training arrangements. These functioned alongside trade advisory committees which the State's Superintendent of Technical Education James Nangle had begun establishing in 1914 to assist with the planning and supervision of technical classes associated with apprentice training. Victoria meanwhile completely reorganised its previously loose apprentice training arrangements when in 1927 the State Government established the Apprenticeship Commission as part of its Department of Labour. The Commission, on which employers and employees were represented, and which was chaired by the State's Superintendent of Technical Education, became something of a model for other states. Earlier, in 1924, Queensland under the Apprentices and Minors Act (amended in 1929) established an Apprenticeship Executive and also appointed Group Apprenticeship Committees for each trade or group of trades. Compulsory technical education involved four hours per week of day, and two hours per week of evening, instruction in a relevant college or school. Western Australia in 1925 amended its Arbitration Act to strengthen powers of the Arbitration Court in apprentice matters.
At the same time the Act mandated four hours per week of day release training for apprentices to be conducted in technical institutions.

Regarding indentures, these eventually settled into conventional patterns of five years apprenticeship, which tended to accommodate union industrial demands rather than fitting any rational manpower policy. Employers indeed generally agreed that more strictly enforced conditions of apprenticeship during the twentieth century were imposing constraints upon skill training that were positively vindictive, establishing wage levels that were counterproductive to employment and involving excessive provision of technical education. More, the controls and policies failed to accommodate structural changes in industry due to mechanisation and automation. Not only were these necessary for competitive survival but they also reduced the need for highly skilled craftsmen. Industrial training of a semi-skilled variety was, in the employer view, of higher priority than conventional apprentice training. This line of reasoning ran consistently through the major reports on apprenticeship and technical education published in New South Wales\textsuperscript{47} and Western Australia.\textsuperscript{48}

Yet nationally and internationally apprenticeship training staged a revival during the depression years. Such agencies as the International Labour Office strongly supported the system which it considered had deteriorated seriously over the previous decade.\textsuperscript{49} Canada and the U.S.A., which like Australia traditionally recruited new skilled labour by means of immigration, also made special efforts to promote, coordinate and strengthen apprenticeship training.\textsuperscript{50} In Australia, both unions and government were unwilling to let apprenticeship collapse, justifying their stance on the need to nurture skills as a national economic priority as manufacturing increased, as well as on humanitarian grounds where youth employment was concerned. Western Australia's Wolff Commission of 1937 and the New South Wales Baddeley
Committee of 1940 strongly preferred retaining the apprenticeship system to introducing more radical schemes. They even opposed shortened indenture periods.

For all this support, New South Wales in 1932 had introduced significant changes to apprenticeship training. Under pressures of the time, the Government appointed an Apprenticeship Commissioner (James McIntyre) to preside over Apprenticeship Councils made up from members of the Conciliation Councils and the Apprenticeship Commission. In another move, replicated elsewhere only in South Australia in a small way in 1938, New South Wales introduced a trainee apprentice system under which employees were not tied to five year apprenticeship indentures. Trainees were placed with cooperating employers for varying periods of time depending on capacity, availability of work, attitudes and performance of trainees, and relationships between employers and apprentices. By 1939 the trainee system dominated in New South Wales. Neither the unions nor most other state governments supported the scheme, although employers actively promoted it.51 Western Australia and Queensland firmly opposed the system.

Another innovation introduced in New South Wales in 1939 became that State's main avenue for spending its Commonwealth Youth Employment Grant of £79,000.52 The Employment Council introduced a scheme of subsidized apprentice training for youths between 19 and 25 years of age. The intention was to place 1000 young people in apprenticeships and provide associated technical education. Because of the age factor, Federal arbitration awards needed adjustment since adults were effectively denied apprenticeship opportunities, whilst indentures of four years were also accepted. Although originally planned for 1000 persons, the scheme eventually catered for 3,065. £50,000 from the Commonwealth grant went towards subsidized apprentice wages, and the remaining £29,000
towards the extension of technical college facilities. Since the scheme cost New South Wales £200,000 annually, the Commonwealth grants were quite inadequate.

Wolff in his 1938 report to the Western Australian Government supported neither the trainee nor the subsidized apprenticeship systems. At the time Western Australia mandated four hours of day release training in technical colleges and it also conducted a closely administered, if rather inflexible, system of apprenticeship indentures. Queensland, and South Australia also had compulsory day release training. In New South Wales, however, and to a lesser extent Victoria also, day release training was less common. Evening classes in both states, with significant exceptions, were the norm. All states after World War II adopted day release training for apprentices. For all the criticism of both the trainee and subsidized apprentice schemes, they were both imaginative and flexible, and so proved highly valuable under depression conditions in offering chances for youth and older people to gain opportunities they otherwise might have missed.

Employment and Training for Women

Regarding training and employment of women, the schemes introduced in the early 'thirties demand special attention because of their relevance to present day concerns. Growing participation in the labour market by women, and particularly after World War I, was widely blamed for exacerbating employment difficulties of young and older males. Between 1911 and 1983 the proportion of women in the Australian workforce had risen from 19.9 to 21.6 percent. Despite this rather small increase, such leading politicians as Sir Frederick Stewart (Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Employment) in 1935 cited these figures as "one of the contributing causes of the unemployment of our
school-leaving youths". On this point he argued from further data that among juveniles under 16 years of age, female participation in the labour force had risen between 1911 and 1933-34 from 43.1 to 55.1 percent. Stewart, typical of many commentators at the time, reported to his parliament the various measures being adopted in Europe to restrict the scope of employment for women, and particularly those who were married.

The whole question exercised the minds of politicians everywhere, to the extent that such bodies as the International Labour Office itself conducted studies into female employment. As for Australia, women's employment occupied a complete chapter of Walker's study in 1936. Walker in this connection stressed that women generally worked as a matter of economic necessity, and therefore that a suitable policy would be to increase male wages and provide stable male employment (an impossibility at the height of the depression). The whole debate nevertheless spotlighted attention on such questions as the rights of women to work, equal pay for equal work, and equal access to areas of employment currently restricted to males.

The major New South Wales and Western Australian inquiries into youth employment devoted special space to women's employment. In Perth, such feminist leaders as Bessie Rischbieth fully outlined the exclusion of females from skilled (apprenticeable) work, and she also reported the deskilling of much factory work performed by women, for example in the clothing, textile and footwear industries which had become increasingly mechanised. Commercial occupations meanwhile quickly became female strongholds. Also from Perth, female politician E. Holman emphasised women's employment rights in the face of community (male?) complaints about its impact on youth and male employment generally.

Elizabeth May Simmons, from the New South Wales State Labour Exchange,
in 1939 drew a similar picture for her own state.

Given the political sensitivity of women's employment, it is perhaps understandable - though no less surprising - that Australia's women engaged as witnesses before the Baddeley and Wolff Commissions turned heavily towards domestic employment ("service") as a work outlet for women. Employment in this area was persistently cited as one where job vacancies went begging for lack of interested or trained women. At a rather more sophisticated level, proponents of domestic training also raised their sights to employment in the food processing industries (in which women were prominent) and in the more professional levels of hospital dietetics and nutrition generally. In Western Australia, observers concerned made continual reference to Victoria's success with the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy at Melbourne as a model for the domestic arts and science program needed at Perth. Both in New South Wales and in Western Australia, observers argued that domestic training would boost the status of domestic work and provide skills that employers would find attractive. Leonard Morris in 1929 was another to champion domestic-home science classes in technical colleges. Commentators concerned further criticised the adequacy of super-primary junior technical school preparation in domestic studies.

The dilemma remained, however, as stressed by New South Wales' Simmons: "The Australian girl is not domestic minded"(!). Pushed on this opinion, Simmons explained that although domestic wages were competitive, the hours and conditions were awful. Girls in factories, for all the drudgery involved, at least enjoyed the freedom of evenings and weekends. Rischbieth in Western Australia was another to signal the servile and boring nature of the work, a situation that was also described graphically by New South Wales' Domestic Employees' Union Secretary Robert Mortell. As he explained, even women "drafted" into
domestic work fled at the first opportunity, into commercial or factory employment. Most commentators agreed that a solution might be found by passing industrial awards for domestic work and introducing apprenticeship training in the field. With respect to more general employment, the women observers contended that a lengthened compulsory education, higher age minima for juvenile employment, and apprenticeship training for girls would not only regularise factory work for women but also facilitate their chances of escape from "dead end" occupations.

In practical terms, implementing the desired schemes was a different matter. During the early crisis years the citizen groups described earlier provided instruction for young girls and single women out of work, in sewing, cooking and other basic skills. The sewing circles and other ventures also featured sustenance, involving shelter, food and clothing, the organisation of congenial surroundings and leisure activities, and some medical examination and treatment. Physical fitness, a problem noted at the time among the girls handled by the groups mentioned, was perhaps of equal importance to moral protection. Concrete progress on domestic science programmes came towards the end of the decade. Western Australia, for example, in 1940 started domestic science courses at the Perth Technical College. The Labor Government at the time also made abortive attempts to introduce industrial awards for domestics.

But even by the end of the 'thirties, domestic employment for women was a lost cause. "Domestic mindedness" noted for its absence amongst Australian women at the time, virtually disappeared during the Second World War and post-war years. Women meanwhile benefited from improved post-primary and secondary education opportunities, although access to apprenticeships and the male-dominated work areas did not much
alter. Hairdressing, beauty salon and commercial work (typing, shorthand and secretarial), and semi-skilled work in particular industries remained the preserve of employed women until well after the Second World War. Interestingly, married women hardly received a mention during the depression. They were expected to leave work upon marriage. Indeed, Walker in 1936 stressed that better male wages and regular work would ensure that married women did not become a major force in the Australian labour market.

Raising the School Leaving Age

Extension of the years of compulsory education assumed international significance throughout the depression decade. Youth congresses leading up to and including the 1936 Congress of the International Labour Office, which devoted special attention to youth employment, all favoured raising the school leaving age on economic, social and educational grounds. The diverse motivations involved are impossible to disentangle satisfactorily, and they are closely linked to the resurgence of community support for technical education, which is dealt with in later sections.

In economic contexts, adding to the years of compulsory education would clearly reduce the size of the labour market, and particularly assist older youth and adults to reenter the labour force. These were the groups most seriously affected by job opportunity losses in the early years of the depression. As one instrument of employment policy, raising the school leaving age lined up with such other options canvassed at the time as shortening the working week, lowering the retirement age, and restricting women's employment. What was clear, however, was that with the birthrate and immigration levels at their lowest for years, dislocations from adding a year of compulsory
education would be minimised. In New South Wales and possibly in Victoria also, some cost savings were anticipated with respect to junior technical schools, were the policy to be implemented. In any event, virtually every investigation by State Employment Councils or other relevant committees and individuals recommended positively on the idea. Indeed surveys of developments around the world - and in Britain and the United States of America in particular - indicated that Australia would only be falling in line with developments elsewhere. The Baddeley Committee in New South Wales in 1940 recommended raising the school leaving age to 15 years in 1942, and to 16 years in 1943.\footnote{65} In fact legislation in 1940 achieved the first target even more quickly. Western Australia's Wolff Commission (into Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System) in 1938, though rather more equivocal in its endorsement, also supported the policy. In 1943 the then Wilcox Labor Government passed the required legislation, though the Act did not operate until 1962. Other states followed similar paths to New South Wales - Tasmania in 1942, South Australia in 1942, and Victoria in 1943.\footnote{66} Only Queensland delayed action till well after World War II, although relevant committees of inquiry and the education authorities all favoured raising the leaving age in the State.\footnote{67}

The social and educational grounds for adopting the policy were closely associated with dissatisfaction about the general and vocational education of young people preparing for entry to the job market. Existing forms of vocational-technical preparation at the post-primary, junior technical and senior technical school levels were regarded by most educationists as needing very considerable reform. In this connection rising disquiet about the early selection and specialised education of children destined for the trades and semi-skilled work motivated such authors as Sublet and Cunningham into writing about
the need for adaptability in the workforce and a sense of cultural depth necessary for good citizenship and social harmony. Along with other international commentators and overseas visitors to Australia, they deplored the trend towards over-specialisation and crass utilitarianism behind the wave of enthusiasm for technical education at the time. Part of their solution to "humanising" technical education was to inject a greater measure of general education into at least the lower levels of technical education, and particularly the junior technical schools and "super primary schools" that would figure prominently in extensions of compulsory education.

At state levels, Victoria's Director of Education M.P. Hansen in 1928 tried to bring the junior technical schools into a wider departmental system of post primary education. But ultimately, even though this policy received endorsement in a major inquiry into Victorian education in 1931, it was opposed strongly by the Labor Government of the day. As a consequence, the junior technical schools remained separate entities, under the technical education branch, and indeed gained strength and popularity during the nineteen thirties.

As for New South Wales, James Nangle after his retirement as Superintendent of Technical Education, in 1934 made no bones about promoting general post primary education outside the technical education system. Like the international and other national commentators, he argued for increased attention at this level to English and Mathematics - the basics - and even for the removal of the word "technical". In doing so he responded to criticism from industry about the poor preparation in the 3 R's received by children about to enter the workforce. On the other hand, he also complained that the tag "technical" encouraged employers to expect unwarranted levels of skill from youths holding certificates awarded by junior technical schools. More to the
point, junior technical school pupils in this view tended afterwards to undervalue the specialised work in technical colleges and schools. Nangle took another stand in 1934 that appeared in most reform proposals concerning technical and extended compulsory education. He contended that junior technical schools became the dumping ground for low achievers and so became identified in the public mind, along with the rest of technical education, as low prestige institutions for the poorer classes in society. At a time when class tensions were high, due to the economic and political situation, such obstacles to educational opportunity were to be minimized.

In most of the other Australian states, the junior technical schools - with a less vocationally oriented curriculum than Victoria's - received considerable support during the depression. Western Australia's Wolff generously commended them in his Royal Commission Report of 1938. South Australia in 1940 renamed many of its central (super-primary) schools as junior technical schools. Before this only the Thebarton Junior Technical School had carried the name. In Queensland, where technical and post primary education were mostly provided within the same buildings, the problem was rather different. In all states, however, a balanced curriculum included substantial general education content.

The status difficulties affecting technical education had roots deep in the social class structure, elite perceptions of theoretical knowledge and the predilections of educational personnel generally. To correct this imbalance in the service of opportunities, upward social mobility and social harmony, and increased industrial efficiency, became a high priority throughout at least the democratic nations during the depression years. In part the motivation also lay in directing towards "lower level" careers the students in traditional (academic) education.
for whom work was becoming harder to find. Radicalisation of this group, more a problem in Europe than Australia, was considered a trend to be countered strongly. In Australian terms, urban drift of the population was often construed in comparable terms.

The solution adopted in most Australian states was to initiate public examination changes that added "vocational" subjects, with the object of according them a level of equality. Examination reforms also sought, without a great deal of success at this time, to counter the dominance of university staff and interests on the public examination boards. Changes in New South Wales (1938), Western Australia (1938), Queensland (1941), South Australia (1944) and Victoria (1947) all contained elements of this policy. Such modifications during the depression years fell into line with British developments after the Hadow Report of 1926, although differentiation of pupils through placement in separate school types at post-primary level affronted the consciences of most Australian observers. Administratively and financially, there were other advantages of amalgamating the various school types into one comprehensive entity. Whichever option was followed, egalitarian objectives dominated the rhetoric. During 1937 the Congress of the National Education Fellowship, held in Australia, confirmed these social democratic themes, which proved the more attractive as uneasiness mounted about the totalitarian trends in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

The Renaissance of Technical Education and Commonwealth Interventions

Most of the preceding account has laid the foundation for a consideration of developments in Australian technical education during the depression years. A measure of the significance attributed to technical education at a time of economic crisis was the number of
government inquiries into technical education, or into apprentice training and youth employment that strongly featured technical education. For the first time in nearly twenty years technical education moved to the centre of attention. New South Wales in 1933 established a Commission chaired by Alexander Gibson to review in very considerable detail the whole system in that State. Two years earlier Victoria held an inquiry into aspects of state education in which technical education, and particularly the junior technical schools were matters of some contention. Then in Western Australia, in 1938 Justice J. Wolff presented the Report of a Commission into Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System that involved every aspect of technical education. New South Wales again, in 1939 and 1940, printed the reports of a Select Committee of Parliament inquiring into youth employment. Technical education again was strongly represented. South Australia, while not holding any special inquiry nevertheless placed technical education at the centre of attention. In Queensland, the annual reports of the Superintendent of Technical Education received substantial prominence, whilst the Juvenile Employment Bureau operations strongly focussed on technical education. Even in Tasmania, technical education received a prominence it had lacked since an earlier inquiry, in 1916.

Australian spokesmen on technical education during the depression achieved a status they had not held since the early days of the century. None could claim such influence perhaps as D.H. Drummond, the New South Wales Minister of Public Instruction for most of the decade. His report after a visit overseas in 1935 carried the plea for Commonwealth intervention to correct the financial condition of technical education. James Nangle, also from New South Wales, strongly influenced conclusions of the Gibson Report. Then in Victoria, Earnest
Eltham in 1930 came to the leadership of technical education as a most able successor to Donald Clark. With the benefit of overseas travel under a Carnegie Grant in 1935, he not only produced a very influential report on technical education overseas but also established a national reputation that in 1939 was recognised by his secondment to the Commonwealth Government to organise the war-time technical education schemes. Western Australia's Leslie William Phillips, another Carnegie grant beneficiary, later led his state's technical education system during the Second World War after emerging in 1938 as one of Australia's first historians of technical education. Nationally, K.S. Cunningham as Director of the newly founded Australian Council for Educational Research (started with Carnegie money) emerged as a prominent figure in all aspects of education. His contributions to debates on technical education were significant outside Australia as well as within.\(^\text{76}\)

Overseas visits of technical educationists and others in Australian education removed Australian education from the insularity into which it had tended to slide during the early depression period. What was especially prominent about the international interest in technical education was the growing involvement of national governments. Australia would not much longer ignore the need for Commonwealth support for technical education as a national priority. Congresses of the International Labour Office in 1936 and again in 1939 focussed upon technical education and apprenticeship as significant aspects of more general concerns with youth employment policy. Australian participation in the I.L.O. congresses ensured too that reports of the congresses and the conventions agreed upon received due acknowledgement in the national and state parliaments.\(^\text{77}\) It is further significant that Australian academic publications in the I.L.O. journals were
prominent, as were articles in such new serials as the *Yearbook of Education*, which first appeared in 1932. These publications tended to emphasise the significant role of technical education in youth employment and apprenticeship matters. On the last point, New South Wales' Apprenticeship Commissioner J. McIntyre in 1939 presented to his State Parliament a very full report on national support for apprentice training in Canada and the United States, during the very years in which the I.L.O. featured apprenticeship in its international congress.

Pressures on the Commonwealth Government to assist technical education came to a head in 1936 when the state ministers of education jointly asked for a grant of £2 million over four years as well as a permanent annual subsidy of £100,000. Again in 1936, a Commonwealth-State ministers' conference held at Adelaide made a special case for Commonwealth assistance. By this stage the target group was the 18-25 year olds, the ones who had missed trade training opportunities at the height of the depression and who now were considered the unskilled unemployed. Initially, the Lyons Government turned down the requests, but soon faced renewed lobbying from the Australian Education Council formed after the 1936 meetings. It comprised the state ministers of education and directors of education, with participation also by the state superintendents of technical education. In 1937 the Lyons Government agreed to a much smaller measure than originally sought, when it passed the States Grants (Youth Employment) Act. This passed £200,000 to the states to be employed in schemes, initiated in each state, to assist the unemployed 18-25 year old group. Programmes for girls and women were specifically included as eligible for assistance.

All states conducted surveys of youth employment at the time to justify proposals for funding placed before the Commonwealth. The
grant, small and late in the depression as it was, proved to be the first major financial intervention in state education by federal government in Australia. Subsequent national conferences, at Adelaide in 1937 and at Melbourne again (in 1939) kept attention on the needs of technical education. Finally, as regards national visibility of technical education, Frank Spencer's survey published in 1939 provided an outsider's critical appraisal of strengths and weaknesses in Australia's systems of technical training.

The Commonwealth grants were distributed according to plans prepared by state authorities - usually the Economic Councils or bodies dealing specifically by this stage with youth employment. New South Wales' grants (£79,000) went almost totally towards subsidized apprenticeship training for older youths and the details were reported earlier in this paper. In Queensland, the money (£25,000) was channelled through the Juvenile Employment Bureau into commercial training for 150 unemployed youths holding passes in the University Junior Examination, into providing 100 places at the Queensland Agricultural High School and College (Gatton) for a one year course in practical farming, and into a training project involving the preparation of 65 boys for practical prospecting. South Australia's share (£19,000) went towards facilities and equipment for pre-trade training for 200 youths who after twelve months were placed in industry by means of subsidized wages. This scheme wound down in 1939, having placed 498 people in employment after the initial period of training. (Thereafter the facilities were turned over to training for the armed services and war industries). Western Australia's grant of £14,000 was lumped with money collected by the Youth and Motherhood Appeal Committee to provide new trade buildings and equipment at the Perth Technical College and to assist the introduction of courses in domestic science. As for
Tasmania, its grant of £8,000 was used by a Youth Employment Branch of the Chief Secretary's Department, which appointed a Youth Employment Officer. The funds were spent on trade and other training facilities in technical colleges and the subsidization of employment and apprentice wages when the trainees involved were absorbed into the workforce. By 1940 the Branch had dealt with 282 trainees of whom 173 had been placed in or had themselves obtained work. 280 non-trainees also had been found employment.81

Tasmania to some extent had followed Victoria's example. In Victoria the State Government established a Youth Employment Committee, presided over by the Minister for Labour, which represented private and public employers.82 The scheme of vocational rehabilitation for unemployed youth attracted 7,766 applications for assistance in 1937, although of these 4,933 failed to report for interview or withdrew. 1,201 were recommended for technical training and 1,632 were considered unsuitable for technical school training for skilled occupations. Under the scheme, youths recommended received between six and twelve months of full time day instruction in trade and other classes for youths aged between 18 and 25 years of age. After reaching an assessed level of efficiency of 40 to 50 percent of that possessed by a journeyman or skilled adult, the selected youths were placed in employment, receiving subsidized wages for a maximum of 18 months. 658 youth received technical training under the scheme in 1937, and a further 1,217 were helped in 1938. Classes were organized in motor mechanics, electric and oxy-welding, panel beating, turning and fitting, carpentry, electroplating and polishing, bricklaying, painting, motor body building, electrical fitting, plumbing and agricultural work. Other classes were added in 1938. Employment without subsidy was found for another 955 young men under the scheme in 1937.83
As far as Commonwealth-state cooperation in youth employment was concerned, ministers representing both the Federal and State Governments met in Melbourne during July 1939 to consider the problem. This conference occurred in the shadow of approaching hostilities; and the second meeting in December met after the nation had entered the conflict. For purposes of the second meeting the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics prepared a paper entitled "The Problem of Employment for Youths and Young Men". This highlighted a continuing difficulty, quite independent of the depression, involving the loss of employment at about 18 years of age among youths who had found employment relatively easily upon leaving school. Options available were raising the school leaving age and restricting employment under 15 years of age. Ultimately, the outcome of the conferences was a resolve among the states to monitor developments during the war years with respect to youth employment. The whole matter then passed into the realm of planning for war-time defence industry training and post-war reconstruction. In this context, Victoria's decision to strengthen its already significant vocational guidance effort as part of the Youth Employment Scheme merged neatly after 1939 into schemes for vocational guidance associated with war-time technical training schemes.

Purpose, Prestige and Governance in Technical Education

The Commonwealth grants for youth employment were a poor return for the lobbying effort launched by the states. Yet this effort reflected a level of visibility and prominence for technical education in Australia matched only in the public inquiries at the turn of the century. As then, so in the 'thirties, overseas developments described earlier played a major part in ideas about reform in Australia's technical education systems. This continued throughout the decade,
peaking around 1940 when national crises in the supply of trained manpower for defence industries completely reordered Commonwealth technical education priorities. On the purposes and functions of technical schools and colleges, the Australian debate focussed strongly on questions of status and balance as between utilitarian and humanitarian objectives. These issues implied higher levels of government resources than formerly, as well as new approaches to governance, community linkages and coordination that would match those enjoyed by the compulsory, secondary and university levels of public education.

The public "image" of technical education proved a difficult obstacle since the field had been associated increasingly with poverty, with regard not only to material resources but also to the social classes for which it was provided. Secondary education reforms early in the century, including patterns of selection through examinations and even vocational guidance, directed the more able into the higher prestige institutions and careers. Technical education meanwhile became identified with contentious arbitration legislation, decrepit buildings, overcrowded classes, poorly qualified teachers, old fashioned and inadequate equipment, and part-time evening study for the ambitious ("worthy") working classes. Tackling the problem of esteem required a breadth of vision for technical education embracing humanitarian and liberal values that had been partly lost in the obsession with industrial efficiency fuelling reforms early in the century. For most of the concerned commentators, Sublet, Cunningham and Drummond for example, the liberal side of technical education would be enhanced by raising the school leaving age and broadening the cultural basis of junior technical education. Yet the need for personal development to receive more attention in a reformed senior technical education system was widely recognised as fundamental to prestige, besides being necessary as a
counter to narrow specialisation at a time when technological and economic changes put high priority on adaptability and mobility of labour.

With respect to the purposes of technical education the 1935 Gibson Commission in New South Wales provided the most comprehensive review of technical education undertaken during the nineteen thirties. It drew most of its ideas too from James Nangle, the recently retired Superintendent of Technical Education in the State. A whole paragraph taken from the Report, which typifies the wider roles to be performed in technical education, might have provided the opening paragraph of the Kangan Report released forty years later:86

"It must be borne in mind, in considering the relationship of the Technical Education Branch to the community's needs, that it is largely the only means available to the great mass of the people of sustained extension study of any kind whatever, and it is therefore necessary when considering the functions of such an institution as a Technical College, to be extremely catholic in outlook. The State must be prepared to consider not only the imparting of knowledge and skill to learners and craftsmen in the various trades, and the supplying of that technical knowledge which is the basis of our multifarious industries (which itself has a general cultural value), but it must also give attention to the needs of those persons in the community, whose lack of extended education makes it desirable that they should possess some means of self-expression, either mental or manual, other than they would ordinarily obtain."

In meeting the needs of personal development and "second chance" opportunities, technical education in the Gibson Commission view would be influenced, where metropolitan centres were concerned, by the wider spread of alternative institutions. Technical colleges in such areas accordingly would tend to be more specialised. But in country centres the Commission endorsed views that would boost the colleges and schools as genuine community institutions. As Nangle put it: "It seems to me that the remedy [for problems in rural areas] lies not only in the provision of Technical Education, but an approach to the problem with a very much wider vision."87 Involved here was the idea of bringing under
one umbrella the facilities and vocational and adult education activities carried on in Railway Institutes, mechanics institutes, schools of art, local libraries and museums and the technical colleges. Such combinations would not only deploy resources more effectively but also lift the reputation of the colleges in the eyes of local residents beyond that of institutions restricted to the provision of poorly provided and housed trade training.

The root problem where all technical education was concerned was resources, since all the surveys conducted by relevant committees and individuals during the depression years illustrated the relative deprivation of technical institutions as compared with primary and more recently secondary education. Nangle and the Gibson Commission reported at length too upon the poor physical conditions of the main metropolitan colleges and those in Newcastle and other provincial centres of New South Wales. They had strong support from Drummond, although he faced inevitable problems in producing funds during the depression years. Some improvements were achieved late in the 'thirties, however. Eltham in Victoria likewise stressed that State's relative neglect of buildings, which he contrasted adversely with the fine buildings and equipment he had seen during his visits in Europe and North America. In Western Australia the Nangle Report of 1928 deplored conditions before the depression. Later, during the Wolff Inquiry of 1937-38, L.W. Phillips and Superintendent of Technical Education Lynch spelled out in detail the financial needs of the schools and colleges. Commissioner Wolff in 1938 agreed with their assessment. Fenner in South Australia made similar pleas, also citing overseas developments as justification. Tasmania during the nineteen thirties possessed only a limited system of technical education. But the State Government in 1937 and 1938 conducted inquiries into the needs of Burnie and Hobart,
and some improvements were implemented. In Queensland, technical education lacked the priority accorded the rest of the education system, though funds were somewhat freer towards the end of the decade. One conclusion is easily asserted: the Commonwealth Youth Employment scheme grants hardly made any impression on resources despite the hopes of those arguing for Commonwealth intervention in technical education. Even so, at least part of the money found its way into facilities, for example a new trades block in the Perth Technical College and improved accommodation and equipment in Tasmania. It required the impetus of wartime technical training needs to make any real impact on the improvement of technical education.

But money was not the only priority. Governance of technical education became a major issue in the Gibson Report on technical education in New South Wales, and similar concerns appeared in the other states. Nangle in his submission to the Gibson Commission argued strongly for a separate administration for technical education, to remove it from submersion within the Education Department and provide the Superintendent with direct access to the Minister of Education. He wanted more direct control over the technical institutions, including the freeing up of policy with respect to staffing and general organisation, which he considered was locked into a system dictated by education department policies and procedures more suited to the schools. Drummond did not move completely in this direction during the 'thirties - the money was not available - although from 1937 the annual Report on Technical Education was presented as a completely separate document from that of the Department of Public Instruction. In 1947 the Technical Education Branch was finally separated as a Department in its own right, under a Director of its own.

In Victoria, Eltham was perhaps less outspoken (he after all had
not retired as had Nangle). But in his 1936 report he complained bitterly about impediments to control over staffing and administration of technical education flowing from provisions of the Teachers Act of 1925:

"A liberal flexible scheme should be provided for the appointment, classification, and promotion of full-time teachers in all technical schools under one authority - the State - and based, in general, on the recommendations of expert committees representative of industry, technical schools, and technical school inspectors, instead of the present unsatisfactory method of triple control and appointment - viz. Secondary School Classifiers, Public Service Commissioner, and Technical School Councils, which make effective administration of staffing almost impossible."

Such strongly held views were not so evident in the other states, although dissatisfactions were in evidence. Fenner in South Australia did not appear to make such strong pleas, though in 1939 he himself succeeded to the position of Director of Education. In Western Australia the situation was rather different. Technical education stayed within the Education Department, but intense lobbying to remove the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie from under the Superintendent of Technical Education eventually succeeded. The School in 1942 reverted to control by the Mines Department (where it had started in 1902), with the move justified on the grounds that it freed an important institution from constraints exercised by the State Education Department.

If the depression experience proved anything it was the need for technical education to become more profitably coordinated with the political, economic and community constituencies responsible for or generating employment. Philanthropic organisations, state employment councils, the departments of labour, other government departments, community leaders and the unions had all responded at the height of the depression to the crisis situation at the time. Technical education leaders, who participated in the bodies created to deal with youth
unemployment, were united in seeking to retain these connections as part of the reform of technical education generally. The Gibson Commission and Nangle in New South Wales, Eltham in Victoria, and Lynch and Phillips in Western Australia - all strongly urged the appointment of state-level advisory councils for technical education. In Queensland the Juvenile Employment Bureau in many respects already served this function, while the youth employment bodies planning and implementing schemes to use Commonwealth youth employment grants indicated the value of mobilizing community goodwill and resources behind technical education. As for the state advisory councils mentioned, it was contended that they would ensure that the key community agencies would become closely involved in the making of policy and its implementation in both technical colleges and in industry. Such levels of mutual cooperation were lacking before the depression, and may well have contributed to the poor public image of technical education as well as its financial deprivation.

While a key area demanding improved linkages concerned the training of apprentices, the community involvement question went a good deal further. Over-centralisation and bureaucratic complexity in Australian education generally proved major objects of criticism by local and overseas commentators. Significantly, these were similar problems experienced elsewhere in the world. Schairer in 1939 referred in glowing terms to governance reforms in Europe which increased commitments from industry, encouraged local initiative through institutional autonomy, taxed industry for training needs and broke out of domination by traditional education authorities.

As for Australia, the various states achieved very little during the 'thirties in producing state-level advisory councils of the type recommended. Such bodies as Queensland's Juvenile Employment Bureau and
the Youth Employment Committees in other states came close, however, to drawing together the interested parties. Drummond in New South Wales, as Minister, also created college advisory councils at Sydney and Newcastle, and District Advisory Committees in provincial centres. These tendered advice and recommendations. In Western Australia, Lynch failed to persuade the State Government to establish a Technical Education Advisory Council, largely because the government refused to concede any financial control over technical education. Spencer in the 1939 survey supported moves to loosen the constraints of centralisation. More comprehensive measures, however, needed to wait till after World War II.

At college level, Nangle, the Gibson Commission and Drummond in New South Wales all strongly supported the concept of increased community involvement with the running of particular technical institutions. As with state-level coordination and governance questions, it was considered that the technical schools and colleges would rise in public esteem if the public constituencies had a more direct connection with policy-making. This was a different level of involvement from that of trade and course advisory committees, which by the nineteen thirties were a well established feature of technical education. Victoria's favourable experience with community involvement in the "council controlled" colleges was used extensively to justify the beneficial effects to be expected elsewhere by introducing college-level advisory councils. Yet even in Victoria there was a major contest of wills between government and the college councils, which the college councils (at least at the (Melbourne) Working Men's College) were able to win. Drummond in New South Wales, as already mentioned, established a series of advisory councils - including one for the Sydney Technical College. These did not possess the powers of the college
councils in Victoria however, although even in Victoria the funding of technical education predominantly came through the Department of Public instruction. In New South Wales another step taken was to transplant the administration of technical education from the Sydney Technical College by placing it within the central Department of Education. The move was intended to give the college a separate identity and break up some of the bureaucratic overlay. \(^{100}\) L.W. Phillips in Western Australia recommended an almost identical policy with respect to the Perth Technical College. He contrasted this college's relative lack of visibility as compared with that of the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, which commanded vigorous local and industry support at the time. His recommendations materialised later during the nineteen fifties.

In spite of the rhetoric about the broad purposes of technical education, apprentice training by the 'thirties formed the bread and butter of the systems. The legislative framework laid in the 'twenties, sought to revive apprenticeship in Australia, and also to promote technical education as a more legitimate partner. By 1930 the technical colleges were supplying the theoretical aspects of trade training to complement on-the-job training in industry. This pattern, typical of the British tradition upon which it was copied, was not the norm in many parts of Europe. Nor was it typical of the United States, where college-located training, including practical skill training, received more formal attention. But even in Australia, structural and technological changes in industry were destroying the craft traditions in on the job training whilst also making it difficult to provide suitable apprentice supervision and experiences. All these trends highlighted a growing role for extended technical education to compensate for the loss of industry-based training and craft experiences.

Australia's future in secondary industry drew it closer to what
had already begun to happen in the more industrially advanced countries. As mentioned earlier these countries during the depression years attacked apprentice training with considerable vigour. The motives were both economic - the preparation of a well trained workforce - and humanitarian - in the context of tackling youth unemployment on a wide front. France's introduction of apprentice taxes on industry was much cited as a means of resurrecting industry-based training, whilst most commentators also praised the Czechoslovakian, German and Scandinavian schemes of trade training. One important lesson drawn from Continental experiences was the importance of positive technical training policies in promoting economic development, by providing skilled workers for new industries. Most Australian states launching industry development programmes realised the significance of trade training for the skilled manpower needed. This became the more urgent as rural depopulation progressed. Technological sophistication in defence production also became increasingly urgent as war clouds gathered in Europe and Japan. Ultimately, these more instrumental values of apprenticeship training were matched to the humanitarian purposes of providing work and training opportunities for young people, including the imposition of social responsibilities for employment generation and training upon the industrial and commercial communities of the nation.

As for Australia, its training deficiencies became evident from experience with the emergency day training schemes for apprentices thrown out of work and other youth unable in the circumstances to obtain an indenture. Nangle, in his evidence before the Gibson Commission proposed a complete overhaul of apprentice training in New South Wales. Apprentices, in his view, should receive two years of full-time pre-apprentice training in technical schools before being placed in industry for experience. This would ensure a better general grounding
besides guaranteeing a more rigorous selection of skilled manpower in industry. All the technical educationists agreed in principle, if not in detail, with Nangle's views. Lynch and Philips in Western Australia pressed for somewhat similar action, whilst Eltham in Victoria concluded along comparable lines in his 1936 Report on Technical Education.¹⁰⁴ All the educationists also agreed on the need for general mental and manual skills to receive more attention in view of the increasing specialisation and mechanisation within industry as well as the increasing rate of technological change. Industrialists were not so convinced, being more concerned perhaps with the levels of literacy and numeracy (to coin a current phrase) and work attitudes among young employees. The three R's received considerable attention in the Gibson and Wolff inquiries, as did the junior technical school system. Vocational guidance associated with the latter and more generally with apprenticeship training also received general support within industry.

What was patently clear from all the depression experience, however, was the need for closer relationships between technical education, the apprenticeship authorities and the State Departments of labour. Such needs were especially clear in Western Australia, where Wolff in his report of 1938 strongly advocated the establishment of an Apprenticeship Executive on which the technical educationists would have a genuine influence.¹⁰⁵ He drew attention to developments in other states, and particularly Victoria, where he claimed this linkage had been cemented. It is clear, however, from the evidence available that even in the other Australian states, including Victoria,¹⁰⁶ more comprehensive bridges from technical institutions to the community were badly needed. As mentioned previously, these linkages were improved after World War II, although few would claim even in the
nineteen eighties that the connections have ever been very satisfactory.

Increasing awareness that structural change was creating demand for semi- rather than highly skilled labour created intense interest in technical education circles. Such people as Nangle, Morris, Phillips, Eltham and Lynch all advocated technical instruction providing sufficient general technical knowledge and manual skills for such employees. Raising the school leaving age and the introduction of appropriate pre-vocational education was seen as particularly valuable for semi-skilled labourers. There were other objectives too. Better general education at this level would increase the adaptiveness of people most likely to be adversely affected by technological change. Further, it would create a base for improved access at a later stage to higher levels of training, to encourage vertical mobility in the workforce and especially among the less affluent sections of society. Worthwhile development of leisure activities in an age of shorter working hours also was considered a useful goal of an extended formal education for the semi-skilled worker. As for the skilled worker, as well as other workers, most of the relevant reports drove home an emerging need for technical education to provide re-training opportunities. "Recurrent education" was a term introduced into the contemporary literature on technical education.  

Automation and mechanisation turned Australian attention, too, to the needs of higher level tradespeople involved in the supervision, servicing, control and monitoring of production. Nangle and others saw this as part of the vertical mobility purposes built into the traditions of Australia's technical and education systems. In any event, trends in North America and Europe, where this level of training was receiving considerable support, pointed the direction towards which
Australian industry of the future would most likely shift. But during the 'thirties the training of middle-level/technician personnel tended to be a matter for speculation. It materialised into concrete programmes after the Second World War.109

As regards identity, status and visibility of technical education, between the two world wars very strong pressures emerged to cap the system with training at university level. Until this happened, commentators contended, technical education would never enjoy parity of esteem as compared to the élite systems of education.110 Such Australian observers as Sublet disagreed wholeheartedly, arguing that professional education was fundamentally different from what technical education was organised to provide. Yet Drummond in his 1936 report focussed attention on sweeping changes at this level taking place in Britain, with the introduction of national diploma courses.111 Phillips in Western Australia, and Eltham in Victoria also stressed the new developments in their reports on overseas experiences.112 In this connection, Germany's technische Hochschulen and such American institutions as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology stood out as lighthouse developments for other nations. Schairer in 1939 emphasised that at this level technology could be humanised - indeed could be brought into the legitimate fold of liberal education in ways that would benefit mankind and perhaps modify the form of élite education itself.

Nangle in his testimony before the Gibson inquiry of 1933 identified rising higher education aspirations among those holding the professional level associate diplomas of the Sydney Technical College. They were seeking a degree award for completed diploma studies that gave access to similar professional recognition as appropriate university degrees. In status, however, the diplomas were inferior. Nangle,
though eventually sympathetic after originally opposing the idea, argued that for the sake of status any such degrees should be awarded by the University of Sydney. Sublet at the University of Melbourne was totally opposed, although he severely criticised university education in the technologies for its increasing specialisation and lack of humanitarian/liberal content. In the event, the revolutionary concept of degree level studies in technical education was hardly realisable in the context of depression and war. But the agitation eventually produced, in 1949, the New South Wales University of Technology at Kensington.113

In the other states, Victoria's long experience with professional education in technology was perhaps unparalleled. By the end of the 'forties, the senior technical colleges were producing more engineers than the University of Melbourne.114 In South Australia avenues to degree studies were available at the University of Adelaide for those finishing the highest level courses at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries. Tertiary level studies at the Perth Technical college were reinstated in 1944, and they eventually formed the basis of the Western Australian Institute of Technology established at Bentley in the nineteen sixties.115

It is not intended to review in any great detail the many other developments fostered in technical education during the depression years. But amongst these, the emergence of correspondence education as a significant feature of Australian technical education deserves special consideration. It received careful attention in New South Wales' Gibson Report and also in the Wolff Report in Western Australia.116 The purpose, obviously, was to provide better vocational education opportunities for people in Australia's vast but sparsely populated countryside. Already by the mid-nineteen thirties, the Australian states had established an international reputation in primary and
secondary education by correspondence. Training for country apprentices by means of correspondence lessons, complemented where possible by travelling workshops in rail cars, started before the outbreak of war. During the war years, however, giant strides were made in the technical correspondence field, resulting in the establishment of technical correspondence schools in every state capital.117

Another very significant development concerned the introduction of teacher training for technical teachers.118 It is interesting to note that this was a feature emerging in European technical education at the time that was noted by Australia's visitors overseas. The object was to enhance the professionalism of teaching in the colleges, and in the process add something to the status of technical education generally by bringing it more in line with other parts of the education system.

The Dimensions of Change in Technical Education

The paper so far has concentrated upon policies, programmes and trends. Some reflection upon the actual dimensions of change in technical education over the period of the nineteen thirties will put these into perspective. This indicates substantial growth in technical institutions after a period of stagnation in the early stages of the depression. New buildings and equipment also materialised after 1935, but these mostly enabled authorities simply to hold the line against rising enrolments rather than retrieve the situation after years of relative neglect.

Taking New South Wales as an example, between 1929 and 1932 the number of individual students in technical education remained stable, rising from 15,253 to only 15,549. Thereafter numbers doubled to 30,865 in 1938, comprising 12,600 in the trades, 4,980 in women's handicrafts, 2,012 in commercial classes, 2,950 in "miscellaneous", and the rest in
higher level classes. Total expenditure on technical education in 1930 was £213,744 (£199,084 on buildings). This shrank to £158,554 in 1932, but by 1938 stood at £476,816 (£310,950 on buildings). Technical education in 1930 absorbed only 4.6 percent of educational expenditure, 4.0 percent in 1932, and 6.2 percent in 1938. Priorities towards technical education clearly shifted somewhat, in keeping with Drummond's policies as Minister. Buildings, for example, which represented 1.0 percent of total state educational expenditure in 1931, represented 31.6 percent in 1937. New premises at Sydney (Kogara, Ultimo and also Granville in the main) and new buildings at Newcastle accounted for most of the new spending.

Victoria's enrolment pattern in technical education followed similar trends. In the senior technical colleges enrolments (in the first term) in 1944 stood at 10,934; by 1938 these had doubled, to 21,127. Over the same period junior technical school enrolments rose from 6,707 to 9,263. Total enrolment increases were from 17,640 to 30,390. Building, virtually suspended between 1930 and 1933, resumed after 1936 as part of government policy greatly influenced by Eltham's initiatives. New developments included colleges at Essendon and Preston, the opening of the William Angliss Food Trades School (in 1940), and major extensions to seven other technical schools. Spencer in 1938 considered that once the planned improvements described above were implemented, Melbourne's provision for technical education would match facilities in many overseas capitals.

Similar summaries could be presented of developments in other states. In the main, however, Spencer in 1938 concluded that technical education facilities in Australia were so poor that the colleges had little chance of competing for status with other parts of the education system. These other parts had themselves suffered considerable
deprivation during the depression. Colleges in the capital cities, Brisbane apart, were poorly housed and badly overcrowded. Those in Perth and Hobart were described as "disgraceful". None could claim to be objects of civic pride. The situation worsened, if anything, during the war years, when in spite of Commonwealth Government assistance, buildings and equipment understandably deteriorated. It was some decades into the post-war period before technical education facilities were substantially improved, and this was largely the consequence of Commonwealth Government financial interventions.

Conclusions

Noone contested the conclusion, during the depression or afterwards, that the only comprehensive solution to youth unemployment lay in a general economic recovery. Australia's economic policies, in this connection, did enable the nation to recover fairly quickly after 1933, though at considerable cost where the unemployed were concerned. Keynesian economic policies, radical in their own time, did not convince the Australian governments. But there was general acceptance of the need to expand secondary industry, since it was the provider of employment whereas agriculture in the longer term would only shed labour. Secondary industry development policies were especially marked in South Australia and Western Australia, the less populated states. In the event, war needs solved the immediate employment problem, and post-war industrial expansion fuelled a boom that continued until the nineteen seventies. During the 'thirties, however, the states were left with only marginal Commonwealth Government support to deal with general and youth unemployment. Central government action across the board in economic and social policy was a war-time and post-war phenomenon.

During the 'thirties, restriction of the youth labour market was
an important aspect of policy to ease competition for jobs. Raising the school leaving age dominated thinking at the time and, as a legislative programme, materialised in the immediate post-war years. Other policy options included restrictions to the employment of minors, shortening hours of work, reducing the retirement age, and cutting back on women's employment. None of these received much support, although extended compulsory education attacked the employment of minors. The revival of apprenticeship during the decade was as much a matter of protection of youth and employment as it was a measure to secure the supply of well trained workmen. This avenue nevertheless solved the problems of relatively few school leavers, since structural changes to the Australian economy, already occurring, indicated that future employment prospects would not lie in the skilled trades. They would come from semi-skilled and service employment, which were areas that would benefit most from the post-war industrial expansion.

In the meantime, education and training drew support from politicians and educationists alike, seeking in these areas a better transition for youth from the protection of the schools into the realities of work. The present paper has detailed the various measures planned and partially implemented during the 'thirties. They ranged across reorganisation of post primary schools, the curriculum, the public examinations, improved vocational guidance and changes to technical education. All these measures had a strong utilitarian emphasis that in many ways counteracted the humanitarian and liberal education trends of the more prosperous nineteen twenties. Utilitarian attacks on "the basics" (the 3 R's) in schools coupled to reinstating vocational emphases in the primary and post-primary curriculum, all carried the urgency of a nation preoccupied with the employment prospects of young people. That these strands should become confused with the more liberal...
cultural reform objectives of educational authorities was inevitable. But the latter also focussed on youth difficulties, being concerned with a longer-term view of political, social and employment needs in a society facing the prospect of radical economic changes as well as the dangers of conquest by totalitarian regimes threatening to plunge the nation into another world war.

Even where general and cultural education occupied the main priorities of educational reformers, national and state authorities shared internationally held dissatisfaction about the low public esteem accorded manual, vocational and technical education. Efforts to resurrect the image of technical education permeated most of the reform debates reviewed in the present paper. Politically, a renaissance was desirable to ensure that the nation's youth were not radicalised by extended periods of unemployment and the prospect of never sharing the fruits of returning prosperity with the more fortunate in society. The maintenance of social harmony demanded that they be given an education and training that would enhance their employment prospects. Yet technical education had become associated with ancient, grimy, overcrowded and poverty stricken buildings, totally inadequate equipment, and an inequitable share of educational finances. The junior technical schools had become the dumping ground for young people considered to lack the ability to cope with the more prestigious academic education leading to the well regarded (middle class) occupations. Some success attended public attempts to reorder priorities, through policies described in the paper. Yet the resources were mostly inadequate for the purpose during the nineteen thirties; and they really did not become available until well after World War II. That similar stresses and strains dominate educational thinking and priorities in the nineteen eighties is a measure of the failure of achievement during the 'thirties and even the
immediate post-war years.

One lesson that appeared to be widely learned during the 'thirties was the desirability of creating bridges between the community and the educational institutions for young people. Excessive bureaucracy in state education, at all levels, contributed to something of the adverse criticism of schools in meeting the employment needs of school leavers. At school level, the politicians and educationists concerned reacted to these complaints with rather ineffectual advisory councils and other reforms - but at least the basis for later reform was being laid. Failures at the time to achieve better relations between industry, commerce, government - the community at large - and the technical education systems were more serious. During the worst stages of the depression, and immediately afterwards, urgent measures had been taken to bring together the state departments of labour and industry, philanthropic groups in society, employers and unions, and the technical education authorities, all in the interests of generating youth employment and alleviating the plight of those most in danger. Something of this urgency disappeared as the employment situation eased. Eventually the bodies created in the depression lost their impetus. Achievements in connection with the creation of state-wide technical advisory councils, employment councils, and college advisory councils fell short of the high hopes of such leaders as Nangle, Eltham and Phillips. A measure of this shortfall is the clamour for improved education-community relationships that reemerged with some urgency during the nineteen eighties.

Humanitarian and egalitarian policies aimed at creating more equal educational opportunities at all levels in Australia have a long history. During the depression years, however, reform pressures gained power from the distress affecting wide sections of Australian society.
However strongly felt may have been fears about preserving political and social harmony, the reformist determination to extend compulsory education, equalise social class opportunities and redress the liberal/vocational balance of the curriculum also contained a deeply held humanitarian and philanthropic motivation. Where resources became available during and after World War II, this motivation ensured that Australia joined the rest of the Western world in "universalising" secondary education, improving higher education opportunities, and ultimately in rejuvenating technical education. Social legislation in other directions - public health, housing, pensions, unemployment assistance, etc. - ran alongside educational reform to create a very different Australia from that of the 'thirties. Commonwealth Government entry on a major scale into these fields of domestic policy, in the final analysis, was a shift that the depression experience facilitated, even though war-time transformations rendered them politically and economically possible.

We are left then with an assessment of the depression decade that emphasises distress, determination to reform, and widespread debate about the avenues of policy open to Australian society in coping with the problem of youth employment. Much was achieved at the time on voluntary and state subsidised effort, since state governments were unable to allocate the resources necessary for the institutionalisation of changes that were widely supported. Undoubtedly, Commonwealth entry into the social and educational arena was needed before reform could become a reality. The Second World War dramatically altered constitutional perspectives, and made this possible. Yet public determination to avoid repetition of the depression experience, and the policy groundwork of the period, established the necessary pre-conditions. In education, guidelines were mapped out during the depression years that
profoundly influenced Australian development in post-war reconstruction and post-war conditions.
References

Note: For the sake of brevity in the references cited below, the following abbreviations with respect to the bound collections of state and commonwealth government parliamentary papers have been employed:

V.P.P. (Qld) : Votes and Proceedings and Papers, Parliament of Queensland.

P.P. (N.S.W.) : Joint Volumes of Papers presented to the (N.S.W.) Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.


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5. These figures have been extracted from the various Education Department annual reports of the time, as well as from the official statistics produced by the different states. As such, comparisons between the states may be very dangerous. However, the general trends are useful.

6. These figures are all taken from the annual reports of the New South Wales Minister of Public Instruction during the decade. "Super primary schools" included central schools, junior technical schools, commercial and domestic science schools, etc., which did not provide the full "secondary" education programme leading to the public examinations.


11. Ibid., p. 41.

12. (Final) Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon the Employment of Youth in Industry (The Baddeley (Final) Report), P.P. (N.S.W.), Vol. 1, 1940-41, p. xxiii.


18. Giles and Lyall, op. cit.


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36. Baddeley (Progress) Report, op. cit., p. 8 (Evidence of C.J. Bellmore, Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry).

37. Ibid., pp. 64-67 (Evidence of E.L.S. Hudson, Forestry Commission of New South Wales).

38. Giles, Unemployment among Young People in Australia (1936), op. cit., pp. 825-826.


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45. White, op. cit.

47. Gibson Report, op. cit.


51. Baddeley (Progress) Report, op. cit., pp. 12-15 (Evidence of C.J. Bellemore, Under Secretary, Department of Labour and Industry); pp. 23-28 (Evidence of A.E. Mander, Secretary-Member, Employment Council).

52. Ibid.


56. Walker, op. cit., Ch. VI.

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61. Ibid., p. 33 (Evidence of E.M. Simmons, Manageress, Women's Employment Agency, State Labour Exchange.)

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75. See Cunningham, K.S. & Radford, W.C. (Eds.), *Education for Complete Living*. (The Proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conferences held in Australia, August 1 to September 20, 1937) (Melbourne, ACER, 1938).

76. The reports mentioned have all been cited earlier. Cunningham's contributions include: Australian Education and the Depression, *Yearbook of Education 1934*, pp. 294-325; Technical Education in Australia, *Yearbook of Education 1939*, pp. 637-664; and *Educational Observations and Reflections* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1934).


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92. Eltham, op. cit., p. 98.


95. Ibid., Gibson Report, op. cit., p. 25; Eltham, op. cit., p. 97.
99. See Blake, op. cit., p. 677. More research on this area, being undertaken by Dr. S. Murray-Smith, will throw more light on the contest.
102. See Schairer, op. cit., p. 505.
104. Eltham, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
113. See Gibson Report, op. cit., pp. 87-88; Willis, A.H., The University of New South Wales: The Baxter Years (Kensington, New South Wales University Press, 1983) Ch. I.
115. White, The Community and Post School Education in Western Australia, op. cit., Chap. 5.
