

Uncovering Theology

The Depth, Reach and Utility of
Australian Theological Education



Charles Sherlock

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Charles Henry Sherlock asserts his right to be recognised as the primary author of this work.

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Foreword

At its best, education must embrace the 'whole of life', reaching out beyond its traditional and essential duty of vocational training and re-skilling to respond to the wider searchings and hungers of mind and spirit—the seeking for new horizons to explore and, for many, the probing of meaning and purpose.

The availability of work-free time, together with increasing longevity and improved aged health and activity, presents a growing challenge to educators and government and non-government providers to inform and equip themselves to meet these new challenges with quality delivery and outcome.

Within that context, *Uncovering Theology* reveals itself as an important and refreshing new exemplar, pioneer and reformer in and beyond its own discipline. It provides invaluable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, diversities, demands and locations of existing theological providers. Of interest and relevance, it indicates that less than one quarter of current students plan to proceed on a path to religious ordination.

It unfolds as a scholarly document, well supported by valuable and in-depth research. Where points of perceived differences emerge, notably in aspects of curricula, it approaches these with sensitivity and understanding, and with a readiness to continue dialogue towards consensus. Surely, it suggests, genuine unity can coexist with some diversity.

To this absorbing task, the Project Manager, has brought and effectively contributed the wisdom and great experience of his rich and varied lifetime. Acknowledgements too must be made to his dedicated and hard-working Project Team. To this talented, visionary and ecumenical gathering go our thanks and warm wishes.

Here then, is a significant contribution to higher education in Australia which fully merits wide public and academic dissemination and discussion. From here, too, must come a stream of meaningful dialogue within and across interest groups.

To the endless adventure and ever-expanding horizons of education comes a newly authorised journey of discovery. Its goal is clearly defined; its course already well charted.

May it find fair winds, eager and willing crews, a speedy and exhilarating journey and rewarding home ports.

John Carrick

Commonwealth Minister for Education 1975–1979

Preface

Uncovering Theology began as a research project—a Discipline-Based Initiative supported by the *Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching*, now the *Australian Learning and Teaching Council* (ALTC). The project has enjoyed the welcome institutional sponsorship of the Australian Catholic University as the lead institution. Our thanks must first go to Professor Gabrielle McMullen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at ACU for her enthusiastic support and keen professional interest.

Uncovering Theology was managed by a team drawn from the *Council of Deans of Theology*. It consisted of co-chairs Neil Ormerod (Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University) and Mark Harding (Dean, Australian College of Theology) with Robert McIver (Dean, Faculty of Theology, Avondale College) and Gerard Moore (Director of Research, Sydney College of Divinity). Each team member wishes to thank their respective institutions who released them for this work.

The success of the project is due of course to its manager, Charles Sherlock. From the commencement of his brief in January 2008, Charles has been indefatigable in the pursuit of the project's goals. His knowledge of Australian theological education is unique; some would say legendary. Despite serious health issues that surfaced in mid 2008, *Uncovering Theology* can be confidently commended as a landmark in the enterprise of Australian theological education.

In September 2008 Charles convened a highly successful workshop for providers at the Uniting Church's *Centre for Theology and Ministry* in Melbourne. Information gained formed the backbone of a substantial amount of Charles' research that built on earlier submissions from each institution in response to his request for handbooks, enrolment data and other material. The team wishes to thank all those who took part in the provider workshop and their institutions for responding so generously.

Uncovering Theology marks the emergence of theological education as part of the mainstream Australian higher education landscape. We are delighted that it is issued by ATF Press, the major Australasian academic imprint in theology and religion, which has been publishing books with colleges in Australasia and the Asia-Pacific region for 15 years.

Uncovering Theology will shape the future of the discipline. We commend it to all theological education providers and their stakeholders and also to higher education regulators and educationalists generally.

Mark Harding and Neil Ormerod
Co-chairs, *Uncovering Theology* project

Executive Summary

Theological education in Australia has a history of more than 150 years, operating largely in parallel to the six public universities until 1945. In addition, the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions had little contact before the 1960s. Four major turning-points influence its present shape:

- the 1964 Martin Report, which led to state governments authorising the conferral of degrees by private higher education providers, including theological institutions;
- the emergence of ecumenical consortia, facilitating theological teaching in Australia's public universities;
- the development of Christian tertiary institutions offering disciplines alongside theology; and
- the Commonwealth *Higher Education Support Act* (HESA, 2003), and the consequent introduction of FEE-HELP from 2005.

All Christian traditions in Australia now participate in theological higher education, through 69 colleges grouped into 26 Higher Education Providers, including five consortia (one listed in HESA Table B) and six universities (five Table A and one Table B). Some 14,000 students are engaged in learning at these institutions, representing around 6,200 EFTSL. The formation in 1968 of the *Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools* (ANZATS) fostered growing co-operation between colleges: formal accreditation procedures were required for membership.

The full range of *Australian Quality Framework* higher education courses has been available in Australian theological education since 2000: diplomas, degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas, coursework masters, professional doctorates and Higher Degrees by Research.

Quality assurance has been given increased attention in the past 25 years, notably in the three private consortia—the *Australian College of Theology* (ACTh, founded in 1891), *Melbourne College of Divinity* (MCD, set up by a 1910 Act of the Victorian Parliament) and *Sydney College of Divinity* (SCD, commencing in 1983). Since 2005, each has been audited by the *Australian University Quality Agency* (AUQA), as have Moore Theological College (established in 1856) and Avondale College (commencing in NSW in 1897). These engagements with AUQA were positive experiences, and raised awareness of the importance of ongoing quality assurance.

The large number of theological colleges, and the diversity of their church, academic and government accountabilities, indicate the need for further collaboration in Australian theological education. This cannot be imposed from outside the sector: further working together needs to be initiated from within, since some of the diversity reflects substantial, long-term theological difference. The patterns of relationships between colleges and churches are correspondingly diverse, including funding: some colleges continue to rely on tuition fees and donations, and few have endowments. Even so, the churches are likely to continue as the 'industry partners' of Australian theological education (including university contexts), whether or not a college is church-sponsored.

Learning and teaching in Australian theological education is marked by a strongly formative ethos, both communal and personal, with small classes and a broad range of ages and life-experience in the student body. The preparation of professional ministers continues to be a significant for some 20% of theological students, but most study to be equipped for life as Christians, the primary meaning of 'vocational learning' in theological education. In the best of worlds, a flexible national learning and teaching management plan would be developed to bring greater coherence to Australian theological education, and assist students, faculty, teaching institutions and churches to learn together as partners in a common enterprise.

The Australian 'theology sector' faces several pedagogical challenges, including experienced faculty coming to terms with the learning styles of younger students; the rapid growth in the use of new technologies and flexible delivery; and the 'service' teaching of theology to students from other disciplines. Existing differences in graduate course nomenclature, length and articulation need to be resolved. Theological institutions need to clarify and put in place patterns of graduate attributes for different courses, unit learning outcomes and evaluation, and further develop national benchmarking standards.

Re-assessment is needed of the expectations placed on faculty by the formative ethos of theological education, and by their wider church responsibilities, in order to equip and re-orient them for the changing environments of society, higher education and church within which they teach. Sustaining the teaching / research nexus, succession planning and providing adequate academic administrative support present particular challenges. Identifying the research strengths in Australian theology is another need: here libraries have led the way, working through the *Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association* (ANZTLA).

Research doctorates in theology have been awarded by the ACTh and MCD since the nineteenth century, and research masters' since the 1950s. The establishment of theology departments at Flinders University (1980), Murdoch University (1986) and Charles Sturt University (1997), and the formation of Australian Catholic University (1991), has boosted Australian theological research resources. The allocation from 2002 of Commonwealth funding to the largest theology research body, the MCD, enabled the development of a research culture across its colleges, and engagement with the research processes of the public universities. Similar advances have also taken place in the ACTh and SCD, including research training, supervisor accreditation and the fostering of faculty research. Yet the lack of research funding is holding back the bedding down of such basic elements in research practice across the theology sector as a whole.

Neither college faculty, church leaders, university staff nor public servants have a full picture of Australian theological education: this book offers such a portrait for the first time, albeit restricted by the time and resources available. One hoped-for outcome is that as particular churches, colleges, university and government departments see themselves in the light of an overall viewpoint, greater understanding, co-operation and collaborative action may eventuate: the many matters noted 'for consideration' in the *Uncovering Theology* book seek to offer ways forward.

Overall, the picture which emerges of Australian theological education is one of a long-established, academically robust and distinctive dimension of higher education, with strengthening international links. Australian theological institutions welcome the warmer relationships developed over the past three decades with government and the universities, and believe that theology makes a distinctive contribution to higher education. Yet they continue to set their priorities by seeking to discern and follow the purposes of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, not only for the sake of the churches, but for humankind in all its diversities, and the whole created cosmos.

The Uncovering Theology Project

Uncovering Theology aims to ‘scope’ tertiary theological education in Australia—its ‘depth, reach and utility’—and so lift the cover sheet from what has been a largely unmapped dimension of tertiary education.

Over the last half-century, church and society in Australia, never tightly inter-woven, have drifted further apart. How Australian theological education will develop and change over the next decade or more is thus a more open question than in earlier generations. From a government and university perspective, benchmarking and quality assurance are key factors for all areas of tertiary study in Australia, including theological education. Changes are continuing to take place in the way governments support and regulate higher education, public and private.

Changes have similarly taken place within the churches—the Second Vatican Council, major reforms in the public worship of older churches, the rise of Pentecostal movements, and the growing presence of non-Christian faiths in Australia, for example. Even so, the Christian churches continue to look to theological education institutions for the education of clergy and other professional ministers, and will continue to be the main sources of their colleges’ human, physical and financial resources. Yet the shape of ‘church’ and ‘ministry’ for the decades ahead is by no means clear, raising questions about the curricula of theological courses and colleges. With some 75% of students studying without ordination primarily in mind, tuition fees, donations / endowment and government funding are becoming increasingly significant for each college’s ongoing ministry. In view of these contexts, *Uncovering Theology* has proved to be timely.

The *Council of Deans of Theology* (formerly the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia or University Departments*, and now including all theological HEPs who wish to participate) initiated the project, which was funded by *The Australian Learning and Teaching Council* (ALTC).

The project was managed by Dr Charles Sherlock, the author of this book, whose personal networks facilitated its progress, and fostered the significant co-operation received from across the range of Australian theological education.

The project was administered by the School of Theology of Australian Catholic University (Strathfield), and directed by a Project Team which met regularly during its planning (August–December 2007) and execution (January 2008–April 2009):

Co-chairs	Dr Mark Harding (Australian College of Theology) Professor Neil Ormerod (Australian Catholic University)
Members	Dr Robert McIver (Avondale College) Associate Professor Gerard Moore (Sydney College of Divinity)
Project Manager	The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock (Anglican Diocese of Bendigo, former MCD Registrar, ACTh Council member)
Project Reference Group: the <i>Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia and University Departments</i> , in 2008 representing	Adelaide College of Divinity / Flinders University, School of Theology Australian Catholic University, School of Theology Australian College of Theology Avondale College, Faculty of Theology Brisbane College of Theology Charles Sturt University, School of Theology Melbourne College of Divinity Perth College of Divinity / Murdoch University, Theology Program Sydney College of Divinity University of Auckland, School of Theology University of Otago, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

The *Uncovering Theology* project used a variety of methods (Appendix B gives fuller details). Its first phase employed existing materials produced by theological colleges and HEPs. Quantitative data was gathered across the whole period of the project's duration (see Appendix G).

The Consultation Day held on September 25, 2009 at the *Centre for Theology and Ministry* in Melbourne was particularly significant for the second phase, gathering qualitative data (see Appendix E). Some 70 people from all mainland states participated, representing the five consortia and most stand-alone theological institutions, from across the full variety of Australian tertiary theological education. The day proved to be stimulating for participants, many of whom had not previously met one another, fostered responses to the work done to that point, and gathered a wide range of qualitative insights on the major areas identified as important for theological education in Australia.

Project aims and outcomes

The intended broad outcome of the project was a detailed, evidence-based portrait of Australian theological education, especially to improve learning and teaching within it.

The Project Team believes that this has been achieved, and warmly affirms these three ‘meta-outcomes’ as very significant for the future:

1. The present two ‘**peak**’ **bodies** in Australian theological education are both important to its ongoing health and vitality, having complementary roles:
 - The *Council of Deans of Theology* relates theology HEPs to one another as institutions, and is the primary vehicle by which the theology sector addresses government and higher education.
 - ANZATS enables faculty and teaching institutions to engage in networking and scholarship as regards both pedagogy and research, especially through annual conferences (the latter in co-operation with ANZSTS, the publisher of *Colloquium*).
2. The development of **common benchmarks** across Australian theological education is essential for its long-term health. Such benchmarks should be used in particular for the five-yearly re-accreditation processes required of Non-Self Accrediting Institutions (and probably Table A and B HEPs, following the Bradley Report).
3. The general **spirit of co-operation and collaboration** in Australian theological education must be fostered, and practical developments encouraged in areas of mutual interest.

The Project Team believes that convergence on what is needed for a first degree in theology (at both undergraduate and graduate levels) would offer an excellent opportunity to pursue aspects of each of these outcomes.

The precise Aims of the project are set out in Appendix A, general outcomes in Appendix C, matters for consideration in Appendix D, and a Bibliography in Appendix F.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to bring together in this project three decades of close engagement with Australian theological education. Dr Keith Cole, the inaugural Secretary of ANZATS, was my first theological teacher, at Ridley College, Melbourne. His sustained passion for co-operative theological engagement has remained with me in the years since. This book is dedicated to him.

Charles Sherlock

Abbreviations

AASR	Australian Academy for the Study of Religion
ACBA	Australian Catholic Biblical Association
ACTA	Australian Catholic Theological Association
ACD	Adelaide College of Divinity
ACTh	Australian College of Theology
ACU	Australian Catholic University
ALC	Australian Lutheran College
ANZATFE	Australian and New Zealand Association for Theological Field Education
ANZATS	Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools
ANZSTS	Australian and New Zealand Society for Theological Studies
ANZTLA	Australian and New Zealand Theological Libraries Association
ATF	Australasian Theological Forum
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
BBi	Broken Bay Institute
BCQ	Bible College of Queensland
BCSA	Bible College of South Australia
BCT	Brisbane College of Theology
BCV	Bible College of Victoria
BD	Bachelor of Divinity
BTh, BTheol	Bachelor of Theology
CCTC	Churches of Christ Theological College
CDTC	Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia
CIS	Catholic Institute of Sydney
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education
CSP	Commonwealth Supported Place
CSU	Charles Sturt University
CTC	Catholic Theological College
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
DMinStuds	Doctor of Ministry Studies
DTheol	Doctor of Theology
EFTSL	Equivalent Full Time Student Load
FACIT	Fellowship of Australian Catholic Theological Institutes
FEE-HELP	Federal Education Entitlement— Higher Education Loan Program

GA	Graduate Attributes
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HEP	Higher Education Provider
HESA	Higher Education Support Act (2003)
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
ICSPF	Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JTC	Jesuit Theological College
LTh	Diploma in Divinity (Licentiate in Theology: MCD)
MA	Master of Arts
MCD	Melbourne College of Divinity
MDiv	Master of Divinity
MMin	Master of Ministry
MTh, MTheol	Master of Theology
MTS	Master of Theological Studies
NTC	Nazarene Theological College
PBC	Perth Bible College
PCBC	Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible Colleges network
PCD	Perth College of Divinity
PTC	Presbyterian Theological Centre / College
QTC	Queensland Theological College
RTC	Reformed Theological College
RTI	Recognized Teaching Institution
SAGOT	St Andrew's Greek Orthodox College
SATC	The Salvation Army Training College
SCC	Southern Cross College
SCD	Sydney College of Divinity
SMBC	Sydney Missionary and Bible College
SOCS	School of Christian Studies
SPABC	South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges
STFE	Supervised Theological Field Education
ThL	Licentiate in Theology (ACTh)
TCTS	Trinity College Theology School
TTC	Trinity Theological College
UCTC	Uniting Church Theological College
UFT	United Faculty of Theology
UTC	United Theological College
YTU	Yarra Theological Union

Notes on Terminology

Throughout this book,

1. By 'church' is meant any Christian body—a congregation, diocese, synod, conference etc.—which owns, sponsors, has an institutional relationship with, or acts as a patron, to an Australian theological institution, irrespective of financial support being involved.
2. 'Congregation' is used to refer to a particular Christian faith community, and 'local congregation' to refer to one which is geographically based.
3. The term 'ordinand' is used to refer to a candidate for the authorised ministry of a church (usually professional), including a person preparing to enter a religious order or missionary society, without prejudice to any particular understanding of the precise meaning of 'orders' and 'ordination'.
4. The term 'clergy' is generally avoided, because it is theologically problematic for many, is not used by every Christian tradition, and does not include members of religious orders or other Christians engaged in authorised ministries. The phrase 'authorised / ordained ministers' indicate persons who in their tradition are recognised as having long-term responsibility in, and being public representatives of, the Christian Church.
5. Where the term 'professional' is used, it does not refer to whether or not a person is paid, but indicates the classical meaning of a profession: an occupation backed by a heritage of practical wisdom and an accumulated and growing body of knowledge, operating with an implicit ethos of ethical behaviour, usually involving a life-long interest and relationship.

All lists (for example of colleges, consortia, churches, disciplines) are given in alphabetical order unless otherwise stated.

Chapter One: Australian Theological Education: *an historical overview*

Key findings: Theological education in Australia is of long standing, and grounded in an ethos of personal and corporate formative learning which aims to equip students to be well-rounded persons and effective in ministry. Though excluded from Australian universities for a century, a key turning point was reached when undergraduate degrees in theology were authorised in the mid-1970s, and some universities began to teach theology.

New institutions have emerged since that time: ecumenical consortia and new colleges from Evangelical, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic traditions. Of particular significance was the formation of Australian Catholic University, with a School (now Faculty) of Theology, and the establishment of the University of Notre Dame and other Christian tertiary institutions offering a range of disciplines alongside of, and informed by, theology.

Since the mid-1980s theological student profiles have diversified, though the preparation of ordinands continues to be the major reason that churches continue to support theological education. Course offerings have also diversified, notably through the introduction of graduate coursework awards from 2000, and the development of more intentional research activity.

Sources: The material used in this chapter is based on websites, handbooks and other resources supplied by colleges and HEPs, some of which has been clarified through direct contact by the Project Manager (especially EFTSL and faculty data).

A Australian theological education: higher education in parallel

Theological education at tertiary level in (European) Australia is long-established, but until recently the 'theology sector' has operated largely in parallel to public Australian higher education. Today the situation is far different, with a variety of institutions teaching theology, some through a university, many linked in consortia, serving a diversity of educational purposes and needs.

Christian clergy were imported from the British Isles for many years, but local theological colleges were opened from the mid-nineteenth century. Roman Catholic seminaries were established in 1834 in Sydney, 1849 in Melbourne (for the education of both 'ecclesiastical and lay' persons),¹ 1850 in Sevenhills, South Australia, 1854 in Hobart and 1863 in Brisbane. Church of England colleges started in Hobart and Sydney in 1846, the latter taken up into Moore College from 1856, which moved to a site adjacent to the University of Sydney in 1891. The Presbyterian Church set up St Andrew's as a residential university college in 1867, at which some theology was taught. The Congregational Camden College commenced in 1864, Church In Melbourne, Trinity College was the first residential college of the University, and began theological teaching from 1878. The Presbyterian Theological Hall was established in 1866, moving in 1881 to Ormond College, a residential college of the University of Melbourne.²

It was during this time that universities were founded in the separate colonies: Sydney (1850), Melbourne (1853), Adelaide (1874) and Tasmania (1890).³ Until the 1970s, however, 'Divinity' was excluded from

1. Frances O'Kane, *A Path is Set* (Melbourne University Press, 1976), 69. This seminary later moved to East Melbourne, then closed when seminarians were sent to Sydney in 1889. A new Victorian seminary, Corpus Christi, was established by Archbishop Mannix in 1922: it remains the Roman Catholic seminary with the longest continuous existence in Australia.
2. See Breward, Ian, 'Historical Perspectives on Theological Education in Australasia,' in GR Treloar (ed), *The Furtherance of Religious Beliefs: Essays on the History of Theological Education in Australia* (Lucas 19/20: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1997) 8–23, and Stuart Piggin, 'A History of Theological Education in Australia,' in Treloar 24–43 give fuller details and bibliography. Piggin includes some British background for both the church and Bible colleges, and divides the Australian story into pre-1888, 1888–1916, 1918–1939 (the 'lean years'), 1940–1964 ('consolidation and advance') and 1965–1994 ('acceptance').
3. In Adelaide, a generous gift funded Union College to train Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian ministers: when this did not work out, the funds were used to help found the University. See Walter Phillips, 'Union College Adelaide, 1872–1886: A Brief Experiment in United Theological Education,' in GR Treloar, 59–71.

undergraduate learning, due in part to the prevailing secular rationalism in academic life, in part to sectarian competition between the churches. In particular, the University of Melbourne Amending Act (1881) forbade both the teaching of Divinity, and clergy being members of faculty. Partly in response, the then largest Christian tradition in Australia, the Church of England, established the Australian College of Theology (ACTh) in 1891 as a 'national' body to provide examinations for undergraduate, graduate and research level awards.⁴ In 1910 the ecumenical Melbourne College of Divinity was set up by an Act of the Victorian Parliament.⁵

The Baptist Union opened a college in Melbourne in 1891, and in 1897 the Seventh-Day Adventists established Avondale College near Newcastle NSW.⁶ The Salvation Army set up separate men's and women's officer training institutions in Victoria in 1888 and 1890 respectively, and a Lutheran seminary, Concordia College, began in 1892, after decades of pastor training using tutorial and apprenticeship models.⁷ By 1900, St Patrick's Roman Catholic seminary was established in Sydney, and religious orders had well-established education for their novices: Good Samaritan, Mercy and Loreto Sisters, Christian and Marist Brothers, for example.

4. The ACTh is one of the few existing bodies which used 'Australian' before Federation.

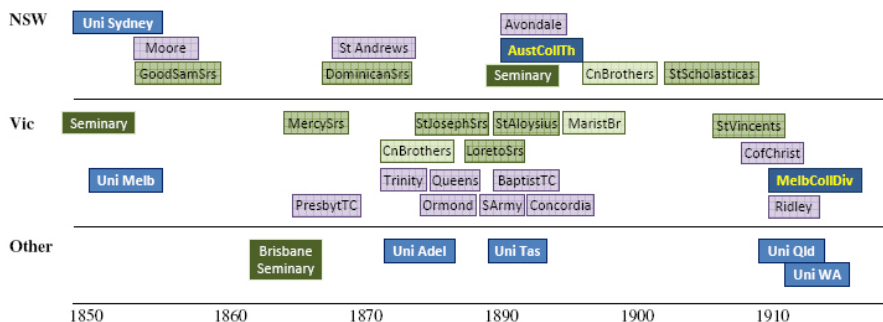
5. The MCD was formed in part because ACTh awards were open only to Church of England ordinands, in part because a University relationship was desired. The four largest churches were granted land around the University of Melbourne for residential colleges. A 1904 Royal Commission recommended that a school of theology be set up, but an attempt to do this in 1909 failed, leading to the setting up of the MCD.

The MCD in 1910 included representatives from the Baptist Union, Church of England, Churches of Christ, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches; the Lutheran Church declined representation "in consequence of the difficulty of language". The major non-participant was the Roman Catholic Church: the establishment of the MCD by Parliament on an ecumenical footing, unprecedented in Australia, would not have been politically possible without the support of Archbishop Thomas Carr. His handwritten letter explaining that, while Catholics had no need of the venture, it had his warm support, is held in the MCD archives. See Charles Sherlock and Paul Beirne, 'The MCD: An Historical Overview', Supplementary Materials 1.1 of the *MCD Performance Portfolio* submitted to AUQA in 2005. Piggin wrongly states that Archbishop Carr 'damned the proposal' (32) but gives no source.

6. Avondale was initially established in Melbourne in 1892 to provide 'Christian workers' with a general education, effectively at secondary level. With Australian tertiary education as closed to theology, Avondale later gained accreditation from Pacific Union College in the US: for many years its degrees were shaped along the lines of a US 'liberal arts' college, a unique approach in Australia until recent decades. See Robert K McIver, 'The Future of Theological Education in Australia – a Case Study: Avondale College,' *Colloquium* 25/2 (1994) 96–112.

7. See respectively www.salvationarmy.org.au/college/history.htm, and www.alc.edu.au/about/history, accessed February 26, 2009.

By World War 1 the six universities had a total enrolment of 3,300 students,⁸ and the approximately thirty theological institutions in place taught around a thousand students, a significant proportion of Australian higher education. Both university and theological college enrolments grew only gradually until World War 2, when both began to expand.



Timeline: Higher Education in Australia 1850–1914

Between the wars, Bible colleges began to be founded in each state, following the American model of lay education for missionaries and church workers: Adelaide in 1913, Sydney in 1916, Melbourne in 1920, Perth in 1928. These institutions formed their own networks, and prepared significant numbers of ministers for independent congregations as well as the inter-denominational missionary societies.⁹

Until the 1970s, then, theological education in Australia was conducted through colleges sponsored by Christian churches and agencies, in four broad streams, reflecting the sharp sectarian divisions between Australia's Roman Catholic and Protestant communities:

- A1 Roman Catholic seminaries trained diocesan and religious priests, preparing students for awards recognised by the Vatican.
- A2 Roman Catholic religious orders prepared novices for their vocational ministries, especially teaching and nursing, in a wide variety of institutions.

8. Jim Breen, 'Higher Education in Australia: Structure, Policy & Debate', Monash University, December 2002: www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/aused/aused.html, accessed 22 February, 2009.

9. See Breward, 15, and more especially Darrell Paproth, "The Melbourne Bible Institute: its Genesis, Ethos and Purpose", in GR Treloar, 124–155.

- B1 The Protestant churches sponsored their own theological college(s), mainly for the training of men for professional Christian ministry. Anglican colleges used the examinations of the ACTh, which opened its tertiary awards to non-Anglican students from 1962. Other churches (and some Anglicans) used the examinations of the MCD. The most common award was the Licentiate in Theology (ThL–ACTh, LTh–MCD) which required New Testament Greek, and three years' study for honours.¹⁰
- B2 After World War I, the network of Bible colleges emerged, having strong links to missionary agencies and evangelical organisations and drawing students from a wide range of Protestant churches. These colleges offered their own awards, alongside preparing academically-oriented students to sit for MCD (and later, ACTh) examinations, which were conducted across the nation and Pacific.

The long-standing divisions between the various Christian traditions in Australia, combined with the 'tyranny of distance', meant that colleges operated largely in isolation from one another, theological faculty were small, teaching curricula were shaped by ordination requirements and assessed by external examinations, and research activity was limited (though the ACTh and MCD offered research awards from their beginnings).

In sum, for over a century theological education in Australia operated in 'parallel' to the universities, with colleges generally teaching in isolation from one another.

11. Until the 1970s a Bachelor of Divinity was the only first degree in theology available in Australia, and for graduates only: it was also not pedagogically appropriate for most students. The MCD BD commenced in 1910, continuing until its replacement by a Master of Divinity from 2001.

A BD (for graduates) was offered for some years by the Universities of Sydney (from 1936) and Queensland (from 1953), but with small enrolments, and largely taught by faculty from nearby theological colleges.

For many years the University of London held examinations at overseas centres towards its BD, a degree open to non-graduates: Moore prepared generations of students for this award.

B The 70s and 80s: two decades of change

B1 *Degrees in theology*

The 1970s saw major changes in Australia, as the nation became more multi-cultural, the electronic mass media grew in influence, the roles of women and men shifted, and the range of religions and religious practice grew. The number of universities increased significantly after the establishment of the Australian Universities Commission in 1959, complemented by Colleges of Advanced Education. As tertiary bodies multiplied, adults of all ages flocked to post-school courses, further encouraged by the Whitlam Government's abolition of student fees from 1973.

Within the churches, the Second Vatican Council led to significant changes within (and beyond) the Roman Catholic Church, most notably the use of vernacular language instead of Latin in worship: the common use of English fostered ecumenical understanding across the old lines of Protestant–Catholic sectarianism, and encouraged many lay Roman Catholics to study theology. Among Protestants, trends such as 'every member ministry', and growing awareness of the need to relate adult Christian faith to a changing Australian society, had a similar effect.

A major turning-point was the 1964–65 Martin Report on the 'Future of Tertiary Education in Australia'. Section 15 stated that 'Universities, and the proposed Institutes of Colleges and Board of Teacher Education, should consider the provision of courses of a non-dogmatic character which are relevant to theological studies.'¹¹ This Report would appear to have been a major reason why universities established from this time were open in various ways to theological enquiry – Macquarie, LaTrobe, Newcastle, Flinders, Griffiths, Deakin, Murdoch. The 1966 Morpeth Conference on Theological Education sought to take account of the Martin Report.

As noted above, ACTh and MCD examinations had for decades been conducted across the nation (and beyond). The two bodies sustained friendly relations, and sought to foster networks of theological teachers and examiners. In 1965, an unprecedented two-day MCD conference in Melbourne brought together College members, Principals of the Bible Colleges and official Protestant church colleges, with the ACTh Delegates and others as guests (58 participants in all). Although a proposal to work towards an Australian undergraduate degree in theology narrowly failed (22–24), negotiations commenced between the churches

11. Cited in Piggin, 37.

represented on the MCD and the Victorian Parliament for a change in the MCD Act.¹²

The years 1966–1969 saw rapid moves towards co-operation, as theology began to see itself as part of the Australian higher education sector. The *Australian* [now ‘and New Zealand’] *Society for Theological Studies* (ANZSTS) commenced in 1996, and the *Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools* (ANZATS) formed in 1968: this embraces colleges from every Christian tradition in Australia and New Zealand. The combined ANZSTS / ANZATS annual conferences continue to be significant for enabling contact between scholars.¹³ In 1969 the *South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges* (SPABC) was set up: today the tertiary-level members of SPABC are also members of ANZATS.¹⁴ ANZATS held a series of five Library Consultations from 1978, from which eventuated the formation of the *Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association* (ANZTLA) from 1986.

In the 1970s, in the wake of the Martin Report, State governments began to legislate for mechanisms to regulate degrees offered by non-university bodies. The MCD, established by an Act of the Victorian Parliament, was after long negotiations able to have this revised in 1972 to provide for a taught undergraduate Bachelor of Theology (BTheol), the first such award

12. The Minutes of this Conference are held in the MCD archives. The attendees form a ‘Who’s Who’ of (non-Roman Catholic) Australasian theological education of the post-WW II generation. The matter most debated, however, was the requirements for biblical languages in the LTh and BD, and the need for more attention being given to practical theology.

The proposal for a Bachelor of Theology was discussed towards the end of proceedings. It was drafted by the Revd Dr Norman Young, supported by the Revd Dr Harry Wardlaw (both then early in their careers). The main argument put against such a degree was the possible lowering of the standard of the BD (which was stated to be that of a Melbourne BA, that is, a second undergraduate rather than a post-graduate award). In the light of the actions which followed, the close vote can be read as a signal for more work to be done, rather than as a decisive ‘no’.

13. Geoffrey Barnes, *ANZATS: the first 35 years* (Sydney: SCD, 2007), and www.anzats.edu.au. In New Zealand, theological colleges belonged to the ACTh and MCD until the mid–1990s, when theology began to be taught at the University of Auckland as well as through the long-established Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Otago (with whom the MCD has a Memorandum of Understanding for its Doctor of Ministry Studies). The Catholic Institute of Sydney offers SCD awards through a New Zealand campus; the ACTh and MCD continue to have HDR students in NZ, and links with NZ colleges, especially through ANZATS. New Zealand government funding is provided for students at all tertiary institutions (private and public).

14. The SPABC website offers a useful table of the relationships, nature and courses of each of its members: see www.spabc.com.au/table.htm, accessed March 14 2009.

permitted in Australia. The revised Act also changed the membership of the MCD, to incorporate Roman Catholic representatives, a major ecumenical initiative.¹⁵ The new BTheol was taught by two ecumenical consortia—the *United Faculty of Theology* (comprising Trinity (Anglican), Jesuit Theological College, and the colleges of what was to become the Uniting Church), and the *Evangelical Theological Association* (the Baptist and Churches of Christ colleges)—and two Roman Catholic groupings: Catholic Theological College (CTC, bringing together the seminaries of the Melbourne archdiocese and three religious orders) and Yarra Theological Union (YTU, a federation of nine religious orders). The *Dalton McCaughey Library* (formerly the *Joint Theological Library*), owned jointly by the *Society of Jesus* and the Uniting Church, is associated with the UFT. These relationships, and the contact between faculty through MCD committees, fostered a new level of ecumenical co-operation in teaching theology, though the formation of ordination candidates remained with each church.

A separate Bill to allow the ACTh to co-operate with the MCD in awarding degrees passed its first reading in the Victorian Parliament, but the second reading was not proceeded with after Archbishop Frank Woods (Anglican), withdrew support.¹⁶ The ACTh, whose offices moved to Sydney soon afterwards, was given permission by the NSW Minister of Education to offer a BTh from 1975. Though the ACTh had opened its examinations to non-Anglicans from 1962, all its associated colleges at that time were Anglican. For the smaller Anglican colleges, providing the necessary academic resources to support a taught degree posed a major challenge: over the decade from 1975 most joined ecumenical consortia, leaving the two colleges of evangelical orientation, Ridley and Moore, as the major Anglican colleges in the ACTh.

Contemporaneously, several Bible colleges which were looking to raise their academic standards and offer a degree-level course, were able to meet the ACTh's academic requirements. Thus the ACTh, while remaining a body accountable to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, found itself gradually transformed into a network

15. The MCD Act, revised in 2005 at the request of the Victorian Government to take account of the Commonwealth Government's *Higher Education Support Act* (2003), gave opportunity for a thorough overhaul of its governance and academic structures: as a result, further recourse to the Parliament is most unlikely to be needed.

16. Dr Woods was at the time President of the ACTh and an Anglican-appointed member of the MCD. Dr Stuart Barton Babbage, *Memoirs of a Loose Canon* (Canberra: Acorn, 2004) chapter 11 provides what information is in the public domain about these events, which led to a fragmentation of Anglican theological education.

of colleges having an evangelical ethos, and working as an inter-denominational body.¹⁷

B2 *Ecumenical consortia, university links*

The universities founded after the Martin Report were more open to teaching Theology / Divinity or Religious Studies (so LaTrobe 1964, Macquarie 1964, Flinders 1966, Griffith 1971, Deakin 1974, Murdoch 1975).¹⁸ From 1979 a number of local ecumenical consortia emerged, in each case including Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church colleges, taking advantage of this new situation:

- The **Adelaide College of Divinity** (ACD, 1979) brought together St Barnabas' Theological College (Anglican), the Catholic College of South Australia, and Parkin-Wesley College (UCA), to offer the Bachelor of Theology (BTh) through an affiliation agreement with Flinders University in which ACD became a university School, the first such arrangement in Australia. ACD faculty have academic status, sit on university committees and take part in university events, and students from other degrees take some units. In 1997 these colleges moved to a joint site, with a unified library, though some distance from the main Flinders campus. Alongside the Flinders degrees in Theology, the ACD offers its own tertiary awards in Ministry, from doctoral level to VET certificates, as a Registered Training Organisation.¹⁹

17. In the 1980s the ACTh developed a tiered system for its colleges, with research, degree and diploma level recognition: see www.actheology.org.au. Moore later left the ACTh and was registered in its own right, and its courses accredited by the NSW DET. A number of church-sponsored institutions belong to the ACTh: Mary Andrews College (Sydney, Anglican Deaconess Institute); Morling College (Sydney), Malyon College (Brisbane) and Vose Seminary (Perth, all Baptist); the three Presbyterian colleges (in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane); and the Reformed college (in Geelong). The ACTh thus embraces church-sponsored as well as inter-denominational colleges.

18. The Faculty of Arts in the University of Sydney today administers the Department of Studies in Religion in the School of Letters, Art and Media; the Faculty of Arts in the University of Queensland includes the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics. Both bodies offer Studies in Religion units for a BA or coursework MA, along with research. In the University of Melbourne, until 1991 the Department of Middle Eastern Studies in the Faculty of Arts offered units related to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Centres for Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies have been established recently.

19. The ACD included the UCA distance education arm, Coolamon College, until it joined Parkin-Wesley College: the merged institution was renamed the Uniting College of Leadership and Theology from March 2009. **Nungalinya College**, the ecumenical indigenous college in Darwin, was part of ACD for some years, but is now a stand-alone VET institution. Burleigh College (Baptist, now closed) and the Bible College of South Australia were originally ACD members, but later were accredited with the ACTh.

- The **Brisbane College of Theology** (BCT, 1983) comprises St Paul's Theological College (Roman Catholic, formerly known as Pius XII Provincial Seminary), St Francis' Theological College (Anglican) and Trinity Theological College (UCA). The BCT Board includes two members appointed by each of the three churches involved; for some years BCT was related to Griffith University. It teaches on the basis of accreditation from the Queensland Department of Education, but with changes in the sponsoring churches' approaches towards theological education, BCT is not seeking re-accreditation from December 2009. St Paul's and Trinity will teach for the theological degrees of the Australian Catholic University (now co-located with St Paul's in Banyo) while St Francis' is looking towards a partnership with Charles Sturt University through St Mark's (Anglican) National Theological Centre in Canberra.
- The **Sydney College of Divinity** (SCD, 1983), while based in NSW, has links with colleges in other states and in New Zealand. A wide diversity of colleges has been included among its Member Institutions (MIs): current MIs are the Catholic Institute of Sydney (with a campus in Auckland); the distance-education provider Broken Bay Institute (Roman Catholic); St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College; Booth College (Salvation Army); the Nazarene Theological College (Church of the Nazarene), Brisbane; Emmaus College (Brethren); Southern Cross College (Assemblies of God), the largest MI, with campuses in WA and New Zealand as well as NSW; Australian College of Ministries (Churches of Christ), teaching in distance mode; and the ecumenical NSW College of Clinical Pastoral Education.²⁰

The diversity of its MIs means that the SCD functions as a federation of colleges offering their own programmes, teaching towards common awards accredited by the NSW Department of Education. Further, unlike the ACTh (accountable to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia) and the MCD (whose Council includes two members each from the Anglican, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches), the SCD has no formal ecclesial basis.

20. Moore Theological College (Anglican) and Morling College (Baptist) were part of the initial discussions towards formation of the SCD, but the participation of Roman Catholic colleges was a key factor in their not joining. Kingsley College (Wesleyan Methodist, Melbourne) was a MI of the SCD until it merged into Tabor Victoria from 2008. Garden City College of Ministries, located in Brisbane, an ACTh college for some years before joining the SCD, was closed by its sponsoring church in 2008: the campus is now being used by Harvest Bible College.

The SCD's operating ethos is thus closer to that of a church-independent HEP, with consequential pluses and minuses. Its member colleges stand more on their own than in the ACTh (which recognizes colleges at four levels) or the MCD (which operates a cyclic audit process for its Recognised Teaching Institutions): again, this has its pros and cons.

- In Perth, **Murdoch University** opened a Theology Program in 1986, to teach awards for the Perth College of Divinity Inc (PCD).²¹ PCD commenced in 1985 from an initiative of the WA chapter of ANZATS, and includes the Anglican Institute of Theology and the UCA Perth Theological Hall. The Baptist Theological College of WA (now Vose Seminary) and the Catholic Institute for Adult and Tertiary Education were foundation PCD members: the latter substantially withdrew from involvement when Notre Dame University was founded in 1990, and BTCWA transferred to the ACTh in 2003.²² From 1994 Murdoch University and PCD have jointly funded the programme on a 40/60 split; faculty members are affiliated to the Churches of Christ as well as with the three sponsoring churches.
- In Canberra, St Mark's National Theological Centre began to operate as a campus of **Charles Sturt University** (CSU) from 1997.²³ In 2007, United Theological College (UCA, formerly with the SCD) became a Sydney campus of CSU; St Francis' College, Brisbane (Anglican) is looking towards CSU affiliation from 2010.

As a result of these changes, relations with the university sector began to change, and co-operative research activity grew. Colleges were able to be more creative with curricula and assessment, and open to consider a wider range of confessional commitments.

One unforeseen outcome has been learning which some feel is 'de-traditioned' from its ecclesial context: what do biblical studies and hermeneutics look like when unhinged from their association with the actual use of the scriptures in Christian ministry, for example? Some report

21. John H Smith, "A Brief History of Theological Education in Western Australia", in GR Treloar (ed), 44–58 gives the background for the Murdoch Program.

22. See <http://www.soc.murdoch.edu.au/theology/info/pcd.htm>, accessed April 14, 2009. The College of Theology of the University of Notre Dame was a PCD member until 1990; co-operation between it and the Murdoch Theology Programme continues on an inter-university basis.

23. An Anglican institution, St Mark's is the outcome of a coming together of the long-established St Mark's Library, and the Canberra College of Ministries, formerly with the ACTh and later the SCD. CSU now sponsors a *Centre for Aging and Pastoral Education* (CAPE), and a *Centre for Public and Contextual Theology* (PACT).

the loss of an ‘across-the-curriculum’ sense of formation for ordination candidates: the context of their degree learning may be quite different from their formational studies.²⁴ Further, for some churches there has been a significant loss of sharing similar standards and approaches in preparing for a common ministry. From an Anglican perspective, ordinands from a variety of ‘churchmanships’ preparing for the ThL knew that their examiner could come from any theological tradition.²⁶

Alongside these changes, the Australian Lutheran story is illustrative of ecumenical developments within a particular Christian tradition. The formation of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (UELCA) from five small synods saw the formation of Wartburg Seminary, which moved to North Adelaide in 1923 and reopened as Immanuel Seminary. In 1966, when the UELCA joined with the ELCA to form the Lutheran Church of Australia, a single seminary to replace Concordia and Immanuel was looked for: in 1968, Luther Seminary commenced on the Immanuel site to train pastors, and Lutheran Teachers College was established on the Concordia site to train teachers and lay people. The latter did not eventuate as hoped, and in 1994 the Lutheran School of Theology began on the Luther Seminary site—and now there were three independent Lutheran theological schools in Adelaide. Four years later these were integrated into the one institution with three Schools (Educational Theology, Pastoral Theology and Theological Studies), and the name Australian Lutheran College (ALC) adopted from 2004. ALC today plays an active role in ANZATS (hosting the 2009 Conference) and co-operates with universities for teacher training. By the mid-1980s the numbers studying theology had grown significantly, with some three-quarters of theological students doing so out of personal interest, and including women and men in roughly equal numbers overall, across an age-range from 18 to 80. This growth has been sustained in the two decades since, across an increasingly diverse range of courses in a variety of colleges.

24. PCD ordinands do their degrees on the Murdoch campus and their formational studies in separate church facilities.

BCT students have Mondays for Anglican, Roman Catholic or UCA formation, and Tuesday–Friday for degree study.

In Melbourne, UFT ordinands do their degree work together Monday – Thursday, then separate on Fridays into Anglican, Uniting and Jesuit groups and location.

ACD colleges (Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting) share a common location, including library and chapel.

C New colleges and networks

A number of churches have developed or made changed arrangements regarding long-standing colleges in the last five years. Some have closed—Burleigh College (Baptist, SA), St John's College (Anglican, Morpeth NSW) and Garden City Christian College (Brisbane)—while Kingsley College (Wesleyan Methodist, Melbourne) has merged with Tabor Victoria. The Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation and The Salvation Army Officer Training College (Melbourne) became RTIs of the MCD. But a number of more significant developments have taken place in theological education across three broad networks, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Evangelical.

C1 *Charismatic / Pentecostal*

New colleges based in Pentecostal traditions have commenced as these churches have grown in Australia, offering both VET and higher education awards. They are attracting significant numbers of young students, and are highly entrepreneurial in their outlook, working with local congregations to develop networks of new teaching centres. The faculty in these new colleges are increasingly well-qualified, especially in applied theology, attention is paid to the use of technology in learning, and—in contrast to most other Protestant traditions—the arts feature strongly. These colleges have also benefitted from State mechanisms for accreditation, eventuating in three networks (Tabor, Southern Cross and Harvest) teaching at some twenty campuses; there would seem to be some competition between the networks, however.

Tabor College, established in Adelaide in 1979 as a Christian Revival Crusade institution, in the 90s developed into a 'liberal arts' in the North American tradition. Today Tabor Adelaide describes itself as 'a multi-denominational Christian Education Centre offering government-accredited courses at tertiary level'.²⁵ The college retains its charismatic ethos, while faculty and students come from a broad spectrum of Christian traditions. Degrees with a theological focus are offered (to doctoral level) as part of a department of Ministry, Theology & Culture, making about half of 2007 enrolments, but a wider range of awards is offered: a Bachelor of Social Science (Counselling), MEd and BEd (including some Commonwealth Supported Places) and a BA with majors in Creative Writing, English Literature, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Performing

25. See www.taboradelaide.com, accessed February 26, 2009—a first-class website, as is the case with other colleges who identify with charismatic / Pentecostal traditions.

Arts (Drama, Dance, Music) and Youth Work; a degree in Nursing is planned for 2010. The faculty for each major hold impressive academic qualifications and have significant professional experience.

Tabor Victoria was established in 1988, Tabor campuses in Sydney and Perth in 1992, and in Hobart in 1999: each is independent, but a national office co-ordinates the network. The non-Adelaide Tabors concentrate mostly on theology and ministry, but aspire to offer a wider range of courses; Tabor Victoria has been granted Commonwealth Supported Places for its Graduate Diploma in Education following Tabor Adelaide's success in gaining teacher training places.

Christian Heritage College commenced in 1985, based in Citipointe Church, Brisbane (Christian Outreach Crusade).²⁶ It has grown into multidisciplinary Christian tertiary education institution, with a strong emphasis on teacher training through a School of Education & Humanities (attracting Commonwealth Supported Places) alongside Schools of Business, Social Studies (offering Counselling, Chaplaincy, Youth Work and Human Services awards) and Ministry (diplomas, Bachelor of Ministry and a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma in Ministry Studies). Courses range from diplomas to Graduate Diplomas and Masters in Education and Counselling: all courses include four core units offered by the School of Christian Studies. As well as providing the core units, the School teaches theology with a strong ministry emphasis.

Alphacrucis (named Southern Cross College from 1993 until 2009, and before that the Commonwealth Bible College) has a history reaching back to 1948.²⁷ A college of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC, formerly the Assemblies of God), it has expanded rapidly since 1993. Today it teaches from three campuses in Sydney, as well as locations in Brisbane and Auckland NZ. Alphacrucis has the largest enrolment of colleges belonging to the SCD (well over 500 EFTSLs), and teaches the SCD BTh in Korean (BTh Korean Medium) as well as in English. As with most Bible colleges, Intercultural Studies (i.e. missiology) is a significant discipline; along with other charismatic / Pentecostal colleges, emphasis is placed on practical training for congregational ministry, including counselling, and the use of visual arts and media.

26. www.chc.edu.au/school-of-ministries, accessed March 19, 2009. The School of Ministries is also the teaching arm of Citipointe Ministry College.

27. www.alphacrucis.edu.au, accessed from www.scc.edu.au on February 26, 2009. Commonwealth Bible College (also known as Illawarra Bible College) had links with the ACTh for some years, at diploma level. Alphacrucis has recently been accredited to offer its own Bachelor of Contemporary Ministries, but in this book is classified as an SCD MI rather than as a stand-alone HEP.

Harvest Bible College, recognised by the ACC, commenced in 1985 from a local congregation in Melbourne's south-east.²⁸ It welcomes students from the five Pentecostal denominations in Australia, as well as those from other churches. Harvest now has teaching bases in six other churches across Melbourne, in Wodonga, and in Brisbane (continuing the Garden City College of Ministries), plus distance education using podcasting.

Harvest West was started by the ACC in Perth, and has its own accreditation with the WA government. Both the WA and Victorian colleges have links with Harvest colleges in Denmark.

C2 *Evangelical*

A number of colleges who describe themselves as Evangelical or Reformed have been established or been reshaped in recent decades. Moore Theological College (which identifies with the Reformed tradition) has grown significantly, and is now one of the largest theological colleges in Australia. Some evangelical colleges have focussed on a special area of ministry: Mary Andrews College (ACTh) trains women for ministry, while Anglican Youthworks (ACTh, Sydney) prepares youth workers.

The **Wesley Institute**, arising from the educational ministry of the Wesley Mission in Sydney, functions (like Tabor Adelaide) as a Christian tertiary studies institution more than as a theological college. It specialises in the performing and visual arts, as well as ministry, and has gained independent accreditation. Its theological program was accredited by the SCD for a period of years.

In Western Australia, **Perth Bible College** has gained separate accreditation as a HEP (as has Harvest West—see above). **Trinity Theological College** is affiliated with the ACTh, and (like the Bible colleges) has no formal relationship with a particular church tradition. It finds support among some Perth Anglicans, however, and has attracted students looking towards ordained ministry. This situation is bringing into public view students' questioning of the theological orientation of official church training provision through Murdoch.

Some evangelical local congregations have sponsored colleges, sometimes in association with a school, and mostly in the VET sector, but some have gained tertiary recognition—**Adelaide College of Ministries** (independent), and **Mueller Ministry College** (ACTh) for example.

28. www.harvestbc.edu.au, accessed February 26, 2009. Harvest's printed publications feature brilliant two-colour graphic design, mostly done by their students.

C3 *Roman Catholic*

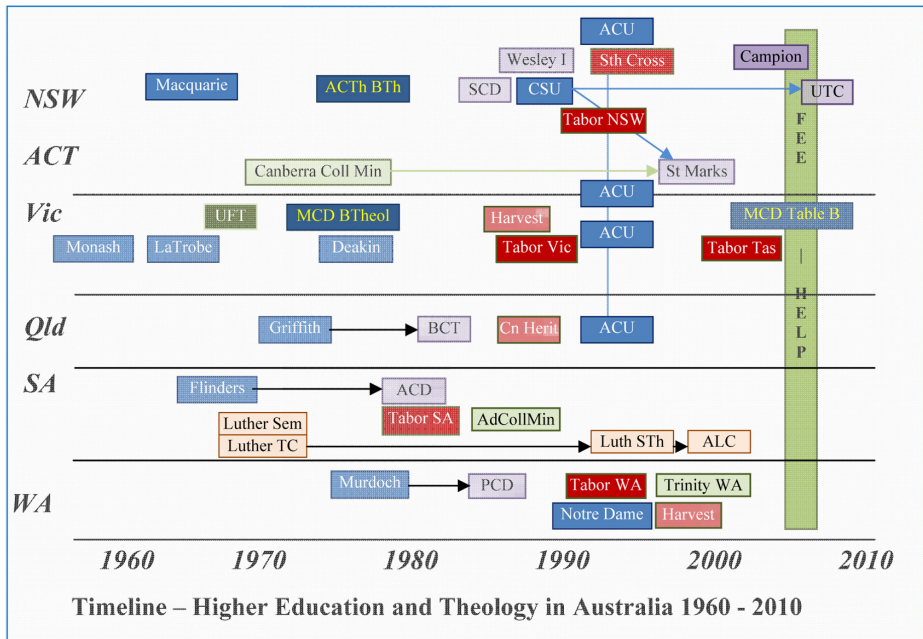
The **Australian Catholic University** was formed in 1991 from the amalgamation of four Roman Catholic tertiary institutions in eastern Australia, each of which had a long heritage of tertiary teaching, especially in education and nursing.²⁹ ACU now operates across six campuses, at five of which some theology is offered, mostly as units within education, nursing and other non-theology degrees: the education of ordination candidates is not part of ACU's purpose, though some non-Catholic students have studied theology at ACU as part of their academic preparation for ordination. A School of Philosophy and Theology (a Faculty from 2009) commenced in the mid-1990s, offering a Bachelor of Theology, postgraduate coursework and higher degrees by research, and teaching theology and philosophy for other ACU awards (its largest teaching load). New relationships are developing between ACU, Roman Catholic seminaries and other theological colleges: from 2010, St Paul's Theological College (RC) and Trinity Theological College (Uniting) in Brisbane will prepare their students for ACU degrees.

The **University of Notre Dame** opened in Fremantle in 1990, as a private university established by the Parliament of Western Australia, with close links to the Roman Catholic Church. With other campuses in Broome and Sydney, Notre Dame now has some 7,000 students enrolled, each of whom must undertake a three-unit 'core requirement' in philosophy, theology and ethics. Bachelor and Master of Theology degrees are offered, with 30 EFTSLs in 2007. Notre Dame is the largest single body teaching theology in Australia, with over 600 EFSTLs in 2007 (only exceeded by the ACTh consortium), in large part due to the core requirement (some 95% of EFTSLs).

Campion College opened in western Sydney in 2006, as "Australia's first liberal arts tertiary college", teaching from the perspective of the "authentic teaching of the Catholic Church".³⁰ Campion does not teach a theology degree, but offers a BA with core units at each level in history, literature, philosophy and theology, directed towards students leaving school seeking a good humanities education.

29. The History section of the ACU website offers contains a very helpful PDF graphic of the many institutions from which it has formed: www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/the_university/our_history/, accessed February 19, 2009.

30. www.campion.edu.au, accessed February 26, 2009. Campion's claim to be the first such college in Australia neglects Tabor Adelaide, though Tabor grew into this philosophy rather than being founded on it.



C4 *An emerging paradigm*

A commonality across emerging institutions is the desire to relate Christian faith to learning across the board, not only in the explicitly theological disciplines.

As well as being a focus for the Christian tertiary institutions, this rationale lies behind the 'Lay Ministry' foci in ACTh Diploma courses, and the ACTh 'Christian Studies' degrees. The ACTh-affiliated School of Christian Studies associated with Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University fosters this latter approach.

In similar vein, Whitley College (MCD, Baptist) teaches a wide range of units relating Christian worldviews to Australian contexts, as does Yarra Theological Union (MCD, RC), including a Diploma in Social Justice as well a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry.

D Conclusion

This rapid overview shows that theological education in Australia

- is of long standing, and grounded in an ethos of personal and corporate formative learning which aims to equip students to be well-rounded persons and effective in ministry;
- though excluded from Australian universities for a century, reached a key turning point when undergraduate degrees in theology were authorised in the mid-1970s;
- has seen its student body diversify significantly since the mid-1980s, though the preparation of candidates for authorised Christian ministries continues to be the major reason that churches continue to support theological higher education;
- is seeing the emergence of new institutions with new approaches, notably the development of Christian tertiary colleges offering a range of disciplines alongside of and informed by theology;
- has diversified its offerings through the introduction of graduate courses from 2000, and the development of more intentional research activity;
- is facing significant challenges and opportunities as relationships between government and tertiary education (especially private) continue to change; and
- maintains high academic standards and a personal dimension to learning, and is adapting to changes in the expectations of students and stakeholders regarding formation.

All of which brings the discussion into the present, of which the next Chapter seeks to sketch out a draft portrait. ◻

Chapter Two: Australian Theological Education Today

Key findings: Australian theological education today is facing challenges and opportunities, as relationships between churches and society, and between government and tertiary education (especially private) continue to change.

The theology sector continues to maintain high academic standards, integrated with a formative and communal ethos for learning. Adapting to changes in the expectations of students and stakeholders regarding formation for ministry, together with the need for greater collaboration and co-operation, are important internal challenges.

Sources: In addition to the sources cited for Chapter One, this chapter takes into account responses from the *Council of Deans of Theology*, ANZATS members and Consultation participants to the April, July and September presentations by the Project Manager.

A 'Seeing' the theology sector

A typology of teaching institutions and students in the theology sector opens this chapter, beginning with an overview of EFTSL by HEP, moving to Tables showing the church and academic affiliations of colleges.

It is important to note, however, that it is Higher Education Providers who are 'seen' by government departments: the larger of these are the consortia, whose teaching takes place through the colleges associated with each. Explaining this 'bi-focal' aspect was a significant dimension in the preparation for and conduct of the AUQA audits of the MCD and ACTh, both of whom were commended for the high levels of co-operation shown between the various colleges, and between these and the central administration. This can mean that government departments relate more to administrative rather than teaching institutions in the theology sector.

On the other hand, it is the individual theological colleges which are 'seen' by churches and students, since these are the primary locale for learning and community life. This can mean that students and churches have little understanding of the wider framework within which most theological education takes place. This is also the case for the university schools of theology: at Flinders and Charles Sturt, the locale of teaching theology is separate from the university campus. At Murdoch, and now Newcastle, theology is located on the university campus, which raises other issues, notably community life and formation, as noted above.

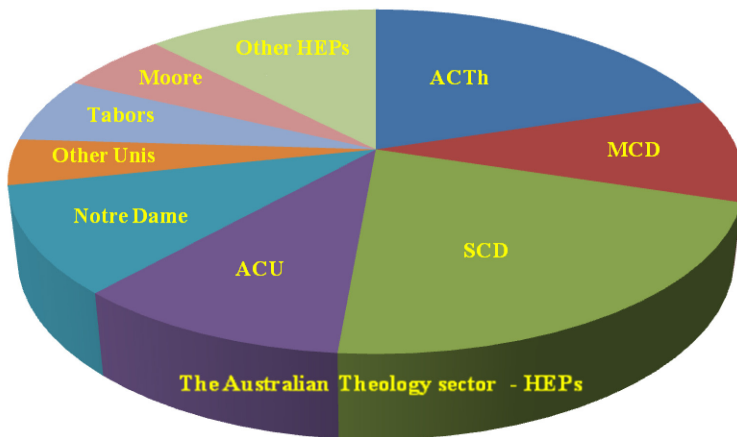
Such structural polarity reflects the tensions which church members and some leaders not uncommonly believe exist between 'academic' and 'formational' theological education. 'Formation' is a term much used in theological education: it is discussed in Chapter Five, but some introduction is appropriate here. It covers several concerns: specific formation for particular ministries, general formation for Christian discipleship, academic formation to develop as a scholar, and personal formation to become a well-rounded graduate. It also concerns corporate as well as individual development: the primary learning environment in theological education is community, and that in an organic, not narrowly institutional sense. Different conceptions of 'ministries', 'discipleship' and 'church' will affect what such formation means in a particular college, so that the impact of formative intentions on curriculum and learning will thus vary in different places.

B Statistics

The following Tables give an overview of enrolments, faculty and affiliations in Australian theological education.⁵

<i>Institution:</i>	<i>Level:</i>	Under-graduate	Postgraduate Coursework	Ministry Studies	HDR	Total	Percentage
Australian College of Theology		711.7	471.6	12.0	20.7	1,216.0	19.6
Melbourne College of Divinity		275.0	215.3	12.0	89.0	591.3	9.5
Sydney College of Divinity		926.0	355.5	2.5	9.6	1,293.6	20.8
Australian Catholic University		473.8	158.0	2.0	38.0	671.8	10.8
University of Notre Dame		557.5	42.5		3.3	603.3	9.7
Other Universities: Theology		196.6	64.3	18.8	57.0	336.6	5.4
Tabor (all)		307.4	57.8	3.8		368.9	5.9
Moore Theological College		321.0	21.0		0.5	342.5	5.5
Other Theology HEPs		667.4	102.0	14.5	2.0	785.9	12.7
TOTAL		4,436.4	1,488.0	65.5	220.0	6,209.9	100.0

Table 2.1 2007 EFTSL by major HEP



1. Data is taken from submissions made by HEPs to DEST for 2007, using narrow discipline codes 91700–91703, together with Annual Reports and direct information from the HEP where this was unavailable. The figures are conservative – some estimates add a further 300–500 EFTSL. A full table by HEP / consortium and college, with more detail on course levels, is included in Appendix G.

‘Other Universities: Theology’ in the table includes data from CSU, Flinders, Murdoch and Newcastle.

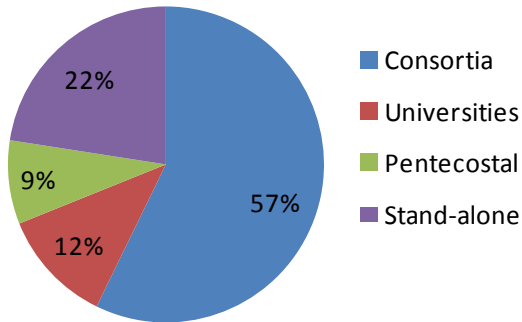
‘Other Theology HEPs’ includes data from the Adelaide College of Ministries, ACD, Avondale (Theology), BCT, Harvest Victoria, Harvest West, Campion, Christian Heritage, John-Paul II Inst., Perth Bible College, Wesley Institute, and Worldview.

HEP	Faculty - Full-time				Faculty - Part-time			
	Doctorate	Master's	Other	TOTAL	Doctorate	Master's	Other	TOTAL
CONSORTIA								
ACD	15	5	1	21	4	3		7
ACT	61	35	21	117	37	48	66	151
BCT	13			13	10	13	4	27
MCD	52	16	5	73	57	33	19	109
SCD	36	4	16	56	12	5	12	29
Consortia totals	177	60	43	280	120	102	101	323
UNIVERSITIES								
ACU	24	3		27				0
CSU	14	3		17	8			8
Flinders	2			2				0
Murdoch	6			6	1	1		2
Notre Dame	17	3	1	21				0
Newcastle	2			2	2			2
University totals	65	9	1	75	11	1	0	12
PENTECOSTAL NETWORKS								
Harvests	3	2	1	6	5		23	28
Tabors	11	12	11	34	8	10	8	26
Pentecostal totals	14	14	12	40	13	10	31	54
STAND-ALONE HEPs								
Adelaide C of Min	1	2	2	5	2		7	9
Aust Lutheran C	9	2		11	5	5	12	22
Avondale C	7	1		8	6			6
Campion C	6	1		7				0
Christian Heritage		4	3	7				0
John-Paul II Inst	6		1	7	5	10	6	21
Moore TC	20	2		22	6	4	3	13
Perth Bible C	2	1	1	4				0
Wesley Inst	2	2	0	4		1		1
Worldview Centre	2	1	4	7	2		7	9
Stand-alone HEPs	55	16	11	82	26	19	35	81
TOTALS	313	99	67	477	170	133	167	470

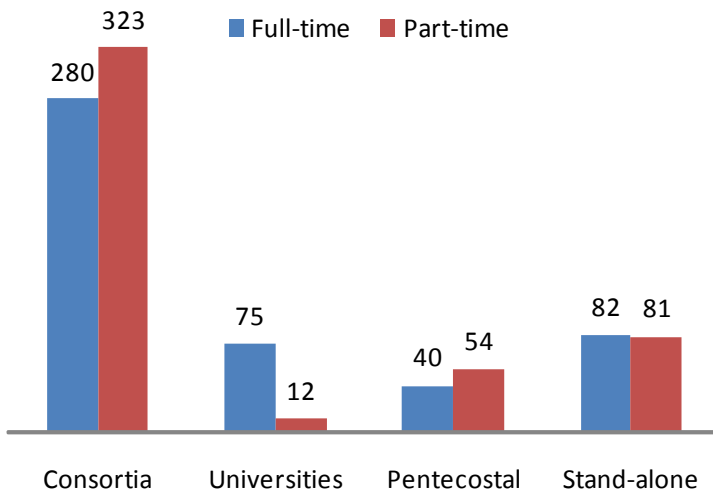
Table 2.2: Faculty by HEP / college, Qualification and Time

Australian Theology Faculty by HEP type

(fulltime + part-time @33%)



Australian Theology Faculty



C Learning people: theological students

Some 14,000 students are estimated to be currently studying theology at an Australian accredited tertiary institution, representing some 6,200 EFTSL.⁵ They fall into three broad categories, each of which is found in the university schools of theology, as well as in private providers:⁶

- those preparing for a Christian ministry (a high proportion of whom study full-time, often with a ministry placement);
- those looking to deepen their Christian understanding (often studying part-time); and
- those taking theology as part of another course (typically Arts, Education, Nursing, Counselling), usually as a core requirement.

The profile of theological students is considerably varied. Until the late 70s, most students were young, single male ordinands in their twenties. Today the range of ages, household patterns, work and life experiences is much wider. In most colleges, students' ages run from the low twenties to retirement and beyond, the average being around 40: a class is likely to include students from the 'baby boomer', 'gen X' and 'gen Y' demographics, posing significant pedagogical challenges. In colleges which see themselves as tertiary Christian institutions, however, the student body is generally closer to the age and gender profile of universities.

Women began to enter theological institutions in significant numbers from the 70s, including at colleges related to churches who do not ordain women. Most colleges now have women and men students in roughly equal proportions, though women form a significant minority of research candidates. Colleges increasingly have women faculty, the highest proportion being in Pentecostal institutions. This change has been accompanied by greater variation in approaches to what 'doing theology' means, explicit attention to feminist (and other 'liberation') theologies, and widespread shifts in teaching styles, group learning and assessment methods.

2. These estimates are based on 2007 DEEWR data, and information provided by theology HEPs. The DEEWR totals for 2005 and 2006 are 4,081 and 5,120 EFTSL respectively, but not all students were included in these figures.

3. Some universities offer Religious Studies, but the numbers are small: DEEWR figures for 'Philosophy and Religious Studies' for those not part of the theology sector (that is, excluding ACU, CSU, Flinders and Murdoch) for 2007 show 342 undergraduate, 46 graduate coursework and 77 HDR EFSTL. This points to the dominance, in Australian higher education, of theology understood from Christian perspectives.

For many years students have come from overseas to study theology in Australia, adapting to learning in an English-language cultural environment. This continues, especially at graduate and HDR level, and from the Asia-Pacific region. As well, degrees in theology are now available in Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean. In recent years, growing numbers of refugees, humanitarian visa holders and Australian students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds have begun to study theology, leading some colleges to adapt their learning processes. This range of linguistic contexts raises issues about the cultural assumptions made in English-medium learning.

This variety of student profiles is likely to influence the shape of Australian theological education over the next decade or more. To what degree do faculty assume that the student body is made of ministry candidates, mature adults or university-age young people? How far are the different learning styles of students from different generations, of women and men, or from non-English linguistic backgrounds taken on board? In what ways do theological communities of learning practise a truly integrative approach to learning ‘across the curriculum’?

D Learning institutions: the colleges

Given this complex history, the general friction between Australia’s Christian churches until the 1960s, and the many changes since the mid-1970s, it is difficult to produce a precise typology of colleges, and some fit more than one category. Further, colleges are relying less on churches supporting ordinands who study full-time, and looking more to recruit students from the wider Christian scene. At best, this situation leads to a greater focus on colleges delivering the learning promised; at worst, it can promote an unedifying and resource-wasting competitiveness.

Some indication of institutional relationships and affiliations is needed, however, in order to ‘scope’ the theology sector adequately. The Tables on the following pages aim to do this.

AFFILIATION: TRADITION:	ACD / Flinders	ACTh	BCT	CSU
Anglican	St Barnabas' Theological College (SA)	Mary Andrews College Ridley Melbourne Mission and Ministry College Anglican Youthworks	St Francis' Theological College (Qld)	St Mark's National Theological Centre (ACT)
Australian Christian Churches (AoG)				
Baptist		Malyon College (Qld) Morling College (NSW) Vose Seminary (WA)		
Bible / Missionary Colleges		Bible College of Qld Bible College of SA / SA Grad School of T Bible College of Vic Sydney Missionary and Bible College Trinity Theological College (WA) Worldview Centre (Tasmania)		
Brethren		Mueller College of Ministries (Qld)		
Charismatic				
COC Churches				
Churches of Christ				
Ecumenical	Nungalinya College (NT) Wontulp-Bi-Buya College (Qld)	School of Christian Studies (NSW)		

Table 2.3A Australian Theological Institutions (2009) by Church Tradition & Educational Affiliation (*first half-page*)

MCD	SCD	Stand alone / other
Trinity College Theological School (UFT, Vic)		Moore Theological College (NSW)
	Alphacrucis (<i>formerly Southern Cross College, NSW, Qld, NZ</i>)	Harvest Bible College (Vic) Harvest West Bible College (WA)
Whitley College		
		Adelaide College of Ministries Perth Bible College
	Emmaus Bible College (NSW)	
		Tabor Adelaide Tabor NSW Tabor Perth Tabor Tasmania Tabor Victoria (includes Kingsley College)
		Christian Heritage College, Citipointe (Qld)
Churches of Christ Theological College (Vic)	Australian College of Ministries (distance education)	
Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation (Vic) United Faculty of Theology (Vic)	NSW College of Clinical Pastoral Education	Murdoch University / Perth College of Divinity University of Newcastle

Table 2.3A Australian Theological Institutions (2009) by Church Tradition & Educational Affiliation (*second half-page*)

AFFILIATION: TRADITION:	ACD / Flinders	ACTh	BCT	CSU
Orthodox				
Lutheran				
Nazarene				
Presbyterian		Presbyterian Theological Centre NSW Presbyterian Theological College Victoria Queensland Theological College		
Christian Reformed Churches		Reformed Theological College (Vic)		
Roman Catholic	Catholic Theological College of SA		St Paul's Theological College (Qld)	
Salvation Army				
Seventh-Day Adventist				
Uniting Church in Australia	Uniting College of Leadership & Theology (SA, formerly Parkin-Wesley)		Trinity Theological College (Qld)	United Theological College (NSW)

Table 2.3B Australian Theological Institutions (2009) by Church Tradition and Educational Affiliation (*first half-page*)

MCD	SCD	Stand alone / other
	St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College (NSW)	<i>Pope Shenouda III Coptic Orthodox College (NSW)</i>
		Australian Lutheran College (SA)
	Nazarene Theological College (Qld)	
Catholic Theological College (Vic): with four seminaries Jesuit Theological College (UFT, Vic) Yarra Theological Union (Vic): with nine seminaries	Broken Bay Institute (NSW, distance education) Catholic Institute of Sydney	Australian Catholic University Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, School of Theology (NSW, Qld, Vic) John-Paul II Institute of Marriage and Family (Vic) University of Notre Dame School of Theology (WA, NSW) <i>Vianney College (NSW)</i>
The Salvation Army Training College (Vic)	Booth College (NSW)	
		Avondale College (NSW)
Uniting Church Theological College (UFT, Vic)		Wesley Institute (NSW)

Table 2.3B Australian Theological Institutions (2009) by Church Tradition and Educational Affiliation (*second half-page*)

Affiliation	HEP / College	Type
ACD	Adelaide College of Divinity (<i>Flinders partner</i>)	
	Catholic Theological College of SA	Denominational
	Uniting College of Leadership and Theology (<i>formerly Parkin-Wesley College</i>)	Denominational
	St Barnabas' Theological College	Denominational
ACT	Australian College of Theology	
[to 2008]	Bible College of South Australia / SA Graduate School of Theology	Bible college
	Bible College of Victoria	Bible college
	Bible College of Queensland	Bible college
	Malyon College (Qld)	Denominational
	Mary Andrews College	Specialist
	Macquarie Christian Studies Institute	Lay education
	Morling College	Denominational
	Mueller College of Ministries	Lay education
	Presbyterian Theological Centre NSW	Denominational
	Presbyterian Theological College of Vic	Denominational
	Queensland Theological College	Denominational
	Reformed Theological College	Denominational
	Ridley Melbourne Mission and Ministry College	Theological college
	School of Christian Studies	Lay education
	Sydney Missionary and Bible College	Bible college
	Trinity Theological College (WA)	Theological college
	Youthworks College	Specialist
	Vose Seminary (Baptist, WA)	Denominational
BCT	Brisbane College of Theology [to 2009]	
	St Francis' Theological College	Denominational
	St Paul's Theological College	Denominational
	Trinity Theological College (Qld)	Denominational

Table 2.4A **Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity** (*first halfpage*)

Ecclesial tradition	Activity
Roman Catholic	Ordination focus
Uniting Church in Australia	Ordination plus distance
Anglican	Ordination plus
Evangelical	Ministry + Theology
Evangelical	Ministry + Theology
Evangelical	Ministry + Theology
Baptist	Ordination plus
Anglican	Women's Ministry
<i>Evangelical</i>	<i>Theology</i>
Baptist	Ordination plus
Brethren	Theology
Presbyterian	Ordination focus
Presbyterian	Ordination focus
Presbyterian	Ordination focus
Reformed	Ordination focus
Anglican	Ordination plus
Evangelical	Theology
Evangelical	Ministry + Theology
Evangelical	Theology
Anglican	Youth ministry
Baptist	Ordination plus
Anglican	Ordination plus
Roman Catholic	Ordination focus
Uniting Church in Australia	Ordination plus

Table 2.4A **Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity** (*second halfpage*)

MCD			Melbourne College of Divinity
	Catholic Theological College		Denominational
	Churches of Christ Theological College		Denominational
	Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation		Specialist
	The Salvation Army Training College		Denominational
	United Faculty of Theology, <i>including</i>		Theological college
	Jesuit Theological College		Denominational
	Trinity College Theological School		Denominational
	Uniting Church Theological College		Denominational
	Whitley College		Denominational
	Yarra Theological Union		Theological college
SCD			Sydney College of Divinity
[to 2008] [to 2008]	Alphacrucis (<i>formerly Southern Cross College</i>)		Tertiary Christian Education
	Australian College of Ministries		Denominational
	Booth College School for Christian Studies		Denominational
	Broken Bay Institute		Theological college
	Catholic Institute of Sydney		Denominational
	Emmaus Bible College		Lay education
	<i>Garden City College of Ministries</i>		Lay education
	<i>Kingsley College [with Tabor Vic from 2008]</i>		Denominational
	Nazarene Theological College		Denominational
	NSW College of CPE		Specialist
	St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College		Denominational
University Schools of Theology			
ACU	ACU Faculty / School of Theology		University
CSU	St Mark's National Theological Centre		Denominational
	United Theological College		Denominational
Flinders	School of Theology		University
Murdoch	School of Theology / Perth College of Divinity		University
	Anglican Institute of Theology / John Wollaston College		Denominational
	Perth Theological Hall of UCA		Denominational
Newcastle	Theology Programme		University
Notre Dame	School of Philosophy and Theology		Tertiary Christian Education

Table 2.4B **Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity (first halfpage)**

Roman Catholic	Ordination focus
Churches of Christ	Ordination plus
Ecumenical	Spirituality Spiritual Direction
The Salvation Army	Ordination focus
Ecumenical	Theology
Roman Catholic	Ordination focus
Anglican	Ordination plus
Uniting Church in Australia	Ordination focus
Baptist	Ordination plus
Roman Catholic	Theology
Australian Christian Churches	Ministry
Churches of Christ	Distance education
The Salvation Army	Ordination focus
Roman Catholic	Distance education
Roman Catholic	Ordination plus
Brethren	Theology
<i>Australian Christian Churches</i>	Ministry
<i>Wesleyan Methodist</i>	Ministry + Theology
Church of the Nazarene	Ordination plus
Ecumenical	Clinical Pastoral Education
Greek Orthodox	Ordination focus
Roman Catholic	Service + Theology
Anglican	Ordination plus
Uniting Church in Australia	Ordination plus
Ecumenical	Theology
University / Ecumenical	Theology
Anglican	Ordination focus
Uniting Church in Australia	Ordination focus
University	Theology
Roman Catholic	Service + Theology

Table 2.4B Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity (*second halfpage*)

Stand-alone HEPs		
[not FEE-HELP]	Adelaide College of Ministries	Bible college
	Australian Lutheran College	Denominational / Tertiary Christian Education
	Avondale College	Denominational / Tertiary Christian Education
	Campion College	Tertiary Christian Education
	Christian Heritage College (Citipointe)	Tertiary Christian Education
	Harvest Bible College	Bible college
	Harvest West Bible College	Bible college
	John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family	Specialist
	Moore Theological College	Denominational
	Perth Bible College	Bible college
	Tabor College Adelaide	Tertiary Christian Education
	Tabor College NSW	Bible college
	Tabor College Perth	Bible college
	Tabor College Tasmania	Bible college
	Tabor College Victoria	Tertiary Christian Education
	Wesley Institute	Tertiary Christian Education
[not FEE-HELP]	Worldview Centre (Tasmania)	Specialist
Other non-HEP colleges		
Morling link	College of Christian Higher Education	Specialist
	Vianney College, Wagga Wagga	Denominational
	Pope Shenouda III Coptic Orthodox C	Denominational
Appendix: some VET theological colleges		
	Alliance College	Denominational
ex ACTh	Cornerstone Community	Lay education
BBI link	Institute of Faith Education	Denominational
ACD link	Nungalinga College	Indigenous training
SCross link	Paradise College of Ministries	Local church ministry
Harvest link	Riverview College WA	Local church ministry
ex ACTh	Tahlee Bible College	Bible college
	Unity College	Bible college
	Victory College WA	Local church ministry
ACD link	Wontulp-Bi-Buya Collega	Indigenous training
	YWAM Discipleship Training School	Lay education

Table 2.4C **Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity (first halfpage)**

Evangelical	Ministry + Theology
Lutheran	Service + Theology
Seventh-Day Adventist	Service + Theology
Roman Catholic	Service + Theology
COC Churches	Service + Theology
Australian Christian Churches	Ministry
Australian Christian Churches	Ministry
Roman Catholic	Marriage & Family
Anglican	Ordination focus
Evangelical	Theology
Charismatic	Ministry
Charismatic	Ministry + Theology
Charismatic	Ministry
Charismatic	Ministry
Charismatic	Ministry + Theology
Uniting Church in Australia	Ministry
Evangelical	Intercultural Studies
Baptist	Christian Education
Roman Catholic	Ordination focus
Coptic Orthodox	Ordination plus
Christian & Missionary Alliance	Ministry
Evangelical	Ministry
Roman Catholic	Ministry
Ecumenical	Ordination plus
Australian Christian Churches	Ministry
Charismatic	Ministry
Evangelical	Ministry
Evangelical	Distance education
Charismatic	Ministry
Ecumenical	Distance education
Evangelical	Ministry

Table 2.4C **Theological Institutions (2008) by Type, Ecclesial Tradition and Main Activity (*second halfpage*)**

The meaning of the descriptors used in the columns of Table 1.4 is as follows:

Type:

- **Denominational:** a college closely related to a particular Christian tradition, usually with an official link to the church concerned.
- **Bible College:** a college teaching from an evangelical theological basis, with students drawn from a range of Christian traditions, whose purpose typically includes preparation for cross-cultural, pastoral and youth ministries.
- **Theological college:** a college existing primarily to educate students in the Christian tradition, usually with an academic emphasis.
- **Lay education:** a teaching institution seeking to equip students for effective Christian living (apart from training for ordained ministry).
- **Specialist:** a teaching institution with a special focus in learning (indicated under 'Main activity').
- **Tertiary Christian Education:** a teaching institution offering a range of studies (for example Education, Counselling, Humanities, Media Studies, Performing and Visual Arts, and often Theology) from a Christian standpoint.

Ecclesial tradition: apart from the particular Christian traditions listed,

- **Evangelical** refers primarily to a college's theological stance, but also to its relationships being mostly with evangelical agencies and congregations.
- **Ecumenical** refers to bodies whose teaching is based on the intention to recognise and transcend the doctrinal differences between church traditions, with a view to living in a re-united Church.⁷
- **University** refers to teaching in a university setting, without direct reference to any church (though these are involved in each case).

Main Activity:

- **Ordination focus** means a college exists primarily to prepare students for authorised professional Christian ministry (usually with an academic emphasis).
- **Ordination plus** means a college prepares students for authorised professional Christian ministry as one aspect of its teaching programme (usually with an academic emphasis).
- **Ministry** colleges focus on preparation for Christian ministry generally (which may include authorised and professional ministries), typically with an orientation to applied / practical theology.
- **Theology** means that the teaching of Christian theology from an academic perspective is the main focus of the institution.
- **Service** indicates that theology units are taught to students from other disciplines (for example Education, Nursing), and / or as a core requirement for non-theological courses (for example Arts, Social Work).
- **Distance education** means that the college teaches only in distance mode (whether by correspondence, CDROM, online, podcast etc.).

4. The term 'inter-denominational' refers to Christian bodies which co-operate across (usually Protestant) denominational lines for particular purposes, but without necessarily having an ecumenical intention to remove ecclesial barriers.

E Learning foci: ministry and theology

Traditionally, every church and college preparing people for ordained, professional ministry has seen itself as concerned with both education in theology and training for ministry. The dominant pattern has been one of several stages: the identification of candidates (ordinands, postulants, novices) by appropriate ecclesial authorities, some years spent studying in a residential college community, then ordination and apprenticeship in a ministry placement.⁵

This pattern has gradually broken down, been adapted or even left behind in recent times. As noted above, new theology-related colleges have largely come from Pentecostal traditions. In these circles, and among some Protestant congregations, a person's ministry performance is seen as the key criterion for ordination (or similar recognition), rather than a formal period of preparation followed by apprenticeship. In 'mainstream' Protestant churches, a high proportion of ministry candidates complete much or all of a theology degree before approaching church authorities, raising issues about formation. In an increasingly egalitarian culture, this may reflect concerns about church as institution, or suspicions about the stance of a church's official college (whether viewed as 'right-wing fundamentalist' or 'left-wing liberal'). Most such applicants are already engaged in a local ministry, however, and expect their studies to relate to this. In the Roman Catholic Church the marked decline in candidates for priestly and religious ministry has taken place alongside a rise in the number of people studying theology towards positions with a ministry focus (for example Pastoral Associates, a high proportion of whom are women).

The past decade has thus seen growing enrolments in courses (at every level) with a 'ministry' rather than 'theology' focus, reflecting the general emphasis placed on 'vocational' learning in higher education. This 'ministry' emphasis is evidenced by the popularity of the Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) as a first degree in theology, the explosion in specialist Graduate Certificates, Diplomas and 'tagged' MA awards, and the extension of 'Ministry Studies' to research doctoral level. Many students choose to study at the college which best matches their perception of good Christian education and ministry formation, a perception influenced by the perceived ministry-orientation (or not) of faculty.

5. Several good examples of how this shape affects ministry candidates' education are available, for example 'Candidates' in the UTC Handbook Appendix Six. The 'phases' involved are helpfully described in the Handbook of the UCA Perth Theological Hall.

A sector-wide swing has taken place towards 'integrated', 'holistic' or 'transformative' learning—words appearing time and again in college websites, promotional materials and handbooks. Further, 'practical' or 'applied' theology, disregarded or even excluded by 'real' theology not so long ago, now plays a full part across the spectrum, as seen in courses and units offered and in faculty appointments.⁶ Experience-based learning, field education, ministry placements, internships and the like are now affirmed across the sector as academically legitimate, and providing significant opportunities for integrative learning.⁷

For consideration: That ANZATS, working with ANZSTFE, facilitate the development of common models for the length, level progression, assessment, ratios of theory / observation / practice, supervisor requirements and the like for internship programmes in Australian theological education.

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6. Thus the Wesley Handbook's staff appendix includes well-crafted Student Placement Procedures; CCTC (MCD) is able to offer STFE to Honours level; Alphacrusis (SCD) requires a Supervised Ministry stream for all BTh students. Youthworks (ACTh) and Whitley's 'Transformation' programme offer innovative diploma-level courses for youth ministers and young refugees respectively. Particular internships typically include church, hospital and industry placements, as well as creative approaches such as work-parties in Nazareth (CCTC).
 7. Supervised Theological Field Education (STFE) now has an Australasian coordinating body, ANZSTFE, as do some States, for example VATFE (Victoria): these work across the theological spectrum.

F Learning ethos: academic freedom in formation

The data gathered in this project indicates that Australian theological colleges go to considerable lengths to inculcate a healthy climate of holistic learning. Yet a number of issues surrounding formation, spiritual and academic freedom need significantly more discussion across the various stakeholders in the theology sector—students, faculty, colleges, consortia, churches, universities and government.

F5.1 *Student perspectives: freedom from ‘spiritual harassment’*

Prospective theological students are well-informed about the community life as well as academic requirements of a college, including expected involvements in chapel, missions, prayer groups, mentoring and the like. Formation mechanisms are designed to assist students to open themselves to learning in a ‘spiritually safe’ environment, where they will be free from ‘spiritual harassment’, a category of special relevance in the theology sector, and recognised in some policies.⁸

In much tertiary study, the approach a student takes to a particular question will not keep them awake at night. Theological study, on the other hand, like political science, goes to the heart of personal and communal identity, worldview and lifestyle: matters that may seem trivial to scholars can cause serious stress for a student.⁹ Students’ sense of ‘spiritual safety’, and the related issue of academic freedom in a learning community with stated commitments, form distinctive factors for theological education.¹⁰ For faculty, such safety is rarely an issue: they are well-educated, and have considered reasons for wanting to teach in a particular institution. There may be tensions over differences of opinion between a college faculty member and its sponsoring body, but the lines are generally clearly drawn.¹¹

8. Cf the MCD Harassment Policy & Procedures 1.2.5 (see www.mcd.edu.au) and those of the Worldview Centre (see www.worldview.edu.au, Student Handbook).

9. In my experience, typical issues might be how a ‘decision for Christ’ relates to grace, whether adding *homousios* to the Creed undermines the authority of Scripture, gender issues in the vocabulary of Genesis 1–3, Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, dissonance between a student’s theological ideals and the realities of church life (for example, perceived contrasts between the theology of baptism and their experience of its practice) etc.

10. It is arguable that no discipline exists without such commitments: in the sciences these are implicit, and so in popular thought ‘science’ is commonly viewed as ‘value-free’. See further Neil Ormerod, ‘Academic Freedom in a Theological Context’ (Sydney: *ACT Occasional Paper* 4, 2008), who gives social work and constitutional law as example of disciplines in which academic freedom only makes sense in a framework of ‘givens’.

11. For a particular example, see McIver, ‘A Case Study’, 100, 103–4.

Conversely, students are better placed to reflect critically on new ideas when they feel themselves to be free from identity pressures, and both supported and challenged as persons of reasoned faith.¹² Yet the manner in which a doctrinal basis, church confession or (more problematic) a presumed but unstated stance interacts with learning, needs attention. A student sent by church authorities to a place s/he believes will 'taint' their faith (whether in ritualist, fundamentalist, heretical, revivalist etc. ways) gains little more than survival skills, and their learning is often distorted by them putting up (often needless) barriers to ideas encountered—and often not learning to distinguish which 'barriers' really matter. The likely outcome is that the student's pre-college outlook may be reinforced rather than reflected upon. On the other hand, students may find themselves restricted in their learning by too prescriptive a college framework, or left unaware of the limited range of learning open to them in such a context.

F5.2 *Learning, teaching and spiritual freedom*

The manner in which theological commitments interact with learning and teaching—what may be termed spiritual freedom in academic enterprise—is rarely addressed in the information covered for this project, though it is implicitly present in a college's public theological stance. Most colleges indicate the theological stance from which they teach, whether through a doctrinal basis, mission / vision statements, or by reference to an historic document (for example the *Westminster Confession*, the *Decrees* of Vatican II, the *UCA Basis of Union*). A few require applicants to indicate information such as 'Date of Salvation' on the enrolment form, or to agree to a detailed statement of doctrine whose fair assessment would require them to be a graduate in theology! That a college identifies clearly its framework for teaching is both legitimate and honest, but admission procedures such as these are not tenable in a tertiary learning context.¹³

12. The BCQ Handbook contains an impressively wide description of 'harassment, including 'Proselytising' (D2): 'Any pressure to sway students from their [church] affiliation will be considered a serious breach of the college's code of behaviour and will result in disciplinary action. Likewise, attempts to persuade students to adopt teaching inconsistent with BCQ's doctrinal basis will be viewed very seriously.'
13. The Project Manager followed up some poor examples of doctrinal bases through careful personal enquiry with college leaders: some recognized that there were issues relating to dated forms of expression; for others, the theological position derived from a sponsoring church.

Good examples include BCV's statement of faith, noteworthy for its brevity, use of contemporary language, and care in doctrinal expression, followed through with a clear

On the other hand, the *MCD Act* commits it to requiring 'No religious test' being placed on students' enrolment, examination or graduation, but this is a broad brush, and may not prevent 'spiritual harassment' or indoctrination.

Key factors touching spiritual freedom in formation include the relationship between classroom, common room and chapel as diverse contexts for formative, communally-oriented learning that frees students to be open to new insights.¹⁴ Opportunities for the practice of new insights is also significant: theological educators at this point agree with the statement ascribed to Marx, that the point is not just to study the world, but to change it.¹⁵ This perspective forms part of the trend towards formative learning which integrates its academic, applied and experiential dimensions, at both personal and communal levels.

Yet it must be acknowledged that prejudice, ideology and oppressive structures play their part in theological education. The long-standing anti-intellectual strand in mainstream Australian culture is pushed further when congregational members (of any tradition) regard academic study of Christian faith, for example the Bible or the liturgy, as dangerous at best and corrupting at worst.¹⁶ When this tendency is associated with a particular theological position, prospective students may consider—or be advised to consider—studying only at a college believed to represent that tradition. On the other hand, where the perception arises among potential students or supporters that a particular college is 'dangerous' to Christian faith, this must be named and faced by faculty.

The biggest risk factor for a theological college is graduates advising potential students not to go there because they will be in spiritual

Values statement. The Wesley Institute grounds its basis in the Bible and the Apostles' Creed, yet in a manner which takes seriously the college's emphasis on the creative arts. The CCTC Handbook, 5 offers another interesting contemporary example of an approach to doctrinal commitment.

14. Cf the Submission of the ACTh to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee *Inquiry into Academic Freedom*, available at www.actheology.edu.au/general_files/Academic_Freedom.pdf, accessed February 27, 2009.

Some Application forms (for example Ridley Melbourne, Youthworks, both ACTh) require an emergency contact person, and Police and Children's worker checks, given the likely involvement in of students in field placements.

15. Cf the UFT's 'Mission Statement': www.uft.unimelb.edu.au/about, accessed February 19, 2009.

16. At the Consultation, CIS noted that there is genuine freedom to explore doctrinal ideas there, but some in the churches do not welcome the appearance of deviations from orthodoxy – perceptions are the issue, and these can create tensions between church and college.

danger. That message gets around very quickly, is hard to contest, and can do considerable damage.

In practice, each theological college not only teaches from an explicit or implicit doctrinal stance, and aims to build up a welcoming and supportive learning community, but has also satisfied government scrutiny to be registered or accredited. Faculty will be familiar with the 'hair-trigger' issues in the tradition concerned, and seek to introduce them to students in such a way that personal, academic and ecclesial integrity are maintained. That said, the relationship between theological commitments and the learning process calls for further discussion. How does a doctrinal basis, church confession or (more problematic) an implicit but unstated stance interact with learning? From a public university viewpoint, how can the gains made in 'professional' learning in recent decades be harvested for theological education (cf the programmes of the School of Theology in Charles Sturt University)? How is learning affected when the institutional stance is so 'open' that any relationship to ministry preparation is negligible (at least as perceived by the student or church)?

Learning is best fostered when trust, co-operation and mutuality typify the learning community, one which can acknowledge when generally-held opinion has become a taken-for-granted ideology. As tertiary educators, a professional obligation rests on faculty both to ensure that students are equipped to face issues with minds open to development and change, and also that they are supported in the risky process of learning. In turn, faculty and college are accountable to any sponsoring church body, which has entrusted them with the formation of its future leaders, and (often through consortia) to government authorities which accredit the awards they offer.

Healthy, open relationships between the various stakeholders in theological education are thus crucial in sustaining academic freedom in formation—students, faculty, colleges / consortia, churches and government departments. Managing the needs of each element in a manner which promotes trust, commitment and openness in learning is a critical factor in ensuring the ongoing health of Australian theological education. □

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate a consultation between colleges, consortia and churches on the issues involved in academic freedom for formation in Australian theological education, with a view to promoting deeper trust and greater co-operation across the institutions involved, and better understanding of theological education on the part of government agencies and humanities departments in the universities.

Chapter Three: Coursework Awards

Key findings: Australian theological education today offers the full range of awards in higher education, a range which has developed particularly since 2000.

Consensus appears to have been reached regarding what is needed for an undergraduate degree in theology: work towards developing a national framework for this foundational award would be of significant advantage for furthering co-operation and the sharing of learning resources.

There are a number of more detailed areas in which significant diversity has arisen, and which can cause confusion or misunderstandings for students. Addressing these would assist the furthering of cohesion in the theology sector.

Articulation, credit transfer and degree length in graduate coursework awards are matters in which the present diversity needs to be addressed.

Sources: The six focus groups which reflected on undergraduate and graduate coursework learning at the Consultation day form the most important resource from which the observations made in this chapter are taken. These groups included 49 participants from 24 colleges and 15 HEPs, the latter including five consortia and two universities.

Details regarding course structures are taken from theological HEPs handbooks and websites, and research carried out during the project where these raised questions of clarity.

A Background

The range of courses offered in the Australian theology sector plumbs the full depth of categories available in higher education globally, from diploma to doctoral levels. This range has developed in stages, chiefly in response to requests from church bodies, and more recently from colleges and faculty seeking to address gaps in their offerings in the light of the categories offered in the Australian Quality Framework (AQF).

At their foundation, the ACTh (1891) and MCD (1910) examined for awards at three levels:

- Diploma:** ACTh: Licentiate in Theology (ThL)
 MCD: Diploma in Divinity (LTh)
 Both were effectively three year courses,
 and included New Testament Greek.
- Graduate:** ACTh: Scholar in Theology (ThSchol)
 (for ThL holders, usually taken over four years,
 including New Testament Greek, and
 Septuagintal Greek or Biblical Hebrew,)
 MCD: Bachelor of Divinity (BD)
 (a three year course for graduates, including
 New Testament Greek and Biblical Hebrew).
- Doctoral:** ACTh: Fellow in Theology
 (later re-named Doctor of Theology, ThD)
 MCD: Doctor of Divinity (DD, later re-named
 Doctor of Theology, DTheol, when the DD was
 made a senior doctorate).

Examinations for these coursework awards were taken at nearly 100 centres in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific; doctorates were examined and conferred at regular intervals. Minor changes took place within this framework—for example, the MCD introduced the Diploma of Religious Education between the wars, and in 1962 the ACTh offered a ThDip (the ThL with NT Greek replaced by other units). The Catholic Theological Faculty at Manly, Sydney, was granted permission to grant the Roman Baccalaureate, Licence and Doctorate in 1954. But the overall pattern continued until the 1970s.

This chapter first considers undergraduate awards before proceeding to the more recent developments in graduate coursework degrees.

B Undergraduate awards

B1 Overview

In the first century of Australian tertiary education, the depth in Australian theological education compared favourably with that available in the universities. The missing element was an undergraduate degree in theology, not remedied until the mid-1970s (as discussed in Chapter One). The Bachelor of Theology (denoted as BTh or BTheol) is now one among many awards in theology, but continues to be viewed by many colleges as the fundamental base for theological education.

In the wake of the introduction of the BTh, diploma enrolments at first dropped sharply, but their continued usefulness soon became apparent. The ACTh thoroughly reworked its diploma courses from 1986, and in 1994 the MCD (whose LTh and Diploma of Religious Education had ceased) introduced a Diploma in Ministry at the request of its colleges. By 2000, nearly all private theology HEPs had come to offer Higher Education diploma-level courses, with some also offering them in Vocational and Educational Training (VET) mode. The flexibility inherent in diploma courses has given opportunity for some colleges to develop innovative programmes.¹

Greater emphasis on vocational approaches to theological education in the late 1980s led to the appearance of Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) and Bachelor of Missiology (BMiss, later renamed Intercultural Studies, BICS) degrees. In the 1990s, some theology HEPs began to offer specialised first degrees, notably in Counselling and Education, areas in which ACU had taught for many years through its predecessor institutions. The ACTh initiated the more general Bachelor of Christian Studies (BCS) primarily to enable university students to complement their undergraduate degree studies with an appropriate theological degree. More significantly, theology HEPs teaching as 'tertiary Christian institutions' (in particular, Avondale, Tabor Adelaide and Champion), as well as the universities teaching theology (notably ACU and Notre Dame) came to offer theology majors in their BA and other non-theology degrees.

This brief survey illustrates the breadth of coverage in the theology sector at undergraduate level. Alongside this breadth, the evidence

1. For example, the 'Transformation' programme of Whitley College (MCD) engages refugees in a creatively taught Associate Diploma of Ministry; Mueller College (ACTh, Qld) offers a Diploma of Theology whose timetable is carefully planned to support lay learning; Youthworks (ACTh, NSW) offers a Diploma for this specialist ministry; Yarra Theological Union (MCD) teaches Diplomas in Social Justice, and Pastoral Ministry.

gathered for this Project affirms the depth of studies required in undergraduate theology courses, especially for degree majors (or their equivalent where this terminology is not used) and in the moderation of assessment grades (see further Chapter Five).

B2 Undergraduate degree structures

At Consultation, these general observations were made:

- Degrees in Theology are more like Medicine or Law than Arts. As with the former, there is a body of knowledge which all students need to imbibe, without which further learning is made difficult. Like Arts, however, there is greater scope for a choice of majors than in a Law or Medicine degree, and the learning strategies for Arts and Theology are those of the Humanities.²
- Divinity degrees have come to be denoted in recent years as in 'Theology' or 'Ministry' (as well as specialist names such as 'Counseling' or 'Intercultural Studies'). If a BTheol is shaped more towards 'classical' academic preparation for ministry, including preparation for further studies, then a BMin is oriented more to the interaction of theology and ministry. Much is in common between the degrees, however, especially as regards foundational studies, and an emphasis on integration is found in both. The BTh / BMin distinction (which originated with the ACTh in 1992) has proved useful in broadening students' possibilities, and bridging the differences in expectation between candidate / specialist / generalist students.³

One (unexpected) outcome from the Consultation was general agreement on the structure of a first degree in theology:

- **Three years full-time** is the minimum length, whether or not candidature is in mind: four are needed for ministry preparation (for example via combined awards such as BTh/BMin, BTh/DipMin).

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2. Stand-alone ordination-oriented colleges commonly offer few electives, whether due to issues of principle, candidate requirements or the practicalities of limited faculty resources. The Moore BTh includes one elective, Hebrew; the Avondale BTh/BMin provides for electives only in the final (fourth) year, and the Australian Lutheran College (ALC) BTh/BMin in the final two (of five) years. On the other hand, while Christian tertiary institutions and consortia offer a wide range of units, what is available in any one year is likely to be limited.
 3. The ACD offers a four-year BTh in conjunction with Flinders University, which includes one year of broader studies (a Bachelor of Theological Studies is granted if a student exits after passing three years), and its own three-year BMin. The Flinders BTh is currently under review, with a view to rationalising the number of units, and allowing undergraduate students to take some postgraduate ones.

- **Fields of study** are useful structures: the ACTh, MCD and SCD each employ Biblical Studies; Theology / Church History; and Mission / Ministry (with slightly varying names). The MCD and SCD add Humanities, including languages and Philosophy.
- **Two majors** (or an equivalent structure), one in Biblical Studies, were agreed to be normal in a theology degree.
- **Level 1** (first year) needs to include units introducing Old Testament (OT), New Testament (NT) and Church History (CH), plus studies in Theology and practical ministry (achievable in a variety of ways). Some colleges would prefer two units in each of OT and NT, and Roman Catholic colleges would want some Philosophy. All this is achievable in an eight-unit year.⁴

In addition, these conclusions have been reached from college's handbooks and websites:

- **Levels and majors**

These concepts are used consistently across the sector, though there is occasional tension between the 'progressive development' understanding of a degree presumed in Australian higher education, with its British background, and the 'general studies' ethos of the United States 'college' BA or BS.⁵ More significantly, there are significant variations from the *Australian Quality Framework* (AQF), and in the coding of units: the university schools, ACTh and SCD follow AQF, and use common coding across their institutions; the MCD and most stand-alone theology HEPs have some inconsistencies with AQF at this point.

- **Units:**

Unit descriptors in most theology HEPs have moved to a more 'learning outcomes' than 'syllabus content' style in the past decade, but inconsistencies remain.⁶

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4. Semesters are the most common major teaching unit in the theology sector, but the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM / SCD) and ALC use trimesters. ACOM does so since it teaches only in distance education mode, in which the timing of units is not dependent on school or university calendars. ALC does so to make full use of the full calendar year for teaching and pastoral ministry candidates.
 5. Avondale recognized this difficulty when in the late 1980s it moved from accreditation by the USA-based Pacific Union College to the NSW authority, and changed its degree structure (see McIver, *The Future of Australian Theological Education* 97ff). Tabor NSW and Alphacrucis structure units into focussed 'streams', having a similar effect as majors, but making 'prerequisites' clearer, and probably assisting the arranging of faculty workloads.
 6. An excellent unit outline exemplar (on 2 Corinthians) is in Wesley's Staff Handbook.

The SCD Handbook helpfully defines seven types of unit:

Regular

Intensive

Extensive (for example four weekends)

Distance education mode (see further Chapter Five)

Independent guided study

Research Project

Research Essay.

This approach is implicit in other bodies, but such a typology clarifies the inter-relationships between learning and administrative expectation of students and faculty.

The credit points assigned to each unit differ remarkably across the sector, even within some consortia.⁷ Further, points rarely vary in value between units, which raises the question as to why they continue to be used, rather than speaking of unit (with some 'double units').

Two recent initiatives reveal interesting differences of approach to what is essential in an undergraduate degree in theology:

- The MCD had revised its 1973 BTheol Regulation several times on an issue-by-issue basis over the years (to initiate a major in Practical Theology, for example). In 2003, the degree's thirtieth anniversary, and in view of the impending 2005 AUQA audit, a full review of the BTheol was commenced: this concluded in 2007 after full consultation with the course's many stakeholders. The outcome is a degree (taught from 2009) which embodies a renewed commitment to the foundational disciplines of Biblical Studies and Theology, alongside a wider range of majors and a tightening of pre-requisites.⁸ The depth of learning required in order to graduate has been strengthened, while the needs of various categories of students (including the minority preparing for professional ministry) have been taken into account.
- The newest Australian undergraduate theological degree is the Bachelor of Theology taught in the Theology Programme, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Education and Arts, in the University of Newcastle. This award differs significantly in

7. One standard undergraduate unit receives these credit points at theology HEPs: ACTh 4, SCD 9, ACD / Flinders 4.5 or 6, ALC 10, CSU 8, MCD 15 (for both 4-unit undergraduate and 3-unit graduate semesters). A few colleges do not use points, but simply units (of equal value): thus Perth Bible College and Moore Theological College; at Moore units have significantly different class contact hours, which does not affect students since no electives (beyond Hebrew) are offered in its BTh.

8. The Regulation can be found at www.mcd.edu.au/regs/Reg04BTh.pdf.

its structure from others in the sector (whether in private HEPs, or the public universities teaching theology), with up to half the degree able to be taken from non-theology units.⁹ This approach is a marked change from existing models for a first degree in theology, and diverges from the consensus noted at the Consultation, but may lead to graduates learning in areas other than the theological disciplines.

For consideration: That the Council of Deans of Theology promote the adoption across Australian theological education of a common structure for an undergraduate degree in theology / ministry, along with consistent descriptors for units and levels, to simplify academic relationships and to enable greater co-operation and collaboration in the use of learning resources.

B3 Admission to undergraduate courses

The admission standard used across the sector for undergraduate courses is eligibility to matriculate to an Australian university. As regards a BTh or BMin, the public universities set the UAI score for a BA as the normal minimum; Notre Dame sets it at 65, the SCD at 70, the ACTh at 75, and the MCD does not set one. For diplomas, no UAI score is set. TaborNSW appears to be the only theology HEP which sets undergraduate course quotas, stating its interview criteria in doing so;¹⁰ it also sets out provisions for students with disabilities, as does Alphacrucis.

Special admission provisions are allowed in almost all colleges: the most common form for BTh or BMin (for example the MCD and SCD) is probationary admission for candidates over the age of 21, with enrolment confirmed when one semester's study is passed (with no failures). Similar but less strict provisions apply for diplomas, for example allowing some unit failures by a provisional candidate.

For international students, the IELTS score required for undergraduate courses is usually 6.5, for graduate courses 7.0 and for research degrees 7.5, though there are some variations.

9. Details can be found at www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/areas/theology.html. It is surprising and disappointing to find this statement on the website: 'Unlike many Bible colleges and Australian Universities, the University of Newcastle offers a practical, fresh approach to Theology.'

10. Tabor NSW Handbook, 10–11.

B4 *Credit / transfer policies*

Theology HEPs nearly all allow credit to be given for up to one third of an undergraduate degree, and sometimes more where the relevant studies are close to the curricula and learning ethos of the crediting institution.¹¹ Reciprocal portability arrangements are in place between the ACD, ACTh, BCT, MCD, PCD, SCD and the University of Otago to accept all credit from a similar course.¹² All require the final year to be completed with the degree-granting institution.

Credits and transfers between Australian theological colleges for similar units are relatively straightforward, though this is not always the case. For example, St Andrew's Greek Orthodox College (SCD) may be asked to give credit for a core unit taken in a non-Orthodox context: St Andrew's can give credit for the completed unit, but may also require the student to take a similar yet distinct unit in the Orthodox tradition.

The more complex situations commonly arise when a student has done some theological study overseas, especially in a language other than English. CTC (Victoria), who regularly receives such students, noted that in assessing a credit application it looks for the unit's study content, assessment mode, bibliography, how and when it was taught, and the qualifications of its teacher(s).

Credit from diploma to degree study is generally possible, but there appear to be some inconsistencies. The ACTh, MCD and SCD each allow credit of up to two-thirds of a (two-year) completed Higher Education Diploma towards a degree (that is, two semesters' credit). On the other hand, while the MCD allows up to half of a (three-year) completed Higher Education Advanced Diploma towards a degree (three semesters' credit), the SCD allows this for a Vocational Advanced Diploma, and allows credit for up to two-thirds of an Advanced Diploma towards a degree (four semesters' credit). The SCD also allows credit of half a Vocational Diploma towards a degree (two semesters' credit).

11. The MCD has specific Guidelines which set down a framework for undergraduate credits, at unit and course level, including articulation from Diplomas and non-MCD awards. Degrees from Australasian universities receive one semester's general credit; credits may be given for a university unit similar to an MCD one, sometimes dependent on further studies being taken (for example an education unit may be given credit if an MCD unit in Religious Education is completed). Credits from other theological studies may be given for equivalent units. Each RTI Dean makes rulings within these Guidelines; complex cases go to the Coursework Studies committee.
12. These were mostly initiated as a consequence of the academic guarantees required for FEE-HELP registration. See for example www.scd.edu.au/Documents/PPM_2007/CREDIT_APPLICATIONS-Credit_portabilityand_RPL/PORTABILITY.pdf.

Credit from VET to Higher Education is a matter of widespread concern: this is allowed for universities but in some states not for private HEPs. In particular, graduates of some indigenous VET colleges are restricted from pursuing further studies. Some theological colleges are able to give credit for a VET course, where state regulations allow it, but credit at the unit level is more difficult, because the assessment and learning outcomes used may not relate to tertiary study. Recognition of prior learning is a priority issue for colleges to consider.

C Graduate coursework awards

C1 Overview

Graduate coursework awards have been offered in theology for many years: the ACTh Scholar in Theology (ThSchol, for theological graduates) since 1891, and the MCD Bachelor of Divinity (BD, a first degree in theology for graduates in other disciplines) since 1910.¹³ Coursework Master's degrees for theological graduates were introduced by the ACTh in 1988 (a two-year Master of Arts (Theology), effectively replacing the ThSchol) and by the MCD in 1977 (a three-semester Master of Theological Studies, at the request of religious orders whose candidates required extended initial study).¹⁴ The SCD, which already had a Graduate Diploma in Ministry, in 1988 was granted accreditation for a Graduate Diploma in Theology and a two-year Master of Theology (MTh).

In the United States, professional awards in ministry developed from the mid-1970s, typically denoted as Doctor of Ministry (DMin), mixing coursework with a research project. Fuller Seminary (Los Angeles) began to DMin offer courses in intensive mode in Australia, in association with several local colleges, with mixed responses, not least the high costs involved. In 1990 the *MCD Act* was changed to allow it to introduce a two-year equivalent Master of Ministry (MMin), involving the equivalent of one year's graduate coursework (in collegial and reflective as well as class-room modes) and a project, usually field-based, at research master's level. It was a huge success, with collegia and residential schools soon being held in most states and New Zealand, and the employment of the first full-time research director in Australian theological education. It

13. The BD was closed to enrolments from 2004, and repealed from March 1, 2009. It has effectively been replaced by the MCD Master of Divinity, for which enrolments were accepted from 2002.

14. The 1956 MCD TheolM could be taken by coursework as well as by minor or major thesis, but when revised to become the MTh, the coursework option was omitted.

soon became apparent that a research project was not relevant or within the capability of some MMin students. In 1994 the coursework year thus became the Graduate Diploma in Ministry (for which eligible students could receive Austudy), and the MMin was clarified to be a research master's degree. On the other hand, some MMin graduates looked to articulate to doctoral level: the Doctor of Ministry Studies (DMinStuds) was inaugurated in 1996 as a research doctorate. Around the same time, the ACTh and SCD gained accreditation for Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degrees, patterned on the Fuller model: both require a 60,000 word thesis. A substantial amount of learning has now been fostered under the broad discipline of Ministry Studies, with its focus on the structural implications and dimensions of professional ministry.

By the mid-1990s, a growing number of non-theology graduates were looking for theology courses shorter than the three-year first degrees on offer (BTh and BD), and oriented to a graduate learning ethos. ACU had offered a Graduate Diploma and a Master of Religious Education for many years, but little was available beyond these. The MCD had introduced the GradDipMin in 1994, as noted above, and the ACTh had the Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies (GradDipCS) accredited from 1997. In the same year, the SCD was given permission to award the nested Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies, Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies and MA in Theological Studies.¹⁵

A turning-point for the development of graduate coursework awards in theology was a proposal by the Bible College of Victoria for a nested structure of courses: a Graduate Diploma (one-year) articulating to a Master of Arts (one further year) and then a Master of Divinity (a third year). BCV was accredited in its own right by the Victorian Department of Education and Training from 2001, in part because of its desire to introduce these awards.¹⁶ The MCD, looking to replace its BD with an MDiv, added a Graduate Diploma in Theology from 2000 as a first step. The ACTh gained accreditation for a Master of Arts in Christian Studies (MACS) from 2002, articulating from the GradDipCS. Both the ACTh and MCD introduced an MDiv from 2002, though with quite different course structures.

By 2005, a full range of coursework awards for both theology and

15. The SCD MTh became a one-year program, with MTh(Honours) derived from the second year of the old MTh, in a manner similar to the MCD approach to the MMin.

16. BCV, having experienced five years as a stand-alone HEP, and being aware of the costs in time and money of maintaining this status, returned to the ACTh from 2006, which had by then had similar awards accredited.

non-theology graduates was available across the sector, from Graduate Certificates to Masters' degrees.¹⁷ Generally, the patterns of articulation and degree structures are closely similar, but some differences remain in content equivalence and nomenclature.

C2 *Graduate coursework degree structures*

Coursework awards for graduates fall into two categories: those for theology graduates, and those for graduates in other disciplines. Graduate Diplomas were initially envisaged for students in the latter group, but their usefulness for specialist theological study was soon appreciated. Conversely, Graduate Certificates were initially designed to offer brief specialist courses for students with a theological background: a one-semester overview to theology was thought to be barely worthwhile, but the numbers of students looking for such an introduction has changed this.

C2.1 *Theology graduates*

Three types of award are available for graduates in theology:

- a) Those seeking to explore theology beyond their initial degree have available courses such as the ACTh MA(Theology), MCD MA¹⁸ or MTS, and the SCD MTh, which have few or no restrictions on unit choice. If passed with excellent grades, a graduate may be able to articulate to a research degree.
- b) Professional ministers can take a variety of coursework awards with a ministry orientation, now available through most HEPs (for example ACD, ACTh, CSU, Harvest, MCD, SCD).
- c) Specialist Graduate Certificates and Diplomas allow a theology graduate to concentrate on one discipline (for example the MCD's Graduate Diploma in Liturgy), or developing a particular area of ministry (for example the CSU Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Counselling Skills, or the MCD Graduate Diplomas in Counselling, and in Spiritual Direction). These awards may articulate to an MA (including research options). Specialist Graduate Certificates generally articulate into the corresponding Graduate Diploma, which may articulate into a coursework Master's degree in the area of speciality.¹⁹

17. The widest range in theology courses in the universities in at Charles Sturt, where a variety of Graduate Certificates and Diplomas are offered, though some are discontinued: see www.csu.edu.au/faculty/arts/theology/courses.html.

18. The MCD MA is offered with three options: 40,000-word research thesis; two postgraduate units plus a 25,000-word research thesis; and four postgraduate units plus a 12,000-word research essay. Only the third structure is considered here.

19. Within NSAI theology HEPs, especially the ACTh and SCD, the number of specialist

C2.2 Non-theology graduates

For graduates in disciplines other than theology, two types of awards are available.

- a) Students looking to a general introduction to theology with personal learning primarily in view can take a 'general' Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma. These typically require core units taken from the major theological disciplines, with some electives (where the student has appropriate pre-requisites). The ACTh Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies, for example, is designed to complement university studies and / or offer a distinctively 'lay' orientation.
- b) A Graduate Diploma may articulate into a master's degree, and may take into account a student's profession and earlier studies.
- c) For students looking to professional ministry, the Master of Divinity offers a first degree taught at graduate level. The ACTh and SCD MDiv follow the structure of the BTh, broadly corresponding to US models. The MCD MDiv seeks to emphasise integrated learning, and is structured quite differently to its undergraduate degrees: Foundational units take up the first year, then four Integrative units (studies undertaken across the theological disciplines) and Specialist units in a student's chosen area of focus.

C3 Articulation: agreements and challenges

Though most graduate coursework awards are fairly recent in the theology sector, there is general agreement about most matters:

- All Graduate Certificates take one semester's full-time study.
- All Graduate Diplomas take two semesters' full-time study.
- Patterns of articulation are generally consistent, viz.
 - BTh/BMin -> [GradCert (special)] -> [GradDip (special)] -> MA or MTS
[Square brackets indicate that a theology graduate may either proceed in steps, or enrol directly in an MA or MTS.]
 - Degree -> GradCert (general) -> GradDip (general) -> MA
 - Degree -> [GradDip (general)] -> MDiv
[Square brackets indicate that a non-theology graduate may either proceed in steps, or enrol directly in an MDiv.]

Agreement is lacking in two areas, however; since graduate students tend to 'pick and choose' units across colleges more than undergradu-

GradCerts and GradDips are restricted by the high costs involved in accrediting and reaccrediting each as a separate award. This was a matter raised by these bodies, CDTC and ANZATS in their submissions to the Bradley Review of Higher Education.

ates, these differences limit their possibilities:

- How many graduate units constitute one semester / year of study? For most HEPs this is four and eight units respectively (Avondale, ACTh, SCD), but for the MCD it is three and six.²⁰ This makes credits transfers between these HEPs difficult.
- How many full-time semesters (or equivalent) are required to complete a coursework MA (especially for non-theology graduates)? For some HEPs (notably ACU, CSU and SCD) it is three: Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and MA require one semester each. On the other hand, for other HEPs (notably the ACTh and MCD) a coursework MA is four semesters in total, that is, a year beyond an articulated Graduate Certificate / Graduate Diploma year.

When these two disagreements are seen in combination, the situation becomes complex. The AQF states that 'Most Masters degrees require the equivalent of two years of study post the three year Bachelor degree,' but that does not wholly settle the issue. In addition, there is a lack of clarity regarding the difference between graduate units (typically denoted as 600) and postgraduate ones (700). The MCD MTS, coursework MA and MDiv (Honours) require between two and four postgraduate units, which affects the number of units seen as needed for a full-time semester. Most other HEPs would appear to include only graduate (700) units in coursework Masters' degrees.²¹

There is a further consideration here. Theology HEPs such as the SCD are required by state authorities to closely align their nested Graduate Certificate / Graduate Diploma / MA courses to AQF standards, while public universities are able to offer non-contiguous nested programmes that encompass only one year of full-time study.²²

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* facilitate discussion between its members to resolve differences in unit values in graduate coursework awards, and the total length of a coursework MA, and seek some alignment of the programmes of NSAI theology HEPs with the latitude given to universities.

20. The John-Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family (Victoria) is unique in requiring 10 units for its one-year equivalent Graduate Diploma.

21. The Wesley Institute assigns 10 points for each unit in its BTh, GradDip and MTS courses, but assigns 15 points for each MTH unit.

22. So the University of Sydney, the University of NSW and Macquarie University.

D Conclusion

The growth and adaptation of courses designed to promote initial, specialist and graduate learning in Australian theological education is a welcome of willingness to change as circumstances vary. The present full range of courses available in what is a relatively small sector is impressive, especially noting that for most HEPs the revision or addition of a course entails extensive resources to gain accreditation.

The possibility of the development of a common framework for an undergraduate degree in Theology is particularly welcome, and would be a major step forward in allowing further co-operation and collaboration. Conversely, there a number of detailed matters which require attention, particularly for graduate coursework awards.

Chapter Four: Quality Assurance

Key findings: Academic standards in Australian theological education have historically been high at the overall level of courses, as appropriate for diploma, undergraduate, graduate coursework and research degree awards, and remain so. The introduction of accredited degrees in theology in the 1970s saw internal moderation develop in the private consortia, and brought greater consistency of grading across related colleges for similar units.

Increased attention has been paid to adult learning methods in the last decade, with significant developments in experience-based learning, greater focus on learning outcomes, and consequential changes in assessment methods. In some areas of detail, including adherence to the AQF, consistency of standards can be improved.

AUQA audits, and a greater focus on quality assurance in (re)accreditation processes, have seen higher levels of awareness of the importance of quality assurance as an ongoing and across-the-curriculum aspect of higher education.

Some benchmarking between theological and other higher education takes place, though to this point largely through personal contacts, or for particular purposes. Such benchmarking as has occurred affirms the quality of Australian theological education. More formal benchmarking may assist sustain an ongoing assurance of quality: one area in which further work could be done is for libraries.

Sources: The overall framework for this chapter comes in large part from the Project Manager's knowledge of developments in Australian theological education since the 1970s, including participation in the first AUQA audit in the sector, of the MCD, and being an AUQA auditor. This perspective was filled out from materials supplied by theology HEPs, especially the private consortia, comments made at the Consultation day in the focus groups related to learning, and resources made available through ANZATS.

Quality assurance in Australian theological education can be assessed in several ways. In the light of the data gathered for the project, the approach taken is to consider in turn benchmarking, student progress, assessment and the issues around multi-streaming.

A Benchmarking and Moderation

At the Consultation day, some focus groups raised the question, ‘What do *we* mean by “bench-marking”?’ It was agreed that it means comparing an institution’s work with a peer, including moderation processes (commonly involving an external institution), degree structures, learning outcomes and graduate attributes, teaching and assessment methods etc. Further, the accreditation and quality audit processes now in place implicitly involve benchmarking. This understanding of benchmarking is the approach taken in this section.

A1 External benchmarking

Maintaining appropriate depth in academic standards, both across teaching institutions and between the theological disciplines, is a major consideration across the theology sector. Benchmarking with higher education was practised informally from the commencement of theological education in Australia. Until the 1950s, college and church leaders had close relationships with the six Australian universities, and with the universities of Cambridge, London, Oxford and St Andrew’s in Great Britain. In the 1960s and 1970s, the marked increase in the number of Australian universities, and of courses and enrolments, led to the further institutional isolation of theology, and this informal benchmarking, grounded in personal relationships, declined. ANZATS undertook benchmarking from its formation in 1968, through its membership requirements for colleges, and moderation across the ACTh and MCD systems continued. These internal benchmarking processes were strengthened with the introduction of Bachelor of Theology degrees from the mid-70s.

Over the past 30 years, external benchmarking between the theology sector and Australian higher education has been renewed, initially from the inauguration of formal university relationships by some ecumenical consortia (ACD / Flinders, BCT / Griffith, PCD / Murdoch). More recently, the formation of Schools of Theology at ACU, CSU, Notre Dame and now Newcastle means that their theology degrees must meet university standards, and that comparisons can be made with awards from theology HEPs outside the university system—a comparison which challenges

both categories in the sector. And other external benchmarking arrangements have been made within the private theology sector: for example, Avondale College and Moore Theological College have entered a Memorandum of Understanding regarding their moderation processes. Both these HEPs are working with the Australian Lutheran College and the SCD in a benchmarking roundtable.

As noted in Chapter 1, two consortia and two stand-alone theology HEPs have been audited by AUQA, and Tabor SA by its State agency. These audits have the effect of benchmarking the sector against Australian higher education generally, strongly affirming the quality of learning in them along with recommendations for improvement. Particular outcomes of these audits (and preparation for them) have been a more intentional focus on ‘what the student learns’ than on ‘what the lecturer teaches’, sharpening procedures for enrolment and academic progress, and the importance of maintaining a culture of continuous quality assurance.

Within the theology sector, the ACTh, MCD and SCD consortia have always had external academics on their academic committees; stand-alone HEPs have adopted similar arrangements.¹ The consortia also take care to foster ongoing relationships with universities—the SCD with Macquarie University, Moore with the doctoral programme of the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and the University of Sydney, the ACTh with UWS and Macquarie until 2007, and the MCD with the University of Melbourne (with whom an affiliation agreement is in place) and Monash University (with whom a joint double degree is offered).

The most stringent form of external benchmarking, however, is the five-yearly re-registration and five-yearly re-accreditation processes that all NSAI theology HEPs must undergo. The experience of the ACTh and SCD in particular, who have worked through these processes several times, is that they involve considerable preparation, requiring external advice and benchmarking. Table A (public university) and Table B HEPs (including the MCD and the University of Notre Dame) conduct rigorous internal reviews, but have not had the experience of regular external scrutiny, which applies to around 80% of the theology sector.

1. Moore Theological College, the Tabor network and Harvest offer good examples.

A2 *Internal benchmarking and moderation*

All consortia run moderation processes across their member colleges, using academics external to the college concerned: these include the cross-checking of mark ranges between colleges, scrutiny of essay and examination scripts, and adherence to graduate attributes.² Similar procedures are found in each stand-alone theology HEP. In particular:³

- The ACTh appoints external moderators for each Field, who scrutinise assessment procedures and examinations for each unit, and read samples drawn from the major piece of assessment for these units, making a written report to the Academic Board. The moderators have the power to recommend changes in grades for a unit, and this power is exercised not infrequently. In such cases, a written report, giving the reasons for the change, is sent to the college concerned: experience shows that these processes are a major catalyst for improving the standards of learning and teaching.
- The MCD has two major moderation processes:
 - An annual review is made of all grades across the RTIs, by disciplines. It is made by college Deans and the MCD Associate Registrar, who reports to the MCD Academic Board; and
 - A five-yearly cycle of AUQA-style audits is undertaken for each RTI, using a panel which includes at least one person from outside the MCD, and one from outside theological education. The audit covers key people (faculty, students, leaders), planning, courses, facilities (especially libraries), learning and teaching, and grading moderation. As regards the latter, the RTI concerned arranges second marking (by an examiner not from that RTI) of the top two and bottom grades in each unit, and all fails. All failed papers, and assessment for units taught by faculty in their first two years of teaching, are second-examined each semester.
- The SCD has two major moderation processes and an internal monitoring of results process:
 - There is an external Moderation Panel, and the College requires a similar body in each MI, each of which is externally moderated every five years.

2. 'Bell curve' analysis is rarely used (and never to enforce grade changes), because class sizes are mostly less than 20, rendering such analysis unsuitable, and grading in humanities units can make such analysis unhelpful.

3. The ACD and PCD use the procedures of their link universities, Flinders and Murdoch respectively; BCT has similar processes to the SCD.

- Each discipline area is moderated on a five-yearly cycle (usually two disciplines per year), by panels made up of external academics. The panels review learning at the completion of each semester, using sample essays, readers and a library report covering two sequential semesters.

Moderation Panel reports are overseen by the SCD Academic Board, with feedback to MIs, and responses from them to the Board.

The Consultation focus groups for graduate coursework awards noted that movement between institutions, involving cross-credit, is getting easier—a significant issue for graduate students. Limitations remain, however, in part due to differing course structures, and different curricula for similar units. The usefulness and importance of cross-institutional benchmarking was affirmed, but it was acknowledged that it ought not suppress a legitimate diversity of practice.⁴

One area in which benchmarking does not appear to be happening as widely as it might concerns library resources. ANZTLA has a set of standards which are approved by the Australian Library Association, and many theological libraries, especially those associated with consortia, co-operate to ensure that significant collections in each key discipline are held in the same geographical area. But it would appear that, except for libraries with links to the universities, benchmarking with other higher education libraries is uncommon. This would be assisted if libraries reported regularly by discipline, including reports on discipline holdings, and were externally moderated yearly.

A3 *Benchmarking in Australian Higher Education: an external perspective*

This review has concluded that Australian theological education, despite internal fragmentation and external isolation from other higher education, has long-standing practices of moderation and benchmarking. Much more should be done, but the processes are continuing to be deepened.

Such a conclusion is reinforced by a ‘comparative study’ made for the *Higher Education and Training Awards Council* (HETAC) of Ireland, ‘Monitoring and Moderation of programme learner assessment procedures’.

4. Other questions raised by these Consultation groups included:

How is a ‘withdrawal’ treated – as a failure or ‘non-enrolment’?

How does this affect retention rates, one aspect of benchmarking?

Who has access to benchmarking data?

How are statistics used: will institutions be compared on the basis of statistics alone – for example retention and completion rates?

This study surveyed benchmarking and moderation across the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, United States, Canada and New Zealand, as well as Australia. Of Australian higher education it makes the following comment:⁵

In 2002, the Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training found that ‘there is not a strong tradition of systematic moderation of assessment and evaluation of performance within Australian universities at undergraduate or postgraduate coursework level either between different markers in the same subject, across subjects, across courses or across institutions.’⁶ Anecdotal evidence suggests that this situation has not improved in recent years.

HETAC concludes that opposition to external monitoring in Australian universities examination arose initially due to the ‘very long distances between institutions’, but that such benchmarking is still seen as ‘impractical’, despite improvements in information technology. LaTrobe University and the University of South Australia are cited as providing some external examination, but the elements of the Australian system which are seen as of greater importance for benchmarking are professional associations, the *Graduate Council of Australia*, AUQA and AQF. Even so, ‘There is currently no detailed public statement of what standards of achievement or performance are accepted by the higher education community to be at the threshold or minimum for particular qualifications.’ HETAC summarises benchmarking in Australian Higher Education by citing the *Centre for the Study of Higher Education*’s conclusion, that it is a matter of ‘professional trust’.

Against this background, the HETAC Report picks out the Australian College of Theology, “which employs a rigorous assessment moderation process to ensure its learners across nineteen independent theological and bible colleges are consistently assessed”, going on to explain its system in some detail. Given the similar approaches taken by other Australian theological HEPs, the HETAC Report makes an unexpected affirmation of the relative depth of benchmarking in the Australian theology sector.

5. HETAC, ‘Monitoring and moderation of programme learner assessment procedures – a comparative study’ (Dublin, 2008). Section 2.5 concerns Australia.

6. Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, *Striving for Quality: Learning, Teaching and Scholarship* (Canberra: DEST, 2002).

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology*, in consultation with ANZATS and SPABC, arrange a consultation on

- a) external benchmarking, gathering data on arrangements in place, and facilitating further co-operation across the sector and with external higher education institutions;
- and*
- b) internal moderation processes, to encourage their being both deepened and simplified, with a view to similar methods being adopted across the sector.

B Student progress

B1 Graduate Attributes

The concept of 'Graduate Attributes' (GAs) was new to some participants at the Consultation, though it is implicit in the minds of any teaching institution's leaders and supporters, especially when preparing publicity, and when an institution is under review.⁷ GAs were described as those qualities which an institution wishes to see in its graduates: thus the UK QAA 2007 Report requires "knowledge of at least one religious tradition in its traditional and varied forms".⁸ It was agreed that, even though much of this Report does not apply to the Australian theology sector, colleges should review their Graduate Attributes in its light.

GAs were affirmed as a significant aspect of benchmarking, not least because their formation assists in moving towards an educational process where outcomes are valued, and not ignored. On the other hand, GAs are of little use if they are not fed back into the design of learning outcomes for disciplines and units. If this is to happen, the initial formation process demands consensus across all stakeholders - faculty, sponsoring bodies, librarians, administrators and supporters. Some colleges saw consortium-developed GAs as coming from 'outside': without

7. The AQF provides generic GAs and learning outcomes for each level of learning within higher education. Although AQF overall course classifications appear to be known in the theology sector, particular aspects do not seem to be widely understood, as evidenced by the inconsistencies between HEPS in describing unit levels.

8. UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education on 2007 Report, 'Theology and Religious Studies', 14-17, available at www.qaa.ac.uk.

faculty from all colleges being involved, the acceptance of such GAs was at risk. Such a process is particularly helpful when a HEP is undergoing (re-)accreditation: this pushes a college to ask what attributes its graduates should have, and how its courses should be formulated in the light of its overall GAs.⁹ The Wesley Institute devised new GAs, written by faculty and coming out of the learning and teaching already in place: they attempt to articulate the values, ethos and qualities that are looked for in the Institute's graduates. At ACU, GAs form part of their mandatory five-yearly review, including generic, course and unit outcomes, and the relationships between them. Course GAs need to influence the learning outcomes of the disciplines involved and the units taught—which will affect the nature of the assessment used.

Consultation participants affirmed that such GAs will extend beyond narrowly academic or merely intellectual qualities. As one person at the Consultation put it, 'Do we want to graduate students in ministry / theology who don't want to pray?' This is not a special emphasis in theology: the University of Sydney *Institute for Teaching and Learning* GAP project includes extensive studies in Graduate Attributes, and affirms that these should include a student's knowledge, character, and commitments.¹⁰ Sensitivity is clearly needed here: in a higher education context, using GAs to test personal faith would be wrong. Yet GAs can and should articulate the expectation that a student will reflect on their personal faith, and (as appropriate for the course) their ability to express this in ministry contexts. These expectations will need to be checked against graduates' experience, to test whether they do in fact exemplify the GAs to which an institution aspires. Consultation participants also affirmed that when drafting GAs and learning outcomes, comparisons made with other colleges, even indirectly, must avoid denigration. Students and faculty need to speak respectfully about other faiths and other theological traditions, as a matter of principle in Christian education.¹¹

9. As part of a thorough review for its last re-accreditation, the SCD was required to add GAs where these were lacking; particular attention was paid to GAs which had confession-specific aspects.

10. See www.itl.usyd.edu.au/projects/nationalgap/introduction.htm, accessed March 19, 2009.

11. It is common practice in the Australian theology sector for an examiner or moderator to require a paper which is polemical or disrespectful to be re-submitted, or failed: arguing a case on the basis of reasoned evidence is another matter.

For consideration: That ANZATS and / or the *Council of Deans of Theology* arrange a consultation on Graduate Attributes, consistent with AQF guidelines, in the Australian theology sector, including the preparation of examples which could be used in a variety of theological teaching institutions.

B2 *Retention and completion rates*

Until recently, statistical monitoring of student progress has not been seen as necessary in the theology sector, so retention rates are difficult to specify accurately. The reason for this seeming laxity derives from the nature and history of theological education, notably the voluntary and vocational ethos with which most theology students approach their study. With no government monies supporting private HEPs, no accountability for funds expended was required: student records were oriented to current enrolments, and evidence of course completions (the factor of most interest to stakeholders), rather than detailed progression data.

At the Consultation, the *unit* completion rate was claimed by participants to be at least 90%, with retention rates just as high. Analysis of 2007 figures for the ACTh and MCD (which use the same academic records software) seemed to suggest that *course* completion rates are much lower.¹² The ACTh began an examination of its coursework awards in 2009, commencing with entrants in 2000 (since nine years is the maximum normal length). The preliminary conclusions reached were that its BTh and MDiv awards reached rates of 78-84% (depending on how transfers between awards are treated); the BTh(Hons) rate was 100% (but the numbers are small); and the newer Graduate Diplomas and MA courses had rates of around 55%. The surprising and disturbing result was the low course completion rate of 26% for the BMin over 2000-2008, which bears further investigation. Factors involved may include

- a) the perception of some applicants that the degree would be 'practical' in a 'how-to' sense, but dropped away when they found that it entailed academic study of the scriptures and theology;

12. Precise figures are difficult to calculate, because the detail needed has been recorded in most colleges only since 2007, when full reporting to DEEWR became compulsory, and then without calculating retention rates in mind. Further, many theological students study theology part-time, or take breaks in a course, so that the proportion who take nearly the maximum time for a course is high. This means that it may be some years before an accurate picture of course completions can be gained.

- b) lower academic ability of some applicants, who chose the course due to little language requirements; and/or
- c) applicants more suited to a diploma programme taking the BMin in a college where this was the 'lowest' award available after diplomas ceased being offered. Yet these reasons are not grounded in firm evidence, and more work needs to be undertaken to uncover and address more precise factors.

The reason for the discrepancy between unit and course completion rates would seem to be due to significant numbers of theological students not being committed to finishing a course: many enrol because they wish to study particular units, rather than complete an award. Expectations of completion and retention rates also differ between different types of colleges: for residential institutions, especially those primarily oriented to preparing students for professional ministry, high course non-completion rates are of concern; other colleges, while expecting high unit completion rates, are more likely to accept that some students aim only to complete specific units.¹³

For consideration: That theology HEPs keep academic data in such a way that student progress, unit and course completion and retention rates are readily available, and
That research be commissioned by the *Council of Deans of Theology* to establish a fuller picture of retention rates in the pre-2007 period, and the implication of such research for Australian theological education.

B3 *Unit evaluation*

Formal instruments for student evaluations of learning were seen at the Consultation as important elements in quality assurance: it was agreed that they should be used for every unit.

Given the typically small classes in the sector, sensitivity exists about student privacy and faculty reputation: a few students colluding could distort results, or anonymity could be used to undermine lecturers (especially where there may be theological differences of opinion).

13. A further consideration, at this stage not of major significance, is the effect of FEE-HELP eligibility requirements where a unit is taken outside the home HEP. If an ACU student takes an SCD unit in their ACU course, for example, s/he must also enrol in the SCD award, which leads to distortions in completion rate data.

Evaluation forms are thus typically considered by a principal, academic dean or external person,¹⁴ who makes summary reports to faculty: the ACTh, MCD and SCD are each moving towards a common instrument for their members.¹⁵

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* initiate a project to design an evaluation instrument for each theological discipline, able to be used across the theology sector and analysed by an external body, and available for benchmarking.

C Assessment

C1 *Learning Outcomes and assessment*

Until the 1970s, assessment in Australian theological higher education was carried out by unseen examinations, supplemented by formal essays from the mid-80s. New colleges, new courses, expansion in disciplines such as Field Education and Ministry Studies, and the advent of online learning, have seen a wider variety of methods used to assess student (coursework) learning.

Correspondingly, unit descriptions are being increasingly set out in terms of Learning Outcomes rather than syllabus content, but their content is mixed across the theology sector. Learning Outcomes for ACD / Flinders unit descriptions are listed on the university website, but not included in the ACD Handbook.¹⁶ Murdoch University initially adopted Unit Quality Standards in 1998, and since 2004 all units (including Theology) are required to include learning outcomes in their study guides. The ACTh provides full details of each unit in its Handbooks, but Learning Outcomes are not expressed in terms of what a student will have learned from a unit, but what is aimed to be achieved. The MCD lists

14. CTC (Vic) employs a set of 15 questions taken (with permission) from an ACU database, adapted to take account of CTC's teaching areas: student responses are sent to an external person for analysis, who reports on each unit and lecturer, and comparing discipline outcomes by semester. At ACU, the faculty Enterprise Bargaining Agreement prevents evaluations from being used by anyone except the lecturer, however.

15. Where a lecturer applies for a position in North America, questions can be raised about their student evaluation results, as well as qualifications, CV, referees, independent evaluations of teaching, publications etc.

16. See www.flinders.edu.au/calendar/vol2/ug/BTh.htm, accessed April 24, 2009.

unit descriptions in RTI Handbooks, but these are mixed in terms of both consistency of format, and articulation of Learning Outcomes. The most consistent approach currently is in the SCD, where unit outlines are set out in accordance with Learning Outcomes for each discipline set out in the SCD Handbook, under the headings Knowledge, Skills and Values.

Procedures for assessment are set out in all college handbooks,¹⁷ and the ACTh provides affiliated colleges with useful assessment guide sheets. Yet some assessment policies can limit the possibilities of more student-oriented learning styles. One example is the relation between moderation and methods of assessment: the ACTh finds that its robust moderation system discourages flexibility, since the largest piece of assessment (40% or more) must be sent to the moderator, and therefore must be written. As well, *Graduate Council of Australia* Course Experience Questionnaire analyses indicate that students of some participating HEPs indicate that they are overworked by excessive essay and examination requirements, in comparison to their university experience.¹⁸ There appears to be resistance among some faculty to the explicit linking of assessment methods to learning outcomes, and to shape outcomes in such a way that appropriate assessment can be made. On the one hand, units with a variety of outcomes can remain assessed by a standard pattern such as 'Written 2-hour examination - 50%; 3000-word essay - 50%'. Given the common use of such methods, the SCD Handbook sets out useful Tables specifying approved combinations of essays word-limits and examination times for each Level, to ensure consistency across its MIs.¹⁹ On the other hand, can a learning outcome such as 'the student will be able to lead a Bible study on Paul's letter to the Romans' be assessed, apart from the observation of such a group over several sessions?

C2 *Assessment for graduate coursework units*

Differences in learning styles and teaching methods between undergraduate and graduate units flow over into assessment methods. At present, most assessment for graduate coursework units consists of longer essays or examinations for a syllabus shared with an undergraduate unit. The Consultation saw this as an inadequate approach, while recognising the practical difficulties of operating separate classes (see 'Multi-streaming' below).

17. All Handbooks offer some guidance for writing essays, though many focus mainly on formatting issues. Malyon College Handbook, 52ff offers an excellent example.

18. For example, Moore College, who have adjusted essay word lengths as a result.

19. SCD Handbook, 70ff.

In particular, in units where accelerated learning is used, assessment needs to reflect an expectation of deepening learning progress. Post-foundational units are likely to have assessment characteristics which have much in common with undergraduate units at Level 3 and honours standard. Where a distinctive graduate learning approach is taken, such as in the MCD MDiv's 'Integrative' units, assessment will need to reflect this distinctive ethos.

C3 *Particular assessment issues*

A number of assessment-related issues were raised at the Consultation, and call for consideration.

C3.1 *Grade descriptors*

General convergence would seem to have been reached regarding grade ranges and Grade Point Averages (GPAs), but there are variations in classifying results such as 'incomplete', 'extra work needed' and the like.²⁰ Some theology HEPs offer grade descriptors for each Level of learning,²¹ but this is not universal across the sector, and some would appear not to be aware of the AQF course descriptors. UTC includes an interesting approach to the issues of grading in the faculty Handbook, 'What Grade should I give?', while the Wesley Institute offers helpful advice regarding follow-up with failing students.²²

C3.2 *Written examinations and essays*

A large proportion of units in the 'traditional' disciplines of Philosophy, Biblical Studies, Theology and Church History (which typically cover

20. The most common grade range is Fail (F: less than 50%); Pass (P: 50–64, though some use P+ for 58–64); S (Satisfactory) or PP (Pass / fail unit); Credit (C: 65–74%); Distinction (D: 75–84%) and High Distinction (HD: 85+); thus see the ACTh *Handbook for Teachers and Examiners*, MCD Academic Conduct Policy section 2.2.1, and the SCD Handbook pp 71ff, available on their websites. Sometimes individual pieces of assessment are graded on an A (=HD), B (=D), C (=C) and D (=P) and F basis.

The SCD list of grades (Handbook pp 71ff) also includes NS (Not Satisfactory, that is, Fail in a PP unit), X (Extra work needed for a Pass), E (Extensions), I (Incomplete), W (Withdrawal after Census date), but the precise meaning of these and similar terms differs between HEPs.

The ACTh and SCD use the same GPA point scale: F=0, P=1, C=2, D=3 and HD=4.

21. ACTh and SCD, for example. A good descriptor set is in the Wesley Institute Staff Handbook, 26ff. Section 5 of the UK QAA 2007 Report offers interesting examples of 'Benchmarks' at entry and graduation: these have been developed by Whitley College, and used as draft descriptors for the MCD.

22. Wesley Institute Staff Handbook, 29.

60-80% of a degree) continue to use formal essays and examinations as primary assessment instruments. For faculty, such methods are generally cognate with the assessment of their own learning, since their research is typically expressed in essay form and is peer-reviewed.

While effective for many students, when used exclusively, or without reflection on the relationship between assessment and learning, such methods can discourage learning, or fail to appreciate the learning achieved by some students. With this in mind, written examinations have gone missing in some colleges. Yet a well-constructed unseen examination has the advantage of testing the extent to which students can 'think on their feet': rejecting one method of assessment does not necessarily end the discussion.²³

The citation rules most widely used across the sector are almost all based on a humanities (Author / Title / Publisher / Date data) rather than a scientific (Author (date)) system. The precise rules used include those of Turabian, Lawrence McIntyre, the JBL / Chicago / Harvard system, and the Australian Government Style Manual: the weakest aspect appears consistency in making citations from the web.²⁴ It would be helpful if all HEPs in the theology sector were to use one of these systems, or a common subset.

C3.3 *Oral assessment*

Oral assessment can be valuable for units in which the testing of student responses is important (for example apologetics). Further, some international students come to Australia for further theological education;²⁵ others have come as refugees (notably from the Sudan) and are looking for studies which will help with their inculturation to Australia. Some of these students live in an oral, story-based culture, where the usefulness of written essays and exams is questionable, and oral assessment can assist their learning. Yet it calls for significant staff time, and audio recording is necessary for moderation purposes, especially where English is not the student's mother tongue.

23. The UK QAA 2007 Report sections 4.13–4.18 include a brief critique and defence of written examinations and formal essays, as part of a range of assessment methods.

24. The UTC Handbook, 42ff was the most helpful form of web reference found.

25. It is general policy in Australian theological education not to take overseas students from non-western cultures unless they have completed their primary theological education in their own culture, and have the support of their own church and a support community in Australia. International theological students in Australia are thus effectively post-graduate, even if taking an undergraduate course. The financial, visa and English proficiency requirements made of all international students also apply.

C3.4 *Group projects*

Difficulties can arise in attaching individual marks for a group project (a mode of learning which is becoming increasingly used). On the one hand, giving all participants the same grade can be unjust, if some students have not played their part in completing the assessment. On the other hand, requiring more (and less) capable students to accept a 'group average' grade can have some interesting consequences for personal learning and formation.

C3.5 *Particular categories of student*

The fair assessment of learning for some students needs to take into account special circumstances, for example the provision of an amanuensis for a student who finds handwriting difficult. Other categories might include the following:

- Where a significant component of assessment requires cultural or artistic interpretation by the student (for example, writing an audit of a church service, or reviewing a film), understanding the criteria involved in assessment is essential.
- For blind students, assessment needs to be consistent with methods used for other students, though some are not appropriate, for example assessment using a 'debate' between students.
- For Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) students, additional time is commonly allowed in written examinations at diploma level, but generally not at degree level.

For consideration: That theology HEPs

a) undertake a thorough revision of unit descriptions in order to form consistent Learning Outcomes, using the resources of university Learning and Teaching centres;
and

b) facilitate the sharing of assessment standards, models and resources across the theology sector, for example via the ANZATS website.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology*

- a) set up a project to draft agreed Grade Descriptors and Guidelines for assessment models (as appropriate for the various theological disciplines and levels of learning) for use across Australian theological education; *and*
- b) facilitate agreement across Australian theological education regarding methods of citation, cognate with those used in major theological journals.

D Multi-streaming

D1 Background

Multi-streaming means including students learning at different levels or in different courses in the same class: for example degree students sharing classes with diploma or graduate students.²⁶ In particular, the advent of graduate coursework awards since 2000 has raised difficulties for the theology sector, where class sizes are typically less than 25. Providing separate BTheol and GradDip/MDiv classes with only a dozen students in each, for example, is hard to justify in terms of faculty teaching loads.

Accreditation bodies, and AUQA, are generally increasingly unsympathetic to multi-streaming from a pedagogical viewpoint: as a result, some colleges have dropped a whole level of courses.²⁷ The tightening of accreditation requirements may be influenced by assumptions made about university contexts, and not take account of the close learning communities and small class sizes which typify the theology sector.²⁸

26. Australian theology HEPs offer classes at two levels at most: the only mixed classes found were diploma / UG degree; Level 1 and 2, or Levels 2 and 3, in an UG degree; UG degree / graduate coursework; graduate / postgraduate units.

At ACU, multi-streaming is restricted to shared graduate and postgraduate classes.

In the ACTh, multi-streaming can be an issue where MA units are also approved for the coursework phase of the Doctor of Ministry. In such circumstances, 25% of the contact time must be delivered to the DMin cohort separately, and units must include topics which explicitly cohere with the ethos and learning outcomes of the degree.

27. Thus Ridley, which taught diploma and degree students for many years, had to choose between introducing graduate awards and continuing their diploma stream.

28. A particular case is 'preliminary' New Testament Greek and Biblical Hebrew, where multi-streaming is irrelevant for learning. Even so, some accreditation authorities have refused permission for this to take place.

Yet university practice is by no means free of multi-streaming. In a paper prepared for the *Council of Deans of Theology*, Dr Les Ball reviews thoroughly the practice of Queensland universities, as well as others. He notes a wide variety in multi-streaming, ranging from minimal differentiation between undergraduate and master's students, to the use of partial class-separations as a principled attempt to address the use of resources. He concludes that

multi-streaming is a common practice in Australian Universities (as indeed elsewhere, as is shown by reference to the University of Otago and other places) ... While multi-streaming is common, there seems to be no consistent practice to ensure a qualitative differentiation between levels, a feature that should be given attention if a legitimate postgraduate award is to be delivered.²⁹

The picture is further complicated for consortia that have member colleges operating under different State jurisdictions (notably ACTh and SCD). Thus the Queensland DETA is open to endorsing multi-streaming in parts of a programme where the NSW DET has placed restrictions.

D2 *Theology sector responses*

In response to concerns about multi-streaming, some theological colleges have initiated separate classes for first-year units, for example offering a BTh/BMin Level 1 New Testament class and a GradDip/MDiv New Testament Foundation one. This enables distinctive approaches to learning to be taken into account: undergraduates can be eased into their new learning. A more common approach, especially for Level 2 degree units, is to offer common lectures, but hold separate tutorials or seminars. Conversely, post-Foundational graduate units, designed as such, may permit senior undergraduate students to enrol, and have their graduate-level grade cross-credited to their degree at Level 3 or honours. By this stage, undergraduate students should have sufficient background to learn at graduate level, and pedagogical differences are minimal. Such methods go some way to mitigating the situation, but do not resolve it entirely.

The ACTh believes that there are situations where classes embracing diploma and first year degree students are both useful and justifiable. An undergraduate pedagogy applies to both groups, and many students with good academic qualifications choose a diploma course.

29. Les Ball, 'Multi-streaming in Australian universities', *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia*, 2005.

On the other hand, many diploma units are 'terminating', that is, they offer the only opportunity for a student to learn in the area concerned: this may affect assessment design in contrast to degree UG units.

From his survey of university and theology sector practice, Dr Ball makes the following recommendations, which would appear to offer a useful way forward for the theology sector:

- Some separation of the undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts on a regular basis, to allow the processing of learning input at different levels of cognitive engagement;
- Clear and explicit differentiation in the expected Learning Outcomes for the two levels;
- Learning tasks and reading which are of a more advanced or scholarly level for the postgraduate cohort;
- Assessment procedures and instruments that are linked explicitly to the differentiated Learning Outcomes.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* sponsor a consultation across the theology sector to reach detailed agreement about learning strategies across different academic levels, with a view to having such an agreement both implemented in the sector, and accepted by regulatory authorities as legitimate practice.

E Conclusion

Overall, quality assurance in Australian theological education can be said to have the following characteristics:

- Overall academic standards have historically been high at the ‘macro’ level of congruent diploma, undergraduate, graduate coursework and research degree awards, and remain so;
- Since the introduction of accredited degrees in theology in the 1970s, internal moderation in the consortia has ensured a consistency of grading standards across similar courses, and increased attention has been paid to adult learning methods;
- In the last decade, there have been significant developments in experience-based learning, greater focus on learning outcomes, and consequential changes in assessment methods;
- AUQA audits, and a greater focus on quality assurance in (re)accreditation processes, have seen higher levels of awareness of the importance of quality assurance as an ongoing and across-the-curriculum aspect of higher education.
- In some areas of detail, including adherence to the AQF, consistency of standards can be improved across the Australian theology sector.
- More formal benchmarking may assist sustain an ongoing assurance of quality, for example for libraries.

Chapter Four: Quality Assurance

Key findings: Academic standards in Australian theological education have historically been high at the overall level of courses, as appropriate for diploma, undergraduate, graduate coursework and research degree awards, and remain so. The introduction of accredited degrees in theology in the 1970s saw internal moderation develop in the private consortia, and brought greater consistency of grading across related colleges for similar units.

Increased attention has been paid to adult learning methods in the last decade, with significant developments in experience-based learning, greater focus on learning outcomes, and consequential changes in assessment methods. In some areas of detail, including adherence to the AQF, consistency of standards can be improved.

AUQA audits, and a greater focus on quality assurance in (re)accreditation processes, have seen higher levels of awareness of the importance of quality assurance as an ongoing and across-the-curriculum aspect of higher education.

Some benchmarking between theological and other higher education takes place, though to this point largely through personal contacts, or for particular purposes. Such benchmarking as has occurred affirms the quality of Australian theological education. More formal benchmarking may assist sustain an ongoing assurance of quality: one area in which further work could be done is for libraries.

Sources: The overall framework for this chapter comes in large part from the Project Manager's knowledge of developments in Australian theological education since the 1970s, including participation in the first AUQA audit in the sector, of the MCD, and being an AUQA auditor. This perspective was filled out from materials supplied by theology HEPs, especially the private consortia, comments made at the Consultation day in the focus groups related to learning, and resources made available through ANZATS.

Quality assurance in Australian theological education can be assessed in several ways. In the light of the data gathered for the project, the approach taken is to consider in turn benchmarking, student progress, assessment and the issues around multi-streaming.

A Benchmarking and Moderation

At the Consultation day, some focus groups raised the question, ‘What do *we* mean by “bench-marking”?’ It was agreed that it means comparing an institution’s work with a peer, including moderation processes (commonly involving an external institution), degree structures, learning outcomes and graduate attributes, teaching and assessment methods etc. Further, the accreditation and quality audit processes now in place implicitly involve benchmarking. This understanding of benchmarking is the approach taken in this section.

A1 External benchmarking

Maintaining appropriate depth in academic standards, both across teaching institutions and between the theological disciplines, is a major consideration across the theology sector. Benchmarking with higher education was practised informally from the commencement of theological education in Australia. Until the 1950s, college and church leaders had close relationships with the six Australian universities, and with the universities of Cambridge, London, Oxford and St Andrew’s in Great Britain. In the 1960s and 1970s, the marked increase in the number of Australian universities, and of courses and enrolments, led to the further institutional isolation of theology, and this informal benchmarking, grounded in personal relationships, declined. ANZATS undertook benchmarking from its formation in 1968, through its membership requirements for colleges, and moderation across the ACTh and MCD systems continued. These internal benchmarking processes were strengthened with the introduction of Bachelor of Theology degrees from the mid-70s.

Over the past 30 years, external benchmarking between the theology sector and Australian higher education has been renewed, initially from the inauguration of formal university relationships by some ecumenical consortia (ACD / Flinders, BCT / Griffith, PCD / Murdoch). More recently, the formation of Schools of Theology at ACU, CSU, Notre Dame and now Newcastle means that their theology degrees must meet university standards, and that comparisons can be made with awards from theology HEPs outside the university system—a comparison which challenges

both categories in the sector. And other external benchmarking arrangements have been made within the private theology sector: for example, Avondale College and Moore Theological College have entered a Memorandum of Understanding regarding their moderation processes. Both these HEPs are working with the Australian Lutheran College and the SCD in a benchmarking roundtable.

As noted in Chapter 1, two consortia and two stand-alone theology HEPs have been audited by AUQA, and Tabor SA by its State agency. These audits have the effect of benchmarking the sector against Australian higher education generally, strongly affirming the quality of learning in them along with recommendations for improvement. Particular outcomes of these audits (and preparation for them) have been a more intentional focus on ‘what the student learns’ than on ‘what the lecturer teaches’, sharpening procedures for enrolment and academic progress, and the importance of maintaining a culture of continuous quality assurance.

Within the theology sector, the ACTh, MCD and SCD consortia have always had external academics on their academic committees; stand-alone HEPs have adopted similar arrangements.¹ The consortia also take care to foster ongoing relationships with universities—the SCD with Macquarie University, Moore with the doctoral programme of the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and the University of Sydney, the ACTh with UWS and Macquarie until 2007, and the MCD with the University of Melbourne (with whom an affiliation agreement is in place) and Monash University (with whom a joint double degree is offered).

The most stringent form of external benchmarking, however, is the five-yearly re-registration and five-yearly re-accreditation processes that all NSAI theology HEPs must undergo. The experience of the ACTh and SCD in particular, who have worked through these processes several times, is that they involve considerable preparation, requiring external advice and benchmarking. Table A (public university) and Table B HEPs (including the MCD and the University of Notre Dame) conduct rigorous internal reviews, but have not had the experience of regular external scrutiny, which applies to around 80% of the theology sector.

1. Moore Theological College, the Tabor network and Harvest offer good examples.

A2 *Internal benchmarking and moderation*

All consortia run moderation processes across their member colleges, using academics external to the college concerned: these include the cross-checking of mark ranges between colleges, scrutiny of essay and examination scripts, and adherence to graduate attributes.² Similar procedures are found in each stand-alone theology HEP. In particular:³

- The ACTh appoints external moderators for each Field, who scrutinise assessment procedures and examinations for each unit, and read samples drawn from the major piece of assessment for these units, making a written report to the Academic Board. The moderators have the power to recommend changes in grades for a unit, and this power is exercised not infrequently. In such cases, a written report, giving the reasons for the change, is sent to the college concerned: experience shows that these processes are a major catalyst for improving the standards of learning and teaching.
- The MCD has two major moderation processes:
 - An annual review is made of all grades across the RTIs, by disciplines. It is made by college Deans and the MCD Associate Registrar, who reports to the MCD Academic Board; and
 - A five-yearly cycle of AUQA-style audits is undertaken for each RTI, using a panel which includes at least one person from outside the MCD, and one from outside theological education. The audit covers key people (faculty, students, leaders), planning, courses, facilities (especially libraries), learning and teaching, and grading moderation. As regards the latter, the RTI concerned arranges second marking (by an examiner not from that RTI) of the top two and bottom grades in each unit, and all fails. All failed papers, and assessment for units taught by faculty in their first two years of teaching, are second-examined each semester.
- The SCD has two major moderation processes and an internal monitoring of results process:
 - There is an external Moderation Panel, and the College requires a similar body in each MI, each of which is externally moderated every five years.

2. 'Bell curve' analysis is rarely used (and never to enforce grade changes), because class sizes are mostly less than 20, rendering such analysis unsuitable, and grading in humanities units can make such analysis unhelpful.

3. The ACD and PCD use the procedures of their link universities, Flinders and Murdoch respectively; BCT has similar processes to the SCD.

- Each discipline area is moderated on a five-yearly cycle (usually two disciplines per year), by panels made up of external academics. The panels review learning at the completion of each semester, using sample essays, readers and a library report covering two sequential semesters.

Moderation Panel reports are overseen by the SCD Academic Board, with feedback to MIs, and responses from them to the Board.

The Consultation focus groups for graduate coursework awards noted that movement between institutions, involving cross-credit, is getting easier—a significant issue for graduate students. Limitations remain, however, in part due to differing course structures, and different curricula for similar units. The usefulness and importance of cross-institutional benchmarking was affirmed, but it was acknowledged that it ought not suppress a legitimate diversity of practice.⁴

One area in which benchmarking does not appear to be happening as widely as it might concerns library resources. ANZTLA has a set of standards which are approved by the Australian Library Association, and many theological libraries, especially those associated with consortia, co-operate to ensure that significant collections in each key discipline are held in the same geographical area. But it would appear that, except for libraries with links to the universities, benchmarking with other higher education libraries is uncommon. This would be assisted if libraries reported regularly by discipline, including reports on discipline holdings, and were externally moderated yearly.

A3 *Benchmarking in Australian Higher Education: an external perspective*

This review has concluded that Australian theological education, despite internal fragmentation and external isolation from other higher education, has long-standing practices of moderation and benchmarking. Much more should be done, but the processes are continuing to be deepened.

Such a conclusion is reinforced by a ‘comparative study’ made for the *Higher Education and Training Awards Council* (HETAC) of Ireland, ‘Monitoring and Moderation of programme learner assessment procedures’.

4. Other questions raised by these Consultation groups included:

How is a ‘withdrawal’ treated – as a failure or ‘non-enrolment’?

How does this affect retention rates, one aspect of benchmarking?

Who has access to benchmarking data?

How are statistics used: will institutions be compared on the basis of statistics alone – for example retention and completion rates?

This study surveyed benchmarking and moderation across the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, United States, Canada and New Zealand, as well as Australia. Of Australian higher education it makes the following comment:⁵

In 2002, the Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training found that ‘there is not a strong tradition of systematic moderation of assessment and evaluation of performance within Australian universities at undergraduate or postgraduate coursework level either between different markers in the same subject, across subjects, across courses or across institutions.’⁶ Anecdotal evidence suggests that this situation has not improved in recent years.

HETAC concludes that opposition to external monitoring in Australian universities examination arose initially due to the ‘very long distances between institutions’, but that such benchmarking is still seen as ‘impractical’, despite improvements in information technology. LaTrobe University and the University of South Australia are cited as providing some external examination, but the elements of the Australian system which are seen as of greater importance for benchmarking are professional associations, the *Graduate Council of Australia*, AUQA and AQF. Even so, ‘There is currently no detailed public statement of what standards of achievement or performance are accepted by the higher education community to be at the threshold or minimum for particular qualifications.’ HETAC summarises benchmarking in Australian Higher Education by citing the *Centre for the Study of Higher Education*’s conclusion, that it is a matter of ‘professional trust’.

Against this background, the HETAC Report picks out the Australian College of Theology, “which employs a rigorous assessment moderation process to ensure its learners across nineteen independent theological and bible colleges are consistently assessed”, going on to explain its system in some detail. Given the similar approaches taken by other Australian theological HEPs, the HETAC Report makes an unexpected affirmation of the relative depth of benchmarking in the Australian theology sector.

5. HETAC, ‘Monitoring and moderation of programme learner assessment procedures – a comparative study’ (Dublin, 2008). Section 2.5 concerns Australia.

6. Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, *Striving for Quality: Learning, Teaching and Scholarship* (Canberra: DEST, 2002).

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology*, in consultation with ANZATS and SPABC, arrange a consultation on

- a) external benchmarking, gathering data on arrangements in place, and facilitating further co-operation across the sector and with external higher education institutions;
- and*
- b) internal moderation processes, to encourage their being both deepened and simplified, with a view to similar methods being adopted across the sector.

B Student progress

B1 Graduate Attributes

The concept of 'Graduate Attributes' (GAs) was new to some participants at the Consultation, though it is implicit in the minds of any teaching institution's leaders and supporters, especially when preparing publicity, and when an institution is under review.⁷ GAs were described as those qualities which an institution wishes to see in its graduates: thus the UK QAA 2007 Report requires "knowledge of at least one religious tradition in its traditional and varied forms".⁸ It was agreed that, even though much of this Report does not apply to the Australian theology sector, colleges should review their Graduate Attributes in its light.

GAs were affirmed as a significant aspect of benchmarking, not least because their formation assists in moving towards an educational process where outcomes are valued, and not ignored. On the other hand, GAs are of little use if they are not fed back into the design of learning outcomes for disciplines and units. If this is to happen, the initial formation process demands consensus across all stakeholders - faculty, sponsoring bodies, librarians, administrators and supporters. Some colleges saw consortium-developed GAs as coming from 'outside': without

7. The AQF provides generic GAs and learning outcomes for each level of learning within higher education. Although AQF overall course classifications appear to be known in the theology sector, particular aspects do not seem to be widely understood, as evidenced by the inconsistencies between HEPS in describing unit levels.

8. UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education on 2007 Report, 'Theology and Religious Studies', 14-17, available at www.qaa.ac.uk.

faculty from all colleges being involved, the acceptance of such GAs was at risk. Such a process is particularly helpful when a HEP is undergoing (re-)accreditation: this pushes a college to ask what attributes its graduates should have, and how its courses should be formulated in the light of its overall GAs.⁹ The Wesley Institute devised new GAs, written by faculty and coming out of the learning and teaching already in place: they attempt to articulate the values, ethos and qualities that are looked for in the Institute's graduates. At ACU, GAs form part of their mandatory five-yearly review, including generic, course and unit outcomes, and the relationships between them. Course GAs need to influence the learning outcomes of the disciplines involved and the units taught—which will affect the nature of the assessment used.

Consultation participants affirmed that such GAs will extend beyond narrowly academic or merely intellectual qualities. As one person at the Consultation put it, 'Do we want to graduate students in ministry / theology who don't want to pray?' This is not a special emphasis in theology: the University of Sydney *Institute for Teaching and Learning* GAP project includes extensive studies in Graduate Attributes, and affirms that these should include a student's knowledge, character, and commitments.¹⁰ Sensitivity is clearly needed here: in a higher education context, using GAs to test personal faith would be wrong. Yet GAs can and should articulate the expectation that a student will reflect on their personal faith, and (as appropriate for the course) their ability to express this in ministry contexts. These expectations will need to be checked against graduates' experience, to test whether they do in fact exemplify the GAs to which an institution aspires. Consultation participants also affirmed that when drafting GAs and learning outcomes, comparisons made with other colleges, even indirectly, must avoid denigration. Students and faculty need to speak respectfully about other faiths and other theological traditions, as a matter of principle in Christian education.¹¹

9. As part of a thorough review for its last re-accreditation, the SCD was required to add GAs where these were lacking; particular attention was paid to GAs which had confession-specific aspects.

10. See www.itl.usyd.edu.au/projects/nationalgap/introduction.htm, accessed March 19, 2009.

11. It is common practice in the Australian theology sector for an examiner or moderator to require a paper which is polemical or disrespectful to be re-submitted, or failed: arguing a case on the basis of reasoned evidence is another matter.

For consideration: That ANZATS and / or the *Council of Deans of Theology* arrange a consultation on Graduate Attributes, consistent with AQF guidelines, in the Australian theology sector, including the preparation of examples which could be used in a variety of theological teaching institutions.

B2 *Retention and completion rates*

Until recently, statistical monitoring of student progress has not been seen as necessary in the theology sector, so retention rates are difficult to specify accurately. The reason for this seeming laxity derives from the nature and history of theological education, notably the voluntary and vocational ethos with which most theology students approach their study. With no government monies supporting private HEPs, no accountability for funds expended was required: student records were oriented to current enrolments, and evidence of course completions (the factor of most interest to stakeholders), rather than detailed progression data.

At the Consultation, the *unit* completion rate was claimed by participants to be at least 90%, with retention rates just as high. Analysis of 2007 figures for the ACTh and MCD (which use the same academic records software) seemed to suggest that *course* completion rates are much lower.¹² The ACTh began an examination of its coursework awards in 2009, commencing with entrants in 2000 (since nine years is the maximum normal length). The preliminary conclusions reached were that its BTh and MDiv awards reached rates of 78-84% (depending on how transfers between awards are treated); the BTh(Hons) rate was 100% (but the numbers are small); and the newer Graduate Diplomas and MA courses had rates of around 55%. The surprising and disturbing result was the low course completion rate of 26% for the BMin over 2000-2008, which bears further investigation. Factors involved may include

- a) the perception of some applicants that the degree would be 'practical' in a 'how-to' sense, but dropped away when they found that it entailed academic study of the scriptures and theology;

12. Precise figures are difficult to calculate, because the detail needed has been recorded in most colleges only since 2007, when full reporting to DEEWR became compulsory, and then without calculating retention rates in mind. Further, many theological students study theology part-time, or take breaks in a course, so that the proportion who take nearly the maximum time for a course is high. This means that it may be some years before an accurate picture of course completions can be gained.

- b) lower academic ability of some applicants, who chose the course due to little language requirements; and/or
- c) applicants more suited to a diploma programme taking the BMin in a college where this was the 'lowest' award available after diplomas ceased being offered. Yet these reasons are not grounded in firm evidence, and more work needs to be undertaken to uncover and address more precise factors.

The reason for the discrepancy between unit and course completion rates would seem to be due to significant numbers of theological students not being committed to finishing a course: many enrol because they wish to study particular units, rather than complete an award. Expectations of completion and retention rates also differ between different types of colleges: for residential institutions, especially those primarily oriented to preparing students for professional ministry, high course non-completion rates are of concern; other colleges, while expecting high unit completion rates, are more likely to accept that some students aim only to complete specific units.¹³

For consideration: That theology HEPs keep academic data in such a way that student progress, unit and course completion and retention rates are readily available, and
That research be commissioned by the *Council of Deans of Theology* to establish a fuller picture of retention rates in the pre-2007 period, and the implication of such research for Australian theological education.

B3 *Unit evaluation*

Formal instruments for student evaluations of learning were seen at the Consultation as important elements in quality assurance: it was agreed that they should be used for every unit.

Given the typically small classes in the sector, sensitivity exists about student privacy and faculty reputation: a few students colluding could distort results, or anonymity could be used to undermine lecturers (especially where there may be theological differences of opinion).

13. A further consideration, at this stage not of major significance, is the effect of FEE-HELP eligibility requirements where a unit is taken outside the home HEP. If an ACU student takes an SCD unit in their ACU course, for example, s/he must also enrol in the SCD award, which leads to distortions in completion rate data.

Evaluation forms are thus typically considered by a principal, academic dean or external person,¹⁴ who makes summary reports to faculty: the ACTh, MCD and SCD are each moving towards a common instrument for their members.¹⁵

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* initiate a project to design an evaluation instrument for each theological discipline, able to be used across the theology sector and analysed by an external body, and available for benchmarking.

C Assessment

C1 Learning Outcomes and assessment

Until the 1970s, assessment in Australian theological higher education was carried out by unseen examinations, supplemented by formal essays from the mid-80s. New colleges, new courses, expansion in disciplines such as Field Education and Ministry Studies, and the advent of online learning, have seen a wider variety of methods used to assess student (coursework) learning.

Correspondingly, unit descriptions are being increasingly set out in terms of Learning Outcomes rather than syllabus content, but their content is mixed across the theology sector. Learning Outcomes for ACD / Flinders unit descriptions are listed on the university website, but not included in the ACD Handbook.¹⁶ Murdoch University initially adopted Unit Quality Standards in 1998, and since 2004 all units (including Theology) are required to include learning outcomes in their study guides. The ACTh provides full details of each unit in its Handbooks, but Learning Outcomes are not expressed in terms of what a student will have learned from a unit, but what is aimed to be achieved. The MCD lists

14. CTC (Vic) employs a set of 15 questions taken (with permission) from an ACU database, adapted to take account of CTC's teaching areas: student responses are sent to an external person for analysis, who reports on each unit and lecturer, and comparing discipline outcomes by semester. At ACU, the faculty Enterprise Bargaining Agreement prevents evaluations from being used by anyone except the lecturer, however.

15. Where a lecturer applies for a position in North America, questions can be raised about their student evaluation results, as well as qualifications, CV, referees, independent evaluations of teaching, publications etc.

16. See www.flinders.edu.au/calendar/vol2/ug/BTh.htm, accessed April 24, 2009.

unit descriptions in RTI Handbooks, but these are mixed in terms of both consistency of format, and articulation of Learning Outcomes. The most consistent approach currently is in the SCD, where unit outlines are set out in accordance with Learning Outcomes for each discipline set out in the SCD Handbook, under the headings Knowledge, Skills and Values.

Procedures for assessment are set out in all college handbooks,¹⁷ and the ACTh provides affiliated colleges with useful assessment guide sheets. Yet some assessment policies can limit the possibilities of more student-oriented learning styles. One example is the relation between moderation and methods of assessment: the ACTh finds that its robust moderation system discourages flexibility, since the largest piece of assessment (40% or more) must be sent to the moderator, and therefore must be written. As well, *Graduate Council of Australia* Course Experience Questionnaire analyses indicate that students of some participating HEPs indicate that they are overworked by excessive essay and examination requirements, in comparison to their university experience.¹⁸ There appears to be resistance among some faculty to the explicit linking of assessment methods to learning outcomes, and to shape outcomes in such a way that appropriate assessment can be made. On the one hand, units with a variety of outcomes can remain assessed by a standard pattern such as 'Written 2-hour examination - 50%; 3000-word essay - 50%'. Given the common use of such methods, the SCD Handbook sets out useful Tables specifying approved combinations of essays word-limits and examination times for each Level, to ensure consistency across its MIs.¹⁹ On the other hand, can a learning outcome such as 'the student will be able to lead a Bible study on Paul's letter to the Romans' be assessed, apart from the observation of such a group over several sessions?

C2 *Assessment for graduate coursework units*

Differences in learning styles and teaching methods between undergraduate and graduate units flow over into assessment methods. At present, most assessment for graduate coursework units consists of longer essays or examinations for a syllabus shared with an undergraduate unit. The Consultation saw this as an inadequate approach, while recognising the practical difficulties of operating separate classes (see 'Multi-streaming' below).

17. All Handbooks offer some guidance for writing essays, though many focus mainly on formatting issues. Malyon College Handbook, 52ff offers an excellent example.

18. For example, Moore College, who have adjusted essay word lengths as a result.

19. SCD Handbook, 70ff.

In particular, in units where accelerated learning is used, assessment needs to reflect an expectation of deepening learning progress. Post-foundational units are likely to have assessment characteristics which have much in common with undergraduate units at Level 3 and honours standard. Where a distinctive graduate learning approach is taken, such as in the MCD MDiv's 'Integrative' units, assessment will need to reflect this distinctive ethos.

C3 *Particular assessment issues*

A number of assessment-related issues were raised at the Consultation, and call for consideration.

C3.1 *Grade descriptors*

General convergence would seem to have been reached regarding grade ranges and Grade Point Averages (GPAs), but there are variations in classifying results such as 'incomplete', 'extra work needed' and the like.²⁰ Some theology HEPs offer grade descriptors for each Level of learning,²¹ but this is not universal across the sector, and some would appear not to be aware of the AQF course descriptors. UTC includes an interesting approach to the issues of grading in the faculty Handbook, 'What Grade should I give?', while the Wesley Institute offers helpful advice regarding follow-up with failing students.²²

C3.2 *Written examinations and essays*

A large proportion of units in the 'traditional' disciplines of Philosophy, Biblical Studies, Theology and Church History (which typically cover

20. The most common grade range is Fail (F: less than 50%); Pass (P: 50–64, though some use P+ for 58–64); S (Satisfactory) or PP (Pass / fail unit); Credit (C: 65–74%); Distinction (D: 75–84%) and High Distinction (HD: 85+); thus see the ACTh *Handbook for Teachers and Examiners*, MCD Academic Conduct Policy section 2.2.1, and the SCD Handbook pp 71ff, available on their websites. Sometimes individual pieces of assessment are graded on an A (=HD), B (=D), C (=C) and D (=P) and F basis.

The SCD list of grades (Handbook pp 71ff) also includes NS (Not Satisfactory, that is, Fail in a PP unit), X (Extra work needed for a Pass), E (Extensions), I (Incomplete), W (Withdrawal after Census date), but the precise meaning of these and similar terms differs between HEPs.

The ACTh and SCD use the same GPA point scale: F=0, P=1, C=2, D=3 and HD=4.

21. ACTh and SCD, for example. A good descriptor set is in the Wesley Institute Staff Handbook, 26ff. Section 5 of the UK QAA 2007 Report offers interesting examples of 'Benchmarks' at entry and graduation: these have been developed by Whitley College, and used as draft descriptors for the MCD.

22. Wesley Institute Staff Handbook, 29.

60-80% of a degree) continue to use formal essays and examinations as primary assessment instruments. For faculty, such methods are generally cognate with the assessment of their own learning, since their research is typically expressed in essay form and is peer-reviewed.

While effective for many students, when used exclusively, or without reflection on the relationship between assessment and learning, such methods can discourage learning, or fail to appreciate the learning achieved by some students. With this in mind, written examinations have gone missing in some colleges. Yet a well-constructed unseen examination has the advantage of testing the extent to which students can 'think on their feet': rejecting one method of assessment does not necessarily end the discussion.²³

The citation rules most widely used across the sector are almost all based on a humanities (Author / Title / Publisher / Date data) rather than a scientific (Author (date)) system. The precise rules used include those of Turabian, Lawrence McIntyre, the JBL / Chicago / Harvard system, and the Australian Government Style Manual: the weakest aspect appears consistency in making citations from the web.²⁴ It would be helpful if all HEPs in the theology sector were to use one of these systems, or a common subset.

C3.3 *Oral assessment*

Oral assessment can be valuable for units in which the testing of student responses is important (for example apologetics). Further, some international students come to Australia for further theological education;²⁵ others have come as refugees (notably from the Sudan) and are looking for studies which will help with their inculturation to Australia. Some of these students live in an oral, story-based culture, where the usefulness of written essays and exams is questionable, and oral assessment can assist their learning. Yet it calls for significant staff time, and audio recording is necessary for moderation purposes, especially where English is not the student's mother tongue.

23. The UK QAA 2007 Report sections 4.13–4.18 include a brief critique and defence of written examinations and formal essays, as part of a range of assessment methods.

24. The UTC Handbook, 42ff was the most helpful form of web reference found.

25. It is general policy in Australian theological education not to take overseas students from non-western cultures unless they have completed their primary theological education in their own culture, and have the support of their own church and a support community in Australia. International theological students in Australia are thus effectively post-graduate, even if taking an undergraduate course. The financial, visa and English proficiency requirements made of all international students also apply.

C3.4 *Group projects*

Difficulties can arise in attaching individual marks for a group project (a mode of learning which is becoming increasingly used). On the one hand, giving all participants the same grade can be unjust, if some students have not played their part in completing the assessment. On the other hand, requiring more (and less) capable students to accept a 'group average' grade can have some interesting consequences for personal learning and formation.

C3.5 *Particular categories of student*

The fair assessment of learning for some students needs to take into account special circumstances, for example the provision of an amanuensis for a student who finds handwriting difficult. Other categories might include the following:

- Where a significant component of assessment requires cultural or artistic interpretation by the student (for example, writing an audit of a church service, or reviewing a film), understanding the criteria involved in assessment is essential.
- For blind students, assessment needs to be consistent with methods used for other students, though some are not appropriate, for example assessment using a 'debate' between students.
- For Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) students, additional time is commonly allowed in written examinations at diploma level, but generally not at degree level.

For consideration: That theology HEPs

a) undertake a thorough revision of unit descriptions in order to form consistent Learning Outcomes, using the resources of university Learning and Teaching centres;
and

b) facilitate the sharing of assessment standards, models and resources across the theology sector, for example via the ANZATS website.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology*

- a) set up a project to draft agreed Grade Descriptors and Guidelines for assessment models (as appropriate for the various theological disciplines and levels of learning) for use across Australian theological education; *and*
- b) facilitate agreement across Australian theological education regarding methods of citation, cognate with those used in major theological journals.

D Multi-streaming

D1 Background

Multi-streaming means including students learning at different levels or in different courses in the same class: for example degree students sharing classes with diploma or graduate students.²⁶ In particular, the advent of graduate coursework awards since 2000 has raised difficulties for the theology sector, where class sizes are typically less than 25. Providing separate BTheol and GradDip/MDiv classes with only a dozen students in each, for example, is hard to justify in terms of faculty teaching loads.

Accreditation bodies, and AUQA, are generally increasingly unsympathetic to multi-streaming from a pedagogical viewpoint: as a result, some colleges have dropped a whole level of courses.²⁷ The tightening of accreditation requirements may be influenced by assumptions made about university contexts, and not take account of the close learning communities and small class sizes which typify the theology sector.²⁸

26. Australian theology HEPs offer classes at two levels at most: the only mixed classes found were diploma / UG degree; Level 1 and 2, or Levels 2 and 3, in an UG degree; UG degree / graduate coursework; graduate / postgraduate units.

At ACU, multi-streaming is restricted to shared graduate and postgraduate classes.

In the ACTh, multi-streaming can be an issue where MA units are also approved for the coursework phase of the Doctor of Ministry. In such circumstances, 25% of the contact time must be delivered to the DMin cohort separately, and units must include topics which explicitly cohere with the ethos and learning outcomes of the degree.

27. Thus Ridley, which taught diploma and degree students for many years, had to choose between introducing graduate awards and continuing their diploma stream.

28. A particular case is 'preliminary' New Testament Greek and Biblical Hebrew, where multi-streaming is irrelevant for learning. Even so, some accreditation authorities have refused permission for this to take place.

Yet university practice is by no means free of multi-streaming. In a paper prepared for the *Council of Deans of Theology*, Dr Les Ball reviews thoroughly the practice of Queensland universities, as well as others. He notes a wide variety in multi-streaming, ranging from minimal differentiation between undergraduate and master's students, to the use of partial class-separations as a principled attempt to address the use of resources. He concludes that

multi-streaming is a common practice in Australian Universities (as indeed elsewhere, as is shown by reference to the University of Otago and other places) ... While multi-streaming is common, there seems to be no consistent practice to ensure a qualitative differentiation between levels, a feature that should be given attention if a legitimate postgraduate award is to be delivered.²⁹

The picture is further complicated for consortia that have member colleges operating under different State jurisdictions (notably ACTh and SCD). Thus the Queensland DETA is open to endorsing multi-streaming in parts of a programme where the NSW DET has placed restrictions.

D2 *Theology sector responses*

In response to concerns about multi-streaming, some theological colleges have initiated separate classes for first-year units, for example offering a BTh/BMin Level 1 New Testament class and a GradDip/MDiv New Testament Foundation one. This enables distinctive approaches to learning to be taken into account: undergraduates can be eased into their new learning. A more common approach, especially for Level 2 degree units, is to offer common lectures, but hold separate tutorials or seminars. Conversely, post-Foundational graduate units, designed as such, may permit senior undergraduate students to enrol, and have their graduate-level grade cross-credited to their degree at Level 3 or honours. By this stage, undergraduate students should have sufficient background to learn at graduate level, and pedagogical differences are minimal. Such methods go some way to mitigating the situation, but do not resolve it entirely.

The ACTh believes that there are situations where classes embracing diploma and first year degree students are both useful and justifiable. An undergraduate pedagogy applies to both groups, and many students with good academic qualifications choose a diploma course.

29. Les Ball, 'Multi-streaming in Australian universities', *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia*, 2005.

On the other hand, many diploma units are 'terminating', that is, they offer the only opportunity for a student to learn in the area concerned: this may affect assessment design in contrast to degree UG units.

From his survey of university and theology sector practice, Dr Ball makes the following recommendations, which would appear to offer a useful way forward for the theology sector:

- Some separation of the undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts on a regular basis, to allow the processing of learning input at different levels of cognitive engagement;
- Clear and explicit differentiation in the expected Learning Outcomes for the two levels;
- Learning tasks and reading which are of a more advanced or scholarly level for the postgraduate cohort;
- Assessment procedures and instruments that are linked explicitly to the differentiated Learning Outcomes.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* sponsor a consultation across the theology sector to reach detailed agreement about learning strategies across different academic levels, with a view to having such an agreement both implemented in the sector, and accepted by regulatory authorities as legitimate practice.

E Conclusion

Overall, quality assurance in Australian theological education can be said to have the following characteristics:

- Overall academic standards have historically been high at the ‘macro’ level of congruent diploma, undergraduate, graduate coursework and research degree awards, and remain so;
- Since the introduction of accredited degrees in theology in the 1970s, internal moderation in the consortia has ensured a consistency of grading standards across similar courses, and increased attention has been paid to adult learning methods;
- In the last decade, there have been significant developments in experience-based learning, greater focus on learning outcomes, and consequential changes in assessment methods;
- AUQA audits, and a greater focus on quality assurance in (re)accreditation processes, have seen higher levels of awareness of the importance of quality assurance as an ongoing and across-the-curriculum aspect of higher education.
- In some areas of detail, including adherence to the AQF, consistency of standards can be improved across the Australian theology sector.
- More formal benchmarking may assist sustain an ongoing assurance of quality, for example for libraries.

Chapter Five: The Practice of Teaching

Key findings: Australian theological education is characterised by a formational focus on learning, with personal and communal dimensions, encouraged by small class sizes, strong faculty-student relationships and supportive institutional environments.

This attractive ethos faces challenges, however, in several areas: faculty adapting their teaching practice to meet the learning needs of younger generations of students; maintaining spiritual and academic freedom in formation; and relating learning more intentionally to Australian contexts.

Sources: The data used for this and Chapter Five are different in kind from that employed for earlier chapters. It derives in large part from the Consultation day, in particular the focus groups on undergraduate learning, graduate studies, and formation—nine focus groups covering some 50 participants from almost every Australian theology HEP. As with the previous chapter, the personal experience of the Project Manager has influenced its framework. This chapter is thus more discursive in style, as necessitated by the subject matter.

A Learning styles

Australian theological students are generally very highly motivated. Most see their studies as shaping their personal and life identities, whether or not they are preparing for professional Christian ministries. Many see their decision to study theology as itself a vocational choice, a following out of what they see as God's will for their present living: as the Catechism of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* affirms for Christian people, 'baptism doth represent unto us our Profession'. It is not uncommon for faculty to have to help a theology student slow down, to trust the learning methods set before them and accept that they do not have to gain a doctorate in every topic of every unit in order to remain in God's will for them.

Characteristics of this kind mean that most theological students are a teacher's dream—and can also be a nightmare, if the student's expectations are not met, or they come to regard their studies as undermining their identity and ongoing formation as women and men of faith.

A1 *Responding to different students*

'Why do committed, hard-working students struggle?' was a question posed at the Consultation day. A number of responses can be made, but taking account of students' differing learning styles is a major issue for theological education. This reality is of increasing importance in view of the widening range of theological students' ages, social and educational background in many colleges.¹ Younger students have had a very different learning preparation from earlier generations, especially in the use of computers; many are at home in visual more than aural learning environments. Conversely, adult education methods need to be taken more seriously in some colleges. Consultation participants agreed that particular difficulties arise where lecturers continue to teach in the way they learnt as undergraduates decades earlier, using methods of limited learning value for both younger and middle-aged adults. The caution

1 For a brief overview of these issues in a British context, see the 2007 Report of the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education on 'Theology and Religious Studies' (available at www.qaa.ac.uk) sections 4.1–4.12. This document was circulated to all colleges as preparatory reading for the Consultation.

Apart from its useful overview of Graduate Attributes, all who commented saw this Report as inapplicable in Australian contexts, since it largely addresses the teaching of Religious Studies in UK universities, a very small component in Australian theological education (both within and beyond the universities). Nor does the Report consider the British network of theological colleges, the largest proportion of UK theological education, most of whom have a university relationship.

was sounded that different modes of learning (auditory, conceptual, visual, concrete, kinetic etc.) must be linked with the style of teaching: some students do not receive 'new' methods well.

A variety of examples of good teaching practice can readily be found in theological colleges, tailored to auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learners: videos, debates, online forums, for example, as well as lectures and seminars.² Intensive units can be set in non-class environments, to take account of different learning styles, and to integrate the experiential, affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. Group projects and collaborative learning are employed, especially in ministry-related areas such as homiletics, congregational ministry and Clinical Pastoral Education, or where team development matters.³ Some colleges have faculty handbooks in place,⁴ a few give suggestions for preliminary reading,⁵ and most include guidelines for writing essays in student resources,⁶ and some give assistance in preparing for examinations.⁷ This wide range of approaches, however, cannot be

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2. Worldview (whose students are all residential and full-time) now teaches units in month-long blocks, which means that faculty have had to revise significantly their approaches to teaching. When two lectures and a tutorial each week are replaced by three full mornings, learning methods must change. This system also enables greater flexibility for faculty, and allows for visiting experts to be invited to participate.

The Tabor NSW Handbook includes a thoughtful Philosophy of Education. The BCSA Handbook offers excellent resources on Overall Educational Strategy, Learning, Foundational Skills, and on getting the best from Tutorials. Vose Seminary's Staff Handbook offers useful preparation guidelines for lecturers, and the UTC Handbook gives practical advice to students on using tutorials, summaries, quizzes, class presentation, book reviews, writing essays etc.

Institutions using *Moodle* (for example MCD / UFT / Trinity, BCT, Alphacrucis) can incorporate quizzes, brief responses, chat room forums etc., both in online units and to accompany face-to-face classes: see Chapter Five.

3. In BCT colleges, units can commence with four weeks' teaching, when students vote on syllabus topics which they want to explore for the next the eight weeks—an attempt to allow students to facilitate their own learning.
4. Colleges with high-standard Staff / Faculty Handbooks include Vose Seminary, Trinity WA (clear on annual, parental, Jury and study leave), Mary Andrews College (MAC—good advice on basic essentials for external faculty), and Wesley (strong Philosophy of Education, applied cross disciplines beyond theology).
5. Cf the Student Handbooks of SMBC (ACTh) and St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological Seminary (SCD). The SMBC Handbook includes all essay topics and assessment readings for the year ahead, plus detailed assessment schedules.
6. Excellent examples of degree-level essay guidelines are those shared between Morling and Malyon, and the diploma-oriented ones in MAC's Handbook. ACOM, teaching only in distance mode, includes a sample essay in its student learning resource.
7. The SOCS Handbook includes useful exegesis guidelines, with examples.

said to exist across the sector, due to factors such as faculty workloads, resistance to change and lack of training in educational methods. Student Handbooks generally outline course structures and rules, and unit description, but not evenly.⁸

One strength of Australian theological education is the endeavour to give attention to the whole person, and to the community of learning. Both church-sponsored and the Bible colleges put significant resources into the orientation of new students, seeking to recognise and affirm what a student knows already through their life-experience.⁹ Theological students are usually linked to a faculty member as a mentor, and the regular structures of communal life—social events, chapel, retreats, missions, care projects etc.—give opportunities for reflective learning. Some Consultation participants commented, however, that these positive dimensions of the depth to be found in theological education are not fully appreciated by some students, or used to their fullest potential.¹⁰

Consultation participants agreed that the essential element in helping a student learn in the area of ministry practice is developing strong skills in theological reflection. This is a key to being able to integrate learning in biblical studies, theology, church history, ethics, liturgy, education and so on with the realities of human living. While many theological students see this as a priority in their learning, in order to become effective reflective practitioners, the training they receive in this area is perceived by some as undervalued in the courses they are taking.

For consideration: That theology HEPs include learning and teaching methods in faculty appraisals and in college audits / reviews.

8. Good examples include quite brilliant diagrams used to explain course progression at Harvest Bible College, the full gathering of all material relevant to each course by Whitley, and excellent descriptions of entry and articulation procedures for all courses by CTC (MCD). In the CCTC Handbook, each discipline is introduced in a friendly way by the staff who teach it. The UFT Manual includes policies on mobile phones, children in class, and email.
9. Several colleges offer incoming students 'preparatory studies' in English, language skills, writing essays etc.—Tabor WA for example. At Avondale, students can start their course with a Diploma of General Studies (commended in its AUQA Report).
10. It is unusual in a theological college to find student discipline a problem, but it can happen: the Handbooks of the Bible colleges include sections on (un)acceptable behavior. The UTC Handbook offers a 'Code of Ethics' grounded in the gospel and the UCA Basis of Union, fleshed out in values and practices; the Tabor NSW Student Handbook also includes a Code, but without an explicit theological foundation.

For consideration: That professional in-service workshops be regularly arranged for faculty on issues such as learning styles, how students have learnt at school, learner-focussed teaching, and the appropriate use of technology for education.

For consideration That opportunities be made for faculty to share effective teaching methods in each theological discipline.

Colleges are encouraged to co-operate in these ventures: ANZATS offers structures within which they could be facilitated.

A2 *Learning styles for graduates*

The proportion of theological students who are already graduates in other disciplines is high in many colleges: 65% is typical. (Christian tertiary institutions, and 'service teaching' institutions, are the main exceptions, since these bodies seek to attract school leavers.) Further, in most theological HEPs, single semester or one-year graduate awards are attracting professionals looking for in-depth basics in theology and / or specialized areas, especially in online mode. Courses for non-theology graduates include core and foundational units introducing students to the basic disciplines more quickly and tersely than corresponding undergraduate units—an 'accelerated' approach to learning.

The Consultation noted that while graduates' background generally enhances their capacity to learn, it also affects their preferred learning styles. Graduates with little humanities-style background may only be as prepared for theological study as a Year 12 student, for example, while graduates from overseas, or 'upgraded' from an old diploma to degree level, present distinctive learning issues. Close reading of 'non-standard' transcripts is important in determining appropriate courses for such students. Bridging courses, or requiring additional units, were possible responses for struggling students, especially in units employing the 'accelerated' mode commonly used in Graduate Diplomas.

The introduction of graduate awards is having an interesting effect on age demographics in the theology sector. Undergraduate courses, which since the 1970s had had students distributed across a wide age-range, are tending to be taken by non-graduates, who are generally younger. Graduate classes are increasingly made up of older students, often with extensive life-experience. These differences are affecting the shaping of

learning outcomes and assessment. At Avondale, ACU, Notre Dame and the Christian tertiary institutions teaching theology, this age disparity is greater, since many undergraduate students were coming directly from Year 12.¹¹

From a teaching point of view, the Consultation noted that some faculty are better prepared to teach undergraduates, typically delivering lively ‘chalk and talk’ lectures with visual aids and handouts, while others were more effective for graduate learning, using seminars or guided reading—and that such approaches have been used for decades. On the other hand, it was agreed that faculty involved in multi-stream teaching must be explicit about distinctive pedagogies and assessment.

As regards curriculum, Consultation participants noted that graduate foundational units are designed to ready students for advanced study, with greater focus on method than content, though both dimensions are given attention. On the other hand, undergraduate degree units tend to focus more on content, assuming that the latter will be developed further in subsequent units: diploma units, many of which do not lead further are often terminating, generally paying less explicit attention to method. Also, close attention to primary sources is a feature of some graduate units, for example reading a particular theologian in depth.¹²

Online learning engages a significant proportion of graduate students (see Chapter Five below). It would seem that appropriate pedagogy is more advanced in this area, since the ‘what and how will students learn?’ question is very upfront for teachers.

Distinctive learning outcomes will distinguish graduate from undergraduate units, reflecting the different Graduate Attributes of graduate and undergraduate courses. These differences will then translate into distinctive learning methods: there may be greater use of student-led seminars, for example, and higher expectations in pre-reading and the reading expected to have been completed by the end of a unit. They will also carry over into distinctive methods of assessment.

11. Theological students linked to CSU, Flinders and Murdoch reflect the age-distribution of theological colleges.

12. The question of whether method or content is to be given preference in the first stages of learning is wider, and affects the pedagogical approach taken to introductory units in the humanities generally. ACTh and CSU degrees tend more towards a content-leads-to method approach; MCD and SCD units can vary between colleges, but seem to prefer a method-mixed-with-content perspective, as do the Christian tertiary institutions (though ‘method’ here refers more to ministry practice than academic methodology). The new Newcastle BTh is distinctive in Australian theological education in having a strongly method-first approach.

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate conversation between faculty and colleges engaged in teaching both undergraduate and graduate coursework teaching with a view to developing guidelines for pedagogies appropriate to the distinctive learning styles these represent.

B Formational learning

B1 *Formation for what?*

‘Formation’ is a major concern in theological education, affecting every aspect, from ‘service teaching’ of core units to teacher trainees to those preparing for authorised Christian ministries through full-time studies for several years. As noted in Chapter One, formation covers a variety of concerns, with both personal and corporate dimensions: specific formation for ministry (including acculturation to church expectations, and specialised areas such as spiritual direction), general formation for Christian discipleship (prayer life, liturgy/chapel, scripture reflection), and personal formation to become a well-rounded graduate.¹³ In particular, it means forming people into the body of Christ, not only as an ideal, but into the sometimes harsh realities of congregational and denominational life. Even so, different conceptions of ‘ministry’ and ‘church’ underlie what such formation means, so that the impact of formation on curriculum and learning will be different in different places.

‘*Formation for what?*’ was a question returned to time and again at the Consultation, behind which lies the question, ‘*What does ministry mean?*’. In part, it remains what it always has been—the ministry of the word, sacraments, pastoral care and advocacy—yet the forms in which these things are done, and the world in which they are done, have changed. ‘Church’ in its visible expression will always take some kind of tangible shape, embracing rites of entrance, celebration and lament, varieties of congregational life and ministry practice, spiritual emphases and confessional stance etc., but articulated in different ways. Formation must therefore involve a strong ethos of preparation for life-long, ongoing

13. Consultation participants also noted that the federally-funded State school chaplaincy programme is having a major effect on the composition of student bodies in some colleges, especially in Queensland. The emphasis in such chaplaincy courses falls on ‘service’ oriented teaching, and ‘non-confessional’ stances: this affects the approach to what ‘formation’ means, in this case for being a chaplain in a government school.

learning that can read not only the texts and traditions of a faith community, but also the people involved and the contexts in which it is set.

Such wisdom cannot be taught, but a learning environment can be created whereby little by little people begin to acquire some, and gain insights of life-long value. 'Can we form people for the *art* of ministry?' was how one participant at the Consultation put the question. Yet many questions remain, and are likely to remain as perennial issues. How do we marry continuity between what is received, with the radical changes that are happening in our culture? How do we help people be formed to minister the ongoing identity-forming practices of the churches, while forming them for a world that is radically changing? How do we develop the skills needed to navigate radical change?

B2 *Tensions and concerns in formation*

As well as these questions, discussion on this topic at the Consultation day uncovered some differences and tensions. Churches with a strong sacramental understanding of ministry and episcopal structure had different expectations from those of a more congregational ecclesiology. The former tend to a more strongly defined curriculum and formation process, determined by church structures and leaders. In the latter (for example, many Bible colleges), the teaching institution has more control over the formation and curriculum of ministry students, but in doing so keeps its ears and eyes open to what is needed in the churches. Charismatic / Pentecostal colleges in particular place emphasis on practical experience and skills over academic training: many of their students will have been asked to study following ministry experience. Concern was also expressed at the growing use of distance education modes and their impact on formation (see further C2 below).

The following tensions would appear to exist, in varying degrees, across all theological colleges:

- Between the expectations of an academically accredited programme, and the need for ministry skills development;
- Between different conceptions of academic learning as 'book' or as 'transformative' learning;
- Between academic learning and personal spiritual development / growth; and
- Between the separation of disciplines in the curriculum, and the need for student integration, both as persons and as potential leaders in church and community.

One participant who teaches in an ecumenical and academically-oriented environment, with 80% non-candidates, acknowledged that formation has largely been treated as separate from academic learning. As a New Testament teacher, the main concern has not been formation as such, but the discipline, which is aimed to be taught in as open a way as possible, using representative text-books which span the middle ground. One particular concern of this person is to teach *method*: how do students learn to exegete a text, to convey a sense of biblical theology? This approach is academic in the traditional sense of academic *theology*—core beliefs such as the Trinity are assumed, teaching is based on the scriptures, tradition and creeds, with disagreement from students expected and welcomed. As such, it is a formational to the academic discipline of New Testament, open to development into preparation for its use in ministry, for example in preaching.

Formation for practical ministry, lived in daily life, is the dominant mode in Bible colleges and charismatic / Pentecostal institutions: integration of ministry and learning is to the fore, and the student body looks for such an emphasis. In most colleges, however, academic subjects are increasingly seen as ‘infiltrated’ by practical theology: ‘what theology is at work here?’ And the reverse is also true: practical theology forcing hard reflection on academic studies: ‘how might this theology shift if it were practised in this new context?’

One Consultation participant reported research done recently on ‘learning’, in which students had been asked how they ‘learn’ theology. They all started talking about academic theology initially, which they found ‘quite dry’, but then moved on to talking about how it was life changing! Their image and the reality was quite different. These comments were supported by other participants, indicating a common experience of initial resistance from ‘practically-minded’ students to studying Church History giving way to enthusiasm for its relevance in helping them prepare for ministry. A member from a college which has had to raise the bar on its academic connections said that this had improved the formation course ‘no end’, as students came to a better understanding of their faith.

NB: Some concern was expressed about the danger of neglecting research and teaching ‘for its own sake’, especially in biblical studies: maintaining such research across the theology sector as a whole was felt by most Consultation participants to be well covered.

With greater orientation towards formation for ‘lay’ and specialist ministries, an emerging issue is the type of faculty recruited to theological

colleges, and their orientation to formation in its varied aspects. In church-related colleges, the ability to take part in training for ordained ministry continues to be a large factor in faculty recruitment, so that a high proportion in these colleges are ordained clergy of academic ability. In the Bible and charismatic / Pentecostal colleges, academic qualifications, though necessary, are viewed as less important than relevant ministry experience. In both cases, most faculty have themselves undergone formation for ministry, including spiritual formation, which shapes their approach to teaching and learning. Consultation participants acknowledged the difficulties which all colleges face in finding faculty with relevant ministry experience, appropriate academic qualifications, and skill as teachers.

The most difficult key question raised was, *'How do you know that a student has developed formationally?'*, an issue recognised to be closely related to the 'graduate attributes' looked for in a course (see Chapter Three). How can this be appropriately tested? A growing stress on 'competency' is evident among college supporters and sponsors, and is commonly seen as more important than one's academic results—in part due to the sad history of clergy who are *not* competent in basic skills of leading and forming a Christian congregation! Only academic performance and skill behaviours can be assessed, not so easily 'the heart' and 'readiness for ministry', the discernment of which calls for subtle wisdom.

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- For consideration:** That ANZATS support consultations to
- a) Develop guidelines on the relationships between 'pure' and 'applied' elements in learning undertaken towards a first degree in theology, to provide a framework within which different emphases on theological learning, ministry practice and personal development may be held together;
 - b) Identify Graduate Attributes looked for by the stakeholders in Australian theological education—churches, mission agencies, colleges, consortia and government agencies;
and
 - c) Foster the identification and equipping of faculty in the disciplines of practical theology, and their engagement with other theological teachers and disciplines.
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C Experience-based learning

C1 *Theory and practice: the context of learning*

Placements and internships are now widely recognised as part of diplomas and degrees, as noted already, and the whole area of 'practical theology' (by whatever name) has changed and grown in the past 25 years. Experience-based learning is now a requirement in degrees with 'Ministry' in the title, which endeavour to take an 'across the curriculum' approach to learning, rather than appearing to segment it into 'pure' and 'applied' areas (as is perceived to be the case for 'Theology' degrees).

Advanced studies in ministry practice barely existed prior to 1990—Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) being the obvious exception, though its effective isolation from colleges and churches has raised issues. The development of Ministry Studies by the MCD, and the offering of the Fuller DMin programme in Australia, gradually brought about greater openness to this style of learning, not only for practising professionals, but theological students. After initial resistance to ministry practice being a fit subject for a research degree, elements of reflective practice are now familiar ground, and incorporated into some PhD / DTheol as well as Ministry Studies theses.

Education for pastoral ministry based in a congregation continues as a key component in Australian theological education, but the learning processes involved have become more developed. Students are no longer placed in a congregation just for work experience (or as a source of cheap labour), but engage in Supervised Theological Field Education, with each term having real significance: their learning is the focus of supervision, not only the work they do. As noted previously, such students now form a minority in most theological colleges: a wide range of specialised ministries have emerged or been renewed—youth ministries, 'pioneer' ministers / church planters / evangelists, and a wide variety of chaplaincies, in schools, welfare bodies, prisons, sport, the defence services, community development and industry.¹⁴ And more broadly still, today social

14. Frameworks for the accreditation of chaplains are increasingly tightened, noted Consultation participants, and chaplains are increasingly being viewed as specialists, rather than as clergy who could not make it in a parish. However, in the wider community chaplaincy is viewed with a broad brush, one not necessarily carrying a religious / spiritual ministry reference, or an identifiably Christian one. Conversely, where an ordained minister is appointed and employed as a chaplain by a non-church body, their accountability to the church may be loosened, and their local congregation may not recognise them as engaged in Christian ministry.

justice and ecological issues are vital for many theological students, who bring different expectations and questions from those asked by an earlier generation. Such students are found across the theological spectrum, and are looking for ways to help shift and change the world, both locally and globally.

Churches, practitioners and students are thus seeking appropriate experience-informed training, significant elements of which it is difficult to offer by any one college. Consultation participants raised broader questions: are colleges training people towards models of ministry which are in decline? Are quite different models needed to develop the skills and experience which students need, without undervaluing the traditional requirements both for pastoral and specialised ministries?

C2 *Education for pastoral ministry*

Pastoral ministry education and formation remains the core focus for church-sponsored colleges. A typical pattern is to have one full day each week devoted to hands-on workshops on topics such as baptism, weddings and funerals etc., engaging with the particular heritage and distinctives of the Christian tradition concerned, including corporate worship and time for personal mentoring. Existing models tend to assume that candidates are preparing to be individual pastors rather than members of a proactive team, but this is changing. One issue noted at the Consultation is the lack of many good models for team ministries, another is the reality that 'sole pastor' ministries are likely to continue for some time, especially outside metropolitan areas and regional cities.

Courses to prepare people for pastoral ministry are available from certificate to postgraduate degree levels, and theology degrees can include STFE and CPE units. Diplomas in which ministry units predominate are commonly used to supplement a degree that focuses on the 'classic' disciplines. Some diplomas include a project, which can be undertaken in groups, enabling greater flexibility for individual and collective learning.

'Internship' programmes are growing in number. One pattern (typically used to train youth ministers) is a two-year half-time course, with some units taken at college, others in a local congregation, with a strong focus on competency-oriented training—the remaining time is allowed for employment.¹⁵ A major challenge is to locate and support suitable placements and supervisors, and the money flows involved (for college,

15. In such programmes there is a growing overlap between VET and Higher Education modes of learning: articulation from VET to Higher Education diplomas is possible for universities, but for private providers the issue remains unresolved.

church and supervisors). Some students come to college with a placement already organised from their home church: for ministry candidates, this may raise issues about the student's need to have wider advice about how and where they will learn best, and avoid deflecting the issues around moving on from their spiritual home base.

Students not uncommonly find their understanding and assumptions about ministry are challenged in placements, and perception and reality can differ, sometimes to the point of sharp dissonance. Having ministry practitioners involved in teaching can assist with this, especially where the student already respects them. Meeting with pastors who find themselves challenged about the negatives of ministry is another possibility, though this may be more relevant to those in the early years of ministry. The practice of ongoing theological reflection, and further training in its use, was stressed as particularly significant at the Consultation, and is a matter for long-term in-service training.

C3 *Preparation for other ministries*

The wider range of students coming to theological education challenges all involved to take with full seriousness wider forms of ministry vocation, and how people can be prepared to exercise them. The 'Theology of everyday life' movement spawned by Robert Banks' work, continued through institutions such as the *Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society*, have encouraged such reflection in Protestant circles, but thus far made little headway in theological curricula.¹⁶

The wide age-range among theological students bears upon experience-based learning, at the heart of which lies theological reflection. In many ways this comes naturally to students with significant life-experience, but can be seen by younger students as too indirect, unrelated to their life-experience or not focussed enough on 'how to' aspects of ministry. Further, Consultation participants noted that some younger students from broken backgrounds have sought out a college in order to find some healing and grow in personal maturity. On the other hand, integrating faith with workplace issues is applicable to all students.

16. See www.zadok.org.au. The ecumenical body *Social Connections*, based at YTU, aims to make Christian contributions toward forming social policy agendas: see www.socialpolicyconnections.com.au.

The ACTh introduced a 'Lay Ministries' focus in its Diploma courses from 1986, but these have not been widely taken up. SOCS (ACTh) focuses on education for Christian living in daily life, while the MCD DipMin offered by Trinity includes 'lay theology / ministry' units for students not intending ordained ministry.

Learning strategies employed here have included focus group panels to encourage discussion in the student body, and bringing in presenters from different ministry areas, and professionals from business, politics, police etc. for an 'integration week' intensive.

Since 2000, Graduate Diplomas and course-work master's degrees which specialise in ministry practice have become available. These are attractive not only to specialist church-based ministries such as spiritual direction, or counselling, but also to community-based chaplains, for example in prisons, schools, welfare bodies, the defence forces, whose sponsoring bodies expect employees to update their qualifications regularly. Such awards fulfil the requirements of government, churches and individuals, and are more ecumenical in their focus and structure, especially in enabling students to take units across several colleges: graduate students typically see themselves much less attached to a particular college, and want to 'pick and choose' offerings and modes of supervision.

Some specialist bodies have emerged to prepare people for particular ministries: noteworthy examples include the Sydney-based ACTh diploma-level colleges, Anglican Youthworks and Mary Andrews College (which prepares women for Christian ministry). Quite different is the ecumenical Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation, an RTI of the MCD which owns no buildings, has faculty drawn from MCD colleges and two Centres for Spirituality, one Roman Catholic (the Champion Centre) and one Baptist (Wellspring), and uses the specialist collection of the Carmelite Library. ICSPF uses educational methods which are cognate to the nature of spiritual reflection, and teaches only at graduate coursework level, towards Graduate Diplomas and an MA in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction.¹⁷

C4 *Supervisor training and accreditation*

Supervisor training is a difficult and challenging area, reported Consultation participants: those in busy ministries find it difficult to find the necessary time. Good supervisors want the input and training. Further, while there are multiple openings for ministry—aged care, with refugees, in schools and the like—supervisors for placements in these diverse areas need particular training. The need is there: how is it to be met?

17. Since holding an MA (Spiritual Direction) qualifies a person to practice in this area of ministry, an interview is required as part of the application process to ensure that the student is suitable as a potential practitioner: the MCD has taken care to ensure that this does not breach the 'No religious test' requirement of the *MCD Act*.

The accreditation of supervisors usually follows the pattern for the accreditation of faculty, taking into account formal learning, experience, suitability to supervise, and ministry practice. However, such accreditation may be beyond a college's control, and be exercised by a professional association (cf CPE) or a church body. This can raise issues: for example, if divergent perceptions are held as to the learning outcomes expected, or different theological emphases about the nature of ministry. Supervisors may also have a light-weight association with the teaching institution: at the Consultation it was suggested that linking them to the faculty member responsible for the student in college was a possible way forward here.

An accredited training programme for supervision was regarded as desirable by Consultation participants—ideally a Graduate Diploma. Whitley offers a BTheol honours cum postgraduate level unit in supervision, but faculty pressures means that it has not been able to be offered every year. And supervisors need to be practitioners, so training and supervising compete for time in often busy schedules. On the job supervision training days, including reflection, and / or a workshop involving supervisor and student, are possibilities, but the number of people qualified to offer such training is small. Supervising the supervisors is a further issue.

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- For consideration:** That ANZATS work with ANZATFE, and church leaders involved with theological education, to identify
- a) The place of experience-based learning and its contribution to theological education, making recommendations about its place in each theological discipline;
 - b) Common patterns in preparing candidates for pastoral and specialist ministries, with a view to encouraging principled ecumenical co-operation;
- and*
- c) The particular needs in each state for the training of placement supervisors, to enable resources to be offered to meet this need.
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D Australian contexts

A related factor in effective learning, especially as preparation for ministry, is taking with full seriousness the Australian contexts within which students live. Until the last two decades, this has not been a significant emphasis in theological education, in part because of the relatively homogeneous culture of non-indigenous Australians, but the picture has been gradually changing. That said, it would be difficult to claim that awareness of the Australian contexts and the Asia-Pacific region in which learning takes place are to the fore in most theological colleges and disciplines: what follows describes more the exceptions than the rule.

Until the mid-1980s, where indigenous cultures were considered in Australian theological education it was in largely missiological terms. The years around the Bicentenary of European settlement saw broader perspectives begin to emerge in a few places: indigenous perspectives are today included in Australian church history and society units, and some specialist units are offered.¹⁸ Today the principal bases for indigenous Australia theological education are Nungalinga College (Darwin), Wontulp-Bi-Buya College (Queensland) and St Paul's Theological College on Thursday Island: all are currently in the VET and not the HE sector.¹⁹ The gradual development of indigenous theology, beyond 'missionary' approaches to 'inculturation' has encouraged similar reflection in European-culture Australia, most notably through a succession of conferences from a variety of theological perspectives, taking up issues related to ministry and mission in this land.²⁰

Learning in Australian contexts is occasionally mentioned in institutions' Mission Statements,²¹ and more commonly in relation to other

18. Colleges with a strong missiological emphasis (so YTU, SMBC, and St Andrew's Hall, the CMS Training College adjacent to Ridley Melbourne) continue to offer indigenous studies to prepare people for indigenous ministry. Faculty who have ministered in indigenous cultures bring the learning gained there to both specialist and general units, for example at Jesuit Theological College / UFT and several Bible colleges.

19. The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission* of the *National Council of Churches*, and similar bodies in the Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches, provide opportunities for theological reflection in indigenous contexts.

20. A 1979 ANZATS conference seems to have been the first academic consideration of doing theology in Australian European contexts, and in each decade since a volume of essays (edited by Peter Malone) has traced trends. The founding of the *Zadok Institute*, and the ABCTV series 'The Sunburnt Soul' hosted by its first Director, Dr David Milikan, put the subject on the map at congregational level and among young adults.

21. See for example those of CIS (SCD), the UFT (MCD), and St Mark's (CSU). Some Australian scholars have questioned the notion of 'contextualisation', most notably Dr David Broughton Knox, Principal of Moore from 1959-1985.

regions and nations in which students are preparing to serve.²² In some institutions, the multi-cultural nature of the student body is a catalyst for shaping learning and community formation with explicit attention to the Asia-Pacific region.²³ In colleges with a specialist orientation (for example youth work, or offering theology alongside university studies) Australian urban contexts are taken up in the structure of courses and unit sequences, with reference to the specialization or purpose of the college.²⁴

Most colleges offer units with titles such as ‘Church in Australian Society’, especially for those preparing for professional ministry,²⁵ but attention to Australian contexts beyond this remains less common: exceptions include St Mark’s (CSU, and its PACT Centre) and Southern Cross College (SCD, Assemblies of God), which requires all its BTh students to take a Church in Society stream. Perhaps the most integrated contextual approach is that of Whitley College (MCD, Baptist), which offers both a wide range of units related to mission and ministry in Australian contexts, aims to develop theology using Australian motifs, and seeks to take these seriously in each discipline’s units (while being aware of the danger of not allowing the discipline to be itself).²⁶

For consideration: That theology HEPs take steps to consider more fully how learning is affected by the varied Australian contexts in which teaching and ministry take place, in particular the opportunities afforded by engagement with indigenous theologians and colleges.

22. Most Bible colleges see preparation for cross-cultural ministry as a key emphasis in their curricula; Worldview focusses its courses around this goal.

23. UTC (CSU, UCA Sydney) is noteworthy for engaging South Pacific cultures, partly in view of past missionary work (especially Methodist) but now taken up explicitly, and given expression in the mix of cultures among faculty and students. UTC also teaches in Korean, taking up its Presbyterian heritage.

YITU includes religious orders with a missionary vocation: its focus on missiology has led to wider consideration of multi-cultural ministries in Australian contexts.

24. Thus Youthworks, SOCS, and the (closed) Macquarie Christian Studies Institute.

25. Pioneers in introducing such units were Ridley and St Mark’s: St Mark’s Library (which pre-dates the Centre) was set up by Bishop Ernest Burgmann in the 1930s to support theological reflection in Australian contexts, and has served Federal MPs and public servants since then.

26. See www.whitley.edu.au/theology, and the use of Michael Leunig’s ‘Mr Curly’ by Dr Frank Rees to frame an Australian approach to theology and ministry.

E Conclusion

Teaching practice in Australian theological education has several distinctive aspects in comparison to other Australian higher education, including:

- The expectations of theological students regarding their experience in a theological institution, their high commitment to learning, and the diversities found within theological student bodies;
- The formative / transformative as well as informative learning goals of theological colleges, in particular the learning needs of ordinands and others preparing for Christian ministries; and
- A universal ethos of personal relationships in learning, reflected in small class sizes, mentoring practices and the importance given to developing communities of learning and scholarship.

These distinctives also present challenges, however, in particular the importance of maintaining attention to both spiritual and academic freedom in formation.

Chapter Six: Learning and Teaching: *flexible delivery, service teaching, languages*

Key findings: Flexible delivery has expanded rapidly in Australian theological education in the past decade, especially through online learning. This has broadened the scope of student bodies, notably in regional areas, but quality assurance, library support and copyright need further attention. Issues of pedagogy are being addressed, but require ongoing work, and the consequences for formational learning are yet to be fully appreciated. Similar opportunities and concerns apply to the growing use of electronic technology in learning.

Service teaching has also grown rapidly in the past decade, now representing around 15% of Australian theological EFTSL. This area was less able to be examined for the project beyond particular conversations, but issues relating to faculty require further exploration.

Biblical languages play much less of a part in Australian theological education than was the case 50 years ago: their continued availability to all theological students is under question. In order to sustain these disciplines, higher levels of co-operation across theological colleges is needed.

Teaching theology in languages other than English (Cantonese, Mandarin and Korean in particular) is another recent development: opportunities for this to enrich cultural awareness for English-language theological education are yet to be taken up.

Sources: The material drawn on for the first section of this chapter included scrutiny of the websites of colleges engaged in flexible delivery, correspondence with faculty responsible for these, and two focus groups at the Consultation (from three consortia and 16 colleges), informed by the Project Manager's experience in correspondence, distance and online teaching. The report on technology draws on a further focus group, with members from seven colleges.

Service teaching was a topic proposed for the Consultation, but insufficient enrolments meant that no focus group was held. The Project Manager was able to discuss the issues involved with key faculty from ACU, Avondale and Notre Dame, and carry out detailed analyses of the DEEWR submissions made by Notre Dame, Tabor Adelaide and the Wesley Institute for non-theology students. The evidentiary base for this part of the report is thus less well grounded, and further work needs to be undertaken.

Language issues resources included college websites and handbooks, discussion in the three Consultation focus groups on undergraduate learning, and some follow-up conversations with the Project Manager.

A Flexible delivery

A1 Overview

In Australian contexts, flexible delivery is of growing importance, as churches and colleges seek to equip ‘all God’s people’ for ministry, and also because of the equity expectations of the Australian government for higher education. Flexible delivery is clearly advantageous outside the capital cities in which all but a few colleges are located, but is also true within them for those whose life situation makes participation in classes difficult or impossible.

By ‘flexible delivery’ is meant these learning contexts:¹

- *correspondence*: where materials (printed, emailed or downloaded) are used by an individual student to prepare for assessments and / or examinations;
- *distance education*: where correspondence learning includes a tutorial group or other face-to-face contact;
- *online learning*: where students engage in inter-active learning with tutor(s) and other students using the facilities of the internet.

Until the 1980s, flexible delivery of learning in the theology sector was largely confined to correspondence methods, typically with duplicated notes being sent out regularly to students, sometimes complemented by a local contact person or study group. The introduction of *taught* degrees in theology was interpreted to mean learning face-to-face exclusively: flexible delivery only applied to awards assessed by external examinations—the ACTh ThL/Dip and the MCD LTh and BD.²

Developments in electronic communication have seen this picture change significantly, and most theology HEPs now allow courses to be taught through flexible delivery. Diploma and graduate coursework

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1. From an educational perspective, classes held in the evenings, weekends or away from a college campus, are viewed as variants of face-to-face learning, rather than being flexible delivery: the main challenges in such contexts are the communal and formational dimensions of learning rather than classroom pedagogy. Likewise, although much research supervision takes place at a distance, this is not considered here.
 2. The (Anglican) *Institute for Theological Education* operated an extensive correspondence network across Australia and beyond until 2001, with study groups in regional towns, using ACTh diplomas. In Sydney, the (Roman Catholic) *Institute for Spiritual Studies* at Randwick, and St Matthew’s Manly (Anglican) offered support for students preparing for MCD BD examinations. Several Bible colleges offered correspondence courses towards their internal awards, and for general adult Christian education, and occasional use was made of lectures recorded on cassette (in the past, at Ridley Melbourne).

awards generally have few if any restrictions placed upon them: educationally, diplomas are well-suited to the 'lead the learner by the hand' ethos of flexible delivery, while graduate learners should already be equipped to learn in their own way, guided by distance education resources. Undergraduate degrees are those on which restrictions are placed, typically up to one third of a bachelor's degree.³ Units related to formation, or oriented to skills-learning (for example homiletics, counselling) are also commonly excluded from flexible delivery modes.

Two major distance education providers teach as Member Institutions of the SCD, largely in correspondence mode, but with attention to learning methods appropriate both to theology as a discipline, and the profile of theological students. Both teach primarily towards the SCD's Bachelor of Theology:

- a) The *Australian College of Ministries* (ACOM, Churches of Christ) provides students with a 'subject package' of a book, a study guide and a reading collection; each student must also have a church placement and coach, and take part in a local formation group, commencing with a three-day retreat and involving meetings of 32 hours over the year.
- b) The *Broken Bay Institute* (BBI, Roman Catholic) uses a similar approach, with a wide range of tutors, as well as teaching through intensive face-to-face and some online units.

Other colleges offer similar approaches: Tabor Adelaide offers (non-ministry) units using notes, audio lectures, readers, and a Teaching Assistant on faculty, and some ACTh colleges offer distance education via CDROMs. ACU sees itself as a national provider, so many MA units are taught using distance education, including some online units.⁴

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3. In the ACTh, Diplomas and the BMin are available by flexible delivery, but the BTh is seen as a 'classic' degree for training clergy, and its delivery by flexible delivery is restricted. Online units are available for some graduate / PG units. The MCD only allows online learning to be used in the BTheol for Level 3 units. On the other hand, no restrictions are placed on flexible delivery in the Flinders BTh or ACD BMin.
 4. Some theology HEPs, for example ACD, do not see online teaching as a priority because there is a perceived lack of people with the appropriate skills, infrastructure resources and student capacity.

Correspondence has effectively disappeared, in favour of distance education, local face-to-face intensives, and online learning. Those using it live in remote locations, and study at 'adult education' level via congregational study groups and discipleship courses. Coolamon College, the ACD distance education provider, joined with Parkin-Wesley College in 2009 as the Uniting College of Leadership and Theology.

For consideration: That ANZATS promote further consultation across the sector regarding the place of flexible delivery in Australian theological education, especially outside the capital cities, the implications for communal and formational learning and preparation for Christian ministries, and the possibilities of greater co-operation.

A2 *Online learning*

A2.1 *Beginnings*

Web-based teaching is very new in Australian theological education, and has grown quickly. It was pioneered in 2001 by Trinity College Theological School (UFT / MCD) after extensive exploration of appropriate pedagogy: at that time only three theological colleges globally were using the web. Trinity coined the phrase ‘accompanied online learning’ to describe its educational philosophy, and requires all online teachers to be trained in, and maintain, this ethos.⁵ By 2007, the MCD Diploma of Ministry, Graduate Diploma of Theology and Master of Divinity courses were available in full online, with teaching faculty drawn from across a range of colleges and academically qualified ministers.

Several ACTh colleges have now moved into online teaching: BCV, Malyon (Queensland) and Morling (NSW) Baptist colleges, SOCS and Ridley (working in conjunction with the *Bush Church Aid Society*, the Anglican ‘outback’ ministry). The two CSU colleges, St Mark’s (Canberra) and UTC (Sydney), use the online teaching facilities of the university. The Theology Program at Murdoch began teaching online units in Practical Theology in 2002. Other colleges (for example Harvest) are moving into online delivery modes, and it is very likely that most theological colleges will do so in the near future.

Online delivery offers opportunities to study which would otherwise be unavailable to some students, especially in regional areas. Many students work to support their studies, especially those with family responsibilities. A growing number of Australian theological students is therefore taking it up. Online learning now represents about 20% of

5. See www.trinitycollege.vic.edu.au/theologyonline. One consequence of offering online learning is its use by students from overseas where there is a paucity of theological colleges—the north-west region of the USA, Africa and the Pacific, for example.

enrolments in the UFT / Trinity (MCD) programme, while the ACTh estimates that some 10% of its students are studying in flexible mode, in some colleges representing 50% of enrolments.⁶

A2.2 *Pedagogy*

Online learning calls for a very different pedagogy than face-to-face classes: teachers need to learn how to teach in this new mode, and most faculty in Australian theological education have not had teacher training, let alone for this new learning context. At the Consultation, it was stated that teachers need to 'move from thinking of the internet as a blackboard, to start to think as learners do, not as just using online to continue as a 'more information' provider'.⁷ Online teaching swings the pendulum decisively from what the lecturer teaches to how the student learns: lesson notes and outlines, reading guides, processes for feedback and student-to-student interchange all have to be re-thought. Several colleges engage consultants (mostly from a nearby university) to assist faculty who teach online, or send faculty to conferences on online learning.

There is general agreement in the theology sector that face-to-face mode remains an indispensable element in learning with a formational orientation—some colleges therefore regard this as the only acceptable form of preparation for the Christian ministries for which they prepare students.⁸ To the churches, many colleges say, 'we want to keep them in college', but the churches respond, 'we want them out there quickly'. How communal and formational learning is sustained for distance education theological students remains a significant challenge. In theological education, ministry preparation and spiritual formation are viewed as part of the whole learning experience: how is this encompassed in online mode—what is equivalent to opening a class in prayer?

'Blended' teaching that utilizes the best of face-to-face and online delivery was seen by most at the Consultation as the way of the future, especially as theological students increasingly come from educational backgrounds where IT is used extensively. Faculty who have taught online have found that their face-to-face teaching shifts towards being

6. At the Consultation, Morling College acknowledged that their current face-to-face to distance education ratio is 50/50.

7. Tabor Victoria merged with Kingsley College in 2008, and initially put lectures inherited from Kingsley online: Tabor is now questioning this process, seeking to move beyond it to an online pedagogy.

8. This not only includes ordinands, but also specialist areas such as spiritual direction: the *Institute for Christian Spirituality and Pastoral Formation* (MCD), for example, continues to use face-to-face mode only.

more student-oriented, complementing classes with online chat rooms, or requiring students to upload brief responses to tutorial reading prior to the discussion, etc. They have found that the best online resource notes are not so much lectures converted into HTML and put online, but reshaped into short introductions offering a range of resources to support student learning. Online forums and student-to-student interaction is strongly encouraged so as to try to create a supportive learning community.⁹

Well-used, IT can significantly enhance the face-to-face learning experience by facilitating social interaction and peer-to-peer learning (for example getting students who never speak in tutorials to respond in chat rooms, using ‘buddy’ pairs etc.). Online facilities can also facilitate the regular maintenance and upgrading of units, and allow access to national and international experts and teachers. Such ‘blended’ approaches are emerging across a good number of colleges, particularly those who see themselves as Christian tertiary institutions—but significant faculty development will continue to be needed for some time.

A2.3 *Student perspectives*

At the Consultation, two sub-groups of students who prefer online learning were identified: congregational ministers seeking in-service training, and school teachers involved in Religious Education. Conversely, colleges indicated that most undergraduate students (notably those in their early twenties) prefer to be in a face-to-face class, part of a tangible learning community, and rarely use online units.¹⁰

It was also acknowledged that students tend to love or hate online learning—their computing (in)ability is a significant factor, though this is much less the case for students under 40. Timetabling is an increasingly significant factor in the uptake of face-to-face units. The growth in numbers of intensive, extensive and online units would in part appear to be due to student pressure towards units being available when they are available: work and family pressures affect the large proportion of part-time students in many colleges.

9. Some college Handbooks give excellent lists of useful websites: for example SOCS, 27 and UFT/TCTS TheologyOnline. Some college’s are using online blogs as part of learning: for example Worldview’s unit on ‘Contextualisation’.

10. An exception noted at the Consultation is the occasional use of flexible delivery for remedial students, letting them make up a failed unit not offered in the next semester.

A2.4 *Further issues*

A number of issues related to online learning need further consideration:

- **Quality assurance:** online students expect the same quality of learning as face-to-face students. Ensuring consistency for the same unit across different learning modes is a major responsibility for theology HEPs, whether stand-alone colleges or consortia. In the ACTh. the moderation of units taught face-to-face, by distance education, or online demonstrates that the learning experience for these units is comparable, regardless of the mode of delivery.
- **Copyright:** copyright material in online learning needs care, including CAL reporting. For example, who 'owns' the intellectual property in online courses; does the normal restriction on copying more than 10% of a book apply; and what does 'for the purposes of study or research' mean?
- **Libraries** find that flexible delivery demands extra resources, and additional work for staff: almost all libraries in the theology sector are oriented to face-to-face teaching.

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate a consultation across the Australian theology sector for faculty responsible for online learning, with a view to developing strategies for best practice. The consultation should consider appropriate pedagogy, issues relating to intellectual property and copyright, quality assurance, and the use of online methods to complement face-to-face learning.

B IT in the Australian theology sector

B1 Hardware and software

The project research found that IT technology has a strong presence across the theology sector, but Consultation participants emphasised that its effective use lags well behind the hardware available, largely due to lack of faculty and administrative staff training.

All theological colleges provide good computer access for faculty and students, with computers available on campus for student use. Most have wireless networks in place, with free email accounts for students, many have IT technology available in classrooms, and laptops are increasingly being used by students in class. Multi-media classrooms are increasingly found in schools, and are likely to reach theological education in the next few years. One college has a lectern including a computer with a touch screen that can combine access to audio, video and internet resources: the cost (\$4–6,000) was regarded as difficult but affordable.

Data projectors are increasingly employed, but often as a replacement for the white or blackboard, without consideration of their primarily visual nature. The appropriate use of such technology is a major pedagogical challenge: in biblical studies, this can come down to asking students to read the *book*, not just the data projector! Further, how words are presented on a screen needs care: data projection is best used for maps and diagrams, graphics and images (for example in for analysing paintings in a unit on art and theology). Pedagogy for students with special needs is important: for example vision-impaired students ask for description rather than seeing: for them, audio remains the main vehicle of communication.

The rapid development of digital technologies has led to some colleges using podcasts and MP3 to distribute lectures and other resources, in both audio and video formats. Harvest offers an iPod to some categories of new students. Several colleges have shifted from recording classes on cassette (as a library resource) to these new digital methodologies. Online streaming video conferencing is being taken up in a few places: two cameras are used, one covering people in the class, the other one on the lecturer.

Moodle (available in the public domain) is the software platform most used for online learning in the theology sector, both for units taught only online (for example UFT / Trinity), and also where online resources are used to support face-to-face learning (at BCT colleges). *Moodle* (or its equivalents) was seen by Consultation participants as critical for the future of learning in humanities higher education.

Techniques noted by Consultation participants as already in use in Australian theological education include:

- Chat rooms for online tutorials / seminars, and for research students to exchange ideas;
- Faculty enabling access to learning resources for face-to-face groups in off-campus classes (especially in regional areas);
- Moderated discussions, including student pre-tutorial preparation;
- Download access used to reduce lecture-room handouts, and to make further reading available;
- Online catalogues of the many internet sites related to the theological disciplines; and
- email and Skype are widely used for interaction between research students and supervisors.

B2 *IT and assessment*

Video and audio recording has been used for some years for assessment in homiletics and communication courses, and is expanding to other areas—recording can be particularly useful for resolving disputed grades. Assessment using video recordings of a group process, however, can be affected by camera placement and shot selection: these areas are still under development.

Consultation participants reported that there is some resistance to using email or other electronic means to submit assignments: 70% of students had no problem with this, reported one college, but some students still prefer to hand in hard copy, and many lecturers prefer this. Australian universities commonly require assessment papers to be submitted electronically in order to run them through plagiarism software. This has not been the practice in the theology sector, where plagiarism has thus far been rare, and usually arises from cultural misunderstandings by students from non-western educational backgrounds. There are other reasons for assignments being submitted electronically, however: many *Moodle* users find its ability to make descriptive comments on essays and record grades is attractive and efficient, for example, and electronic submission can enable more timely feedback to students.

B3 *IT training*

The use of data projectors, audio / video and especially online software such as *Moodle* require training and support for faculty: the costs involved are at least as significant as those for hardware. Some faculty

cannot be trained; some need a lot of support for technology as sometimes it fails and support is essential from inside and outside sources. The Consultation recognised that training in technology skills needs to be included in the learning experience of many students. Some libraries run training, some students take it in specific classes, some are left to access such training outside class.

A fragmented approach to technology training is problematic: new technology calls for 'across-the-college' change, and integration with existing learning methods. The growth in the use of electronic technology has seen clerical support lessen (in particular due to the use of word-processors by faculty), but the need for technical support correspondingly goes up, an often-ignored factor. Employing students for this can be a helpful strategy initially, but long-term staff are essential for ongoing support.

B4 *Libraries and technology*

Almost all theological libraries include audio and video recordings in their resources, use electronic catalogues and borrowing software, subscribe to electronic journals and databases such as ProQuest and the Religion Index; the larger libraries, and the MCD consortium, provide online search facilities.¹¹ Library budgets for printed materials and staff support can suffer, however, if a technology budget is seen as a rival. Consultation participants estimated that electronic resources affect 25% of the typical library purchasing budget, on top of which are the capital requirements for technology support.

Online journal and database subscriptions are excellent resources, and in many cases less expensive than hard copies. Such subscriptions are increasing, though licensing rather than purchase can make this complicated: if a year is missed, then the library is prohibited from accessing the knowledge available.¹² The moderators of one library reported an increase in journal access between 2005 and 2008 due to online accessibility. The availability of online catalogues and primary sources is leading to greater electronic use of libraries, yet from a distance. A librarian at the Consultation observed that faculty are going less often into the library to access shelves, preferring electronic rather than physical retrieval and storage.

11. An interesting initiative taken by Alphacrucis is the development of its own search engine, <http://search.scc.edu.au>, replacing Yahoo and Google for theology.

12. The Dalton McCaughey library (UFT/MCD) has created an electronic reserve system to support teaching roles. A research repository is embryonic, but in time all research will be publicly available; biblical and other specialist software is available by individual licences: similar facilities are available or being developed in other theological libraries.

MCDcat (which combines catalogues online from 15 MCD libraries) has had a large influence on the researchers for whom it was designed: it uses Z3952 technology, and each of the libraries keeps and maintains its own data. The catalogue appears online to be unified, while each library catalogue can be accessed virtually: this is especially helpful in enabling small, specialist collections to become known and used.¹³ *WorldCAT* is a central data file to which all libraries around Australia contribute and are connected, with links to Australian and New Zealand databases. The Australian Library gateway is run through the National Library: Consultation participants stated that all theological libraries should be part of this.

A number of other points were noted in the Consultation discussion:

- Training in the use of technology for library skills is time-consuming;
- The placing of barcodes on books needs training, and the condition of the codes under wear and tear requires ongoing attention;
- Demand for photocopying services seems to be decreasing, now many resources are accessible as PDF documents and can be saved to personal computers;
- Wireless technology is resisted in some libraries: the library can become a computer graveyard!

B5 Conclusion

A number of more particular issues, too substantial to be more than noted here, were raised during the Consultation:

- New security issues arise, for example the possible downloading of viruses, and the levels of access which students, faculty and administrative staff are allowed;
- Cheating, plagiarism, and grades being changed are potential dangers;
- Risk management presents a significant new challenge where electronic technology is used;
- Band width for internet access can be an issue, especially for online learning: thus one college is situated in an area where no more than dial-up speed is possible.

Flexible delivery also presents distinctive resourcing challenges. The provision of hardware and software is the obvious presenting cost, but the implementation of wireless communication and electronic library resources in most colleges, and the availability of good public domain

13. The Adelaide Theological Library (ACD) is available through the Flinders online catalogue, including access to electronic journals and research databases: www.acd.edu.au/library/index.php.

software, has meant that these costs are significantly less than a decade ago. The major cost is in making ongoing provision for staff to prepare distance educational materials (including payment to external writers), in keeping up contact with online students, and in continuing IT support. These costs are similar to those needed for face-to-face teaching.

Consultation participants emphasised that *technologies date, and are always changing*: some are being scaled back—overhead projectors, slide projectors, cassette tapes and microfiche are now dated, and replacement parts are now often unavailable: videotapes are being converted to DVD. If theological education needs to invest substantially in more training for teaching faculty, it should do so in ways that will relate to developing teaching skills generally, rather than being restricted to one particular technology.

C Service teaching of theology

By 'service' teaching is meant theology units taught to students taking other than a theological degree.¹⁴ Such teaching includes 'core' units required for degrees at some institutions (notably ACU, Avondale, Champion and Notre Dame), particular units required for specialist courses—graduate courses in Religious Education at ACU; the Wesley Institute and YTU (MCD); in Spiritual Direction at ICSPF (MCD); or a theology 'major' in a BA at Tabor Adelaide and Tabor Victoria.¹⁵

Some half of Avondale's theological teaching (147 EFTSL in 2007) represents units for non-theology degrees. Its Education courses are oriented to preparing teachers for its school system, and a good proportion of its non-theology students are Seventh Day Adventists (who are unlikely to be nominal adherents), but by no means all. Some 'service' teaching thus embraces students who have not chosen to study theology. This is even more the case at Notre Dame, which teaches the highest number of theology EFSTL in Australia due to the three core units required for all courses (524 EFSTL in 2007, alongside 80 in theological courses).

In such contexts the question arises, 'how *little* theology is essential for a person to be able to engage learning employing its key elements?'

14. As it happens, the Project Manager supported his own theological studies for four years in the 1960s by teaching the 'service' unit 'Statistics for Engineers' at the University of Melbourne, which full-time faculty were less than keen to be involved in!

15. Other examples noted during the project include courses in Counselling (YTU, the Tabor network, Vose Seminary and Wesley), Nursing (Avondale, ACU, Notre Dame), Social Work and Social Science (ACU), and Creative and Performing arts (Wesley and Tabor Adelaide).

Each answer will itself rest on assumptions about the nature of theology, the relation of general adult learning to tertiary studies, the extent to which effective inter-disciplinary education is possible at an undergraduate level, and what 'short cuts' can be taken for post-graduate students from another discipline. Might specialist students assume that 'answers' are more readily available than is actually the case?

Significant pedagogical challenges are presented to faculty engaged in 'service' theological teaching. Students studying specialist courses closely related to theology, such as Religious Education or Spirituality, are likely to approach their learning in a manner similar to theological students generally. Others may approach their learning quite differently: while they have chosen to study at an institution grounded in the Christian tradition, they have not chosen to study theology. Many will have little if any knowledge of the Christian tradition, may have given little considered attention to philosophical, ethical or worldview issues, and may profess no Christian (or other explicit) faith. Some will want to get the required units 'over and done with'; some may find that it opens up wider perspectives in their learning; some may find these units lead to them pursuing further units related to theology. The responses of theology faculty to these pedagogical issues are likely to be of considerable value to those teaching full courses in theology in both university and theological college contexts.

A wider range of questions arise in relation to assuring quality in theological 'service teaching', which the project was unable to do more than formulate. These include:

- Student learning:
 - What factors (if any) differentiate student learning in 'service' and other theology units?
 - How do the larger class sizes generally found in 'service' units affect the nature and quality of learning?
 - To what extent do students not committed to learning theology affect the ethos and / or pedagogy of 'service' units?
- Faculty teaching:
 - To what degree is a distinctive pedagogy needed and / or employed in 'service' units?
 - How do faculty involved with 'service' units approach their teaching, in comparison to other theology units? Do some repeat basic units frequently, with little or no revision?
 - How is the teaching of 'service' units apportioned among faculty?

- What tensions or opportunities (if any) have arisen among theology faculty involved in service teaching?
- General issues:
 - How are 'service' units benchmarked against equivalent theology units?
 - What distinctive resources are required to enable effective 'service' teaching?
 - To what degree, if any, has 'service' teaching affected the teaching / research nexus?

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate a consultation drawing together faculty from theological institutions engaged in 'service' teaching, to consider the issues involved, share insights gained from their experience (especially those which relate to theological courses) and encourage benchmarking across 'service' units.

D Languages

D1 Biblical languages

Until the 1960s, all theology awards in Australia required a reasonable ability to exegete the New Testament in its original language, Koiné Greek, a requirement that was increasingly questioned.¹⁶ The 1965 Conference in Melbourne from which the BTheol eventually grew had this issue as its major item of business: the MCD degree made provision for both Biblical Hebrew and Koiné Greek, but these were not compulsory (as they were for the ACTh BTh). Today no Diploma level awards, and few degrees in theology, have compulsory language requirements.

The Australian theology sector currently has mixed requirements for biblical languages in theological degrees:

- Some courses (the ACTh MDiv, Moore's BTh / BD) and some colleges (the three Presbyterian colleges, St Andrew's Greek Orthodox
16. The ACTh ThL required two year-long units of NT Greek exegesis; in 1962 the new Diploma in Theology (ThDip) replaced these with elective units. The ThL continues as a non-accredited award gained by external examination; accredited ACTh diplomas do not require biblical language study. Similarly, the MCD LTh was complemented by the Diploma of Religious Education (DipRE) in the 1930s: both ceased to be offered in the 1980s, replaced from 1994 by the Diploma in Ministry, with no language requirements.

Theological College) require at least four semesters of New Testament Greek (two introductory, two exegetical).

- Some courses and colleges (most BMin, and the Tabor network BTh) require sufficient study of Greek and Hebrew to enable students to use lexicons and commentaries, but not translate or engage in original language exegesis.
- Some courses (all BAs with theology majors, the Flinders BTh, ACD BMin, ACU and SCD BThs, MCD BTheol) have no biblical language requirements, largely because these institutions have found that mature adult learners have a high resistance to learning a biblical language. Greek and / or Hebrew are usually required for a Biblical Studies major, however, as essential scholarly tools.

Biblical Hebrew is offered as an option in some colleges, especially those in the Reformed theological tradition. Most colleges offer Koiné Greek: ACU and UFT / Trinity do so online;¹⁷ Latin is available in some Roman Catholic colleges, and online at ACU. But the continued availability of introductions to these ancient languages is less than certain, and very few Australian universities now teach them. This situation poses significant issues for the long-term scholarly basis of congregational ministry, and scriptural research.

For consideration: That the ANZATS encourage theological colleges to work closely together to ensure that introductory and advanced units in Koiné Greek and Biblical Hebrew are available to all theological students.

D2 *Teaching in Languages other than English (LOTE)*

A growing number of colleges are engaged in teaching theology in LOTE. Given that Australia is officially an English-speaking country, before the first introduction of this in Australia, at the Bible College of Victoria (BCV), its implications were discussed in some depth within the ACTh. The Bible College of Queensland (also ACTh) has now been teaching in Chinese for a decade.

The BCV Chinese department has its own staff and library resources,

17. St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College (SCD) offers Modern and liturgical Greek. Syriac (important for New Testament studies) is occasionally available in Melbourne due to links between local scholars and *St Ephraim's Ecumenical Research Institute* in Kottayam, Kerala State, India, but research students looking to learn ancient semitic languages such as Ugaritic need to do so privately, or look overseas.

and regularly invites overseas Chinese-speaking scholars to visit. The department teaches the ACTh BTh in Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, to train people as pastors for Chinese-speaking Churches in Australia, though graduates are now moving into churches in Asia. At the Consultation, BCV reported that the challenges faced include formation, trying to integrate physically and educationally separate departments in the one community, and finding moderators fluent in both English and Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese language library resources are substantial, though not as large as the English-language library.

Teaching in Korean is becoming significant, especially in Sydney, and aims primarily to train Korean resident pastors: Consultation participants reported that congregations can divide when Korean pastors are imported into Australia. Alphacrucis (SCD), the Presbyterian Theological Centre (ACTh) and UTC (CSU) teach at undergraduate level. UTC has developed strong library resources, and expresses the learning of theology in Korean in terms of a 'holy journey'. Wesley offers a coursework master's as well as undergraduate at its city campus. While the challenges involved in teaching in Korean are similar to those found at BCV for Chinese, Korean cultural identity is strong.

Though a recent development, opportunities exist for interaction between theology explored in Asian languages and in English. The linguistic structures of English are cognate with those of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and undergird western philosophical reflection and the Christian theological tradition. Chinese (and in a different way, Korean), however, as a pictographic language, presumes different modes of reasoning, and its philosophical perspective is also different.¹⁸ While such matters lie largely beyond the level of undergraduate learning, the situation in Australian theological education whereby both languages are being utilised offers significant opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue.

For consideration: That ANZATS arrange for a consultation on the issues involved in teaching theology in Asian languages in Australia, including any implications for English-language teaching and theological reflection.

18. This point comes from the Project Manager's experience of ministry in a Mandarin-speaking environment.

E Conclusion

A major challenge facing Australian theological education as regards learning and teaching is the rapid growth in the use of flexible delivery methods, and the concomitant employment of electronic technology. Both these developments point up the different learning cultures of younger generations of students in comparison to older ones, as noted in Chapter Four. More particularly, they present significant challenges to the long-standing teaching practice of many faculty, and revealed the need for significant shifts in the learning methods they employ.

The significant presence and growth in 'service teaching' in some parts of the Australian theology sector raises a number of important issues, notably in institutions who see themselves as Christian HEPs rather than as theological colleges.

The traditional place of biblical languages in theological education has been eroded to the point where it has become difficult for some theological students to take them—a situation of considerable concern for the well-being of both scholarly theological education and the churches.

The presence of Asian-language learning in Australian theological education opens up rich possibilities both for those for whom these languages are their native tongue, but also for new dimensions of theological reflection. □

Chapter Seven: Research and Research Awards

Key findings: Research has been part of Australian theological education since its beginnings. In particular, from the 1960s it developed steadily, finding a research presence in public universities. Since 2000, research processes have deepened, notably through the emergence of qualitative field research, and the adoption of university practice for HDR students regarding admission, monitoring of progress and research seminars.

Australian Government research funding for the MCD since 2002 (as well as for the public universities which offer theology) has enabled the MCD to develop a strong research culture across its network of colleges. The paucity of federal funding to other institutions is the main restriction on their research activity.

In private Australian theological education, training in supervision and research methods has improved, but much remains to be done if the desired teaching-research nexus is to be sustained. Research students have received significantly greater support, but a good deal more could be done, especially for overseas students.

Several significant library collections have been sustained, and continue to be supported, while advances in the use of technology have been widely implemented.

The identification of research strengths across Australian theological education, and thus the allocation of research resources, is a pressing need.

The Australian Government's *Excellence in Research for Australia* (ERA) initiative is receiving active consideration in universities: greater understanding of, and participation in, this development is urgently needed in the private theology sector.

Considerable room exists in Australian theological education for higher levels of co-operation, including in ARC grants: collaboration could bring about a single theology research institution conferring HRDs, alongside the university schools.

Sources:

The sources used in preparing this chapter come mainly from research undertaken for the project, including the analysis of figures submitted by theology HEPs to DEEWR for 2007, and Annual Reports for 2007 and 2008.

Qualitative comments are derived from the focus groups on research at the Consultation day: participants included consortium staff who oversee research in their related colleges, research-engaged faculty from ACU and 16 other theology HEPs and colleges, and an observer from AUQA.

The Project Manager acknowledges the significant assistance given by key research personnel in Australian higher education in responding to drafts of the chapter.

A Overview

A1 Background

Research has been part of Australian theological education for over a century. As noted in Chapter One, doctoral awards were offered by the ACTh and MCD from their foundation, and a steady stream of theses were examined until the 1980s.¹ When doctoral degrees were introduced to Australian universities after World War II, research relating to theology found a place in some humanities faculties.² The *MCD Act* was amended in 1956 to introduce the research-oriented Master of Theology, and similar degrees came to be offered by the other theology consortia in the decades following. One outcome of importance for research in theology was that several research-level colleges began organising research seminars for faculty and HDR students.

The establishment of the *Christian Research Association* in 1985, and the introduction of the MCD's Master of Ministry (MMin) in 1990, soon to be taken to doctoral level, ushered in field-based research and the need to address qualitative methodology in theological research. In the past decade, MA programmes have been inaugurated in the MCD and SCD which enable non-theological graduates to move into research drawing on both their existing professional knowledge and the theology disciplines, with progression to a doctorate possible. Closer relationships between the larger private theological HEPs and humanities schools in the universities have begun to be developed, though the disparity in funding between them continues to be a matter of concern.

It is important to recognise that in Australian theological education research takes place almost wholly through the ACTh, MCD and SCD consortia and the universities which offer theology, rather than across the sector as a whole. On the other hand, unlike coursework awards, HDR enrolments in theology and religious studies are shared in roughly

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1. Until 1962 the ACTh continued the English practice of awarding an honorary doctorate to each Church of England bishop in Australia. The ACTh, MCD and SCD confer honorary doctorates recognising academic contributions made by their recipients. The *MCD Act* empowers it to confer a 'senior' Doctor of Divinity on scholars who have made an outstanding contribution of international standing: this is done sparingly.
 2. The University of Sydney and the University of Queensland have significant HDR enrolments in Religious Studies (cf Chapter One, footnote 18), and general research is undertaken by other university-related bodies such as the *Centre for Religious Studies* at Monash University, and the *Centre for Jewish Studies* and the *Centre for Islamic Studies* at the University of Melbourne.

equal proportions between private and public higher education (see Table 6.2 below). Yet the examination of websites and handbooks, and discussion at the Consultation day, revealed that in private theology HEPs, awareness of developments in Australian higher education, rather than being generally familiar to faculty, appears to be limited to Deans and Directors of Research. This recognition shapes a number of comments in this chapter, which largely focuses on theological research in the ACTh, MCD and SCD consortia. ACU, as the only public university in which theology operates at faculty level, is in a distinctive position to offer resources to bridge this gap in understanding.

A2 HDR enrolments

Overall enrolments in DEEWR-registered doctoral research degrees in theology and have grown by 15–20% annually in recent years,³ while enrolments in master's-level HDRs have remained static, as the EFTSL data in Table 6.1 show:

Year:	2004		2005		2006		2007	
HEP:	Doct	Mast	Doct	Mast	Doct	Mast	Doct	Mast
ACTh	* 8	* 18	6	11	7	10	8	11
ACU	12	4	12	4	29	7	33	5
CSU	9	0	9	1	11	1	19	1
Flinders	22	6	21	6	21	5	21	4
MCD	* 36	* 58	29	47	33	41	51	48
SCD	* 6	* 2	5	3	5	3	8	2
TOTALS	93	88	82	72	106	67	133	71

Table 7.1 EFSTL for theology HDR enrolments, 2004–2007

3. The asterisked 2004 figures for the ACTh and SCD are taken from their internal records, supplied to the project.

The data for the MCD comes from its 2004 Annual Report. The latter are higher than DEST-reported EFSTL (14 and 23 for doctoral and master's awards respectively) because only MCD students in receipt of Commonwealth support (via APA, IPRS or PELS) were reported in 2004.

Enrolments in 2007 HDRs for the DEEWR category 'Philosophy & Religious Studies' for all Australian HEPs are set out in Table 6.2:⁴

HEP:	Degree:	Doctorate	Master's	Total HDR
<i>Private sector (Theology):</i>				
ACT		8 [+ 19 DMin]	9	17 + 19 = 36
MCD		41 [+10 DMinSt]	48	89 + 10 = 99
SCD		8 [+3 DMin]	2	10 + 3 = 13
Other theology HEPs		2	0	2
Totals		59 + 32 = 91	59	118 + 32 = 150
<i>Public sector (Theology):</i>				
ACU		33	7	40
CSU [St Mark's, UTC]		12 [+7 DMin]	1	13 + 7 = 20
Flinders [ACD link]		21	4	25
Murdoch [PCD link]		13	3	16
Totals		79 + 7 = 86	15	94 + 7 = 101
TOTAL: Theology		138 + 39 = 177	74	251
Other public universities		64	13	77
TOTAL: 2007 P&RS HDRs		241	87	328

**Table 7.2 EFTSL for 'Philosophy & Religious Studies'
HDR enrolments 2007**

4. Sources: 2007 data collected by the Project Manager from theology HEPs and DEEWR, and 'Religious Studies Enrolments across Australia 2007,' by Professor Gabrielle McMullen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), ACU, and used for the 'MCD 2015 Summit' conference on December 8, 2008. The information in the McMullen paper was specially prepared by officers in the University Statistics Section, IT Development Branch, Information Services Group, DEEWR.

Awards are counted as HDRs only if they meet the DEEWR definition of a research degree. The ACTh, CSU, MCD and SCD DMin[Studs] meet this definition, so are counted as research degrees, though some are classified by DEEWR as 'coursework'.

The MCD adopted the 'Doctor of Ministry Studies' terminology because its governing body would only accept the conferral of a doctorate which was a research degree.

The data in the McMullen paper covers all 'Philosophy and Religious Studies' disciplines. In addition to ACU, Flinders and Murdoch, these universities reported Religious Studies HDR students in 2007:

Griffith University	8 doctoral EFTSL
University of Sydney	18 doctoral, 4 master's EFTSL
University of Queensland	30 doctoral, 7 master's EFSTL
Other public universities	8 doctoral, 2 master's EFSTL

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show that the MCD is the leading body conferring theological research degrees in Australia, especially among private HEPs, followed by ACU and the ACTh. The MCD's dominance is partly due to the longevity and reputation of its research programmes, but more particularly to its receipt since 2002 of funding from the Commonwealth's Research Training Scheme and Institutional Grants Scheme. This funding has enabled the MCD to engage in research activities which are regarded as standard in the universities, but have been uncommon among private theology HEPs: these include research grants to faculty, libraries and HDR students, supporting part-time research co-ordinators in each RTI, employing a full-time MCD Director of Research, and subsidising payments to supervisors and doctoral candidates' tuition fees.⁵ The significant impact of this external funding in creating a strong research culture across the MCD provides evidence that such support across the theology research sector would have a similar effect.⁶

A3 *Research awards*

Three classifications of research master's degrees are used in the theology sector, reflecting distinct approaches to research and research data. The following typology is generally understood:⁷

- *Master of Theology*: requires a thesis grounded in a particular aspect of a theological discipline, researched from written sources, especially libraries, articulating to a Doctor of Theology (or Doctor of Philosophy for universities);
 - *Master of Ministry*: requires a thesis arising from critical theological reflection on ministry practice, usually grounded in the analysis of field data alongside written sources, articulating to a Doctor of Ministry [Studies];⁸
5. HDR students in private HEPs must pay upfront tuition fees, a major factor in diverting some to university programmes, even though supervisors trained in the theological disciplines are few in number there. From 2005, the MCD was able to remove tuition fees for doctoral students, conditional on the successful completion of a Confirmation Panel, at the end of the first year of research (which is not always the case).
 6. The disparity of treatment regarding research funding between public and private HEPs, and between some private HEPs, was raised in all submissions from the theology sector to the Bradley Review of Higher Education.
 7. Degrees such as Master of Education, Master of Counselling etc. are not considered here, though they are available through some theology HEPs who operate as Christian tertiary education institutions, and bring theological perspectives into the research conducted: for example ACU, Avondale, Tabor Adelaide.
 8. The Master of Ministry and Doctor of Ministry at the ACD require a research project, but do not meet the DEEWR HDR definition, and are classified as coursework awards.

- *Master of Arts*: requires a thesis grounded in one or more disciplines related to theology, researched from written sources, especially libraries, articulating to a Doctor of Philosophy.⁹

This terminology is least settled when it comes to the last category. Most theology HEPs awarding an MA add a parenthetical description to mark out a research as distinguished from a coursework award. Thus the MCD awards an MA(Theology, or specialisation) for a coursework award, for example Master of Arts (Spiritual Direction) but MA (without descriptor) for a research degree. Others offer coursework degrees with titles such as MA(Ministry) at Harvest and in the ACTh, or Master of Practical Ministry at ACU.

Two broad categories of research doctorates are awarded in the sector:

- *Doctor of Ministry [Studies]*: requires a thesis grounded in analytical theological reflection on ministry practice, usually involving research from field data. Coursework is required to ensure that adequate academic foundations are laid for the proposed research project, and considerable attention is paid to methodology, including the researcher as a research subject.
- *Doctor of Theology*: requires a thesis grounded in a particular aspect of a theological discipline, researched from written sources, especially libraries. The terminology 'Doctor of Philosophy' (PhD) is used in the universities for awards, of whatever discipline, that are similar to the Doctor of Theology.

In the non-university theology sector, a PhD is only conferred by the MCD and SCD, for a thesis on a topic which is related to, but wider than, the traditional theological disciplines, typically arising from cross-disciplinary or Religious Studies research. Of similar kind, length and standard to the Doctor of Theology, the PhD offers a pathway for candidates who have come through a research MA route, or hold a relevant research master's degree from outside the sector.

NB: In the ACTh, MCD and SCD the examination of HDRs has always followed university practice (initially British, now Australian): at least two examiners must pass all theses, at least one being external to the HEP concerned, and for doctoral degrees one examiner is often from overseas. However, there is some diversity in the outcome descriptors for the grading of a thesis: the adoption of

9. Some HEPs allow an MA candidate to enter through a Graduate Diploma route, rather than a primary degree in theology, and the thesis might take up learning from the candidate's earlier tertiary study—music, law or education, for example.

common ones, especially regarding the borderline between 'Pass after revision' and 'Rewrite needed', is highly desirable, following Australian university practice in the humanities.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* arrange for consultation between theology HEPs which offer HDRs to reach agreement on

- a) The terminology used for master's degrees, especially the MA;
- b) Common structures for doctorates in Ministry Studies, clarifying their research status (including DEEWR classification and terminology) and facilitating the further development of methodology appropriate to field-based research, and the effective and fair assessment of research outputs; *and*
- c) Common outcomes descriptors for the examination of theses, taking account of the *Universities Australia* guidelines.¹⁰

A4 *The teaching-research nexus*

The typically high workload and wider involvements of most theological faculty mean that the inter-relationship between teaching and research in the theology sector is complex. The project data confirms the impression that, in Australian theological education generally, the focus is on teaching. Nevertheless, since theological study is closely related to students' exploration of identity, from the first subjects taught, the idea that they are engaged in some sort of research can be inculcated into the student body. All participants at the Consultation affirmed the importance of maintaining and deepening the teaching-research relationship: teaching without research can lead to lecturers becoming 'hacks', while research without teaching can lose touch with the reality of the student body and a teaching institution's stakeholders.

The balance between research and teaching needs to be considered not merely at the individual level, but across a college as a whole: supervising involves teaching, and some staff may be good at supervising but not at researching. Such a balance is perhaps best maintained in the

10. See www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/publications/policy/statements/Principles_final_Aug2005.pdf, accessed April 17, 2009.

religious orders whose members include theological exploration in their vocational purpose, for example the *Society of Jesus*, the *Order of Preachers* (Dominicans) and the *Society of the Sacred Mission* (Anglican).

Most colleges take cognisance of a prospective lecturer's research output, including not only publications in academic journals, but seminar and conference contributions, workshops run, and research undertaken on behalf of church leaders. Consultation participants noted that theological faculty have opportunities to speak at conferences, and can do so keeping a theme in mind for a book or essay for a journal. Again, publications can emanate out of lectures, especially where a class offers feedback.¹¹ Publication is how research output is mostly measured in university environments, however. It involves meeting deadlines, validates one's authority to teach, and increases faculty awareness as to the direct research undertaken.

On the other hand, Consultation participants queried some of the motives behind publication: will it enhance students' learning, or is it merely to increase a HEP's funding and higher education status? Unlike the university sector, in private Australian theological education 'promotion' in terms of increased remuneration is uncommon, since most faculty are stipended rather than salaried.¹² The pressure to publish for reasons of advancement is thus largely absent, though doing so to assist one's institution in gaining funding can be a factor. The motive for publication in much Australian theological education comes principally from the sense of theological teaching as a vocation, and research forming part of that calling. Similar claims can be made for HDR theology students: the lack of recognition of theological research in Australian churches and wider higher education means that few will complete a thesis without a strong sense of the work having a vocational undergirding.

Being 'research-active' is a category increasingly used in Australian theological education, as a way to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching-research nexus. What it means is difficult to pin down precisely, however.¹³ This is, in part, because it has been presumed

11. SCD's MTh (coursework) degree was reaccredited on the understanding that the postgraduate units taught arose out of a lecturer's research, and aimed to increase the research capacity of advanced coursework students.

12. See Chapter Eight, footnote 9. This principle can also apply to university faculty whose financial support comes from church bodies as well as the university.

13. Thus at ACU, 'research-active' previously included three criteria: a research publication every two years or a book over three years; have supervised two or three students; and gained a research grant. Supervisors used to have to demonstrate that they fell into one of these categories: now they must fit at least two, which for

rather than defined until recently; in part because there is strong resistance in much of the theology sector to what is seen as an overly quantitative approach from DEEWR and consequently in the universities.

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate communication between the Associate Dean of the ACTh, the ACU Associate Dean (Research, Research Training and Partnerships), the MCD and SCD Directors of Research, the Director of PACT and corresponding persons in other theology HEPs, with a view to developing guidelines relating to the teaching-research nexus desirable in the Australian theology sector, including the meaning of 'research-active', taking account of university practice in the humanities.

A5 *Research strengths*

Every year, institutions receiving research funding from DEEWR are required to submit an *Institutional Assessment Framework*, including the research strengths for which the institution is recognised. The MCD would appear to be the only non-university theology HEP which submits an IAF: theological research is not given distinctive treatment in the IAFs of the universities in which it is undertaken.

In its 2007 submission, the MCD lists the following as its research strengths: Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics (I, indicating International standing); Church History in Europe, Asia & the Americas; Contextual & Indigenous Theologies; Ethics, Bioethics & Social Justice (I); Ministry Studies (I); Missiology (I); Pastoral Theology; and Systematic Theology. 'Emerging strengths' are given as Ecumenism (I); Philosophy; Post-colonial Studies and Theology (I); Post-structuralism and Theology (I); Religious Education; Spirituality; and World Religions.¹⁴ In the ACTh, faculty of affiliated colleges are publishing in Old and New Testaments;

scholars with no supervision experience sets up a high hurdle to surmount. ACU has a process of assistant supervision to enable staff to gain relevant experience.

The SCD was required to develop a definition in their accreditation processes: one book per five years, one DEEWR single-point item per year, a referred journal or a conference paper, a translation, chapter in a book etc.

14. The 2007 submission can be found at www.mcd.edu.au/Publications/RRTMR_2007.pdf: this contains significant observations about the place and nature of Australian theological research.

Reformation Church History; Leadership and Ecclesiology; Islamic Studies; Chinese translation of existing works; and Greek and Hebrew grammars. The SCD identified its research strengths as Theology, Philosophy and Church History at the Consultation. ACU's Strategic Plan indicates the teaching and research priorities of the University, which

chooses to *focus* on areas of teaching and research that are closely connected with its particular character as a university that is Catholic, and that is public and national. The first focus area is *Theology and Philosophy* as being central to the elucidation, development and expression of Catholic intellectual thought. The second focus area is *Health ...* The third focus area is *Education ...* includ[ing] religious education, Indigenous education, and learning and leadership in education, literacy and numeracy. The final focus area is the *Common Good and Social Justice*, as comprising the heart of Catholic social thought ... It grounds the development of the University's graduates, who learn to think critically, act ethically and put the good of humanity at the centre of their concerns.

At the Consultation it was agreed that across the Australian theology sector there is excellence in Biblical Studies. Missiology was mentioned as another research strength across the sector, as indicated by the number of HDR students and visiting experts and scholars who come to Australia. It was suggested that a close examination should be made of research being undertaken in various theology HEPs to identify the distinctive expertise in particular colleges, and encourage appropriate specialisation in both research areas and methods.¹⁵

The Consultation also identified a different type of research strength in the Australian theology sector: it sustains a very productive and creative dialogue with its 'industry partners', the churches, and does so with a view to making thoughtful contributions to society generally. It was argued that the ongoing working relationships which exist between theology HEPs and their 'community partners' stand out in comparison to university relationships. As one participant put it, 'They would love to have what we have: we can point out who are our partners, when we last visited them, when they were in contact with us.' Such relationships were also seen as facets of engaging issues in wider society through research, as the ACU Strategic Plan cited above indicates.

15. Research methodologies vary mainly between library and primarily field-oriented data collection. But at the Consultation, an ACU member expressed the view that in the university the needs of Biblical Studies research are not recognised as different from those appropriate for research in Systematic Theology.

Many theological institutions are constantly interacting with the wider community. Theological college faculty, especially those from church-sponsored colleges, are frequently engaged with their 'peak body' as consultants, applying the findings of research to that situation. Colleges and churches could do more to recognise and value the research contribution that their faculty make in this regard.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* seek support for a research project to identify the particular research strengths across the Australian theology sector, including the public universities, private theology HEPs, and other agencies engaged in research related to theology, society and the churches.

B Research students

B1 HDR admission processes

B1.1 Overview

Until the last decade, admission to research master's degrees in the private Australian theology sector was restricted to candidates with an honours undergraduate degree in theology, normally a First or Upper Second Class; admission to a doctoral degree was restricted to candidates who had completed a research master's degree in theology, or had publications of equivalent standing.¹⁶ In the public universities, as well as academic pre-requisites, HDR enrolments are largely tied to funding, and quotas are likely to apply: applicants are rated across faculties, and theology must compete for its share of scholarships.¹⁷

These requirements remain in place in the private theology sector, but are now qualified in two ways. On the one hand, research awards in Ministry Studies require professional ministry experience as well as academic achievement, and the latter may take into account appropriate professional experience (for example, being registered as a CPE Supervisor). On the other hand, pathways to research awards appropriate

16. Cf the pre-2000 MCD Regulations for the TheolM and DTheol, and ACTh and SCD Postgraduate Handbooks. HDR theology candidates in the public universities follow the respective university's processes.

17. ACU participants at the Consultation noted that ratings set by the theological school can be higher than those set by the university, which disadvantages theology.

for non-theological graduates have been developed which seek to minimise unnecessary barriers to a candidate moving into the research stage. Factors such as these, together with the steadily increasing numbers of HDR applicants with overseas qualifications, mean that admission processes in the ACTh, MCD and SCD consortia have undergone significant reviews in recent years, as evidenced from their websites.

More emphasis is being given to preparing an initial research proposal, with feedback, as part of the admissions process. In accord with university practice, HDR applicants in theology are normally required to provide a statement of the research planned to be undertaken, the methodology to be employed, and an introductory bibliography. The latter is typically prepared in consultation with the proposed supervisor, sent to external readers for review, and presented by the applicant to a research seminar. Some applicants can view such processes as time-consuming and even bureaucratic, but Consultation participants were warm in affirming the helpfulness of these processes in sharpening research and saving time in the longer term. As part of this application process, seminars on methodology, inaugurated in the MCD when Ministry Studies HDRs commenced, are a standard requirement for ACTh, MCD and MCD applicants.

Many of these changes have arisen from initiatives of research administrators and/or scholars, but the need to be accountable to the Commonwealth for funding has also played its part. Greater contact between the private theology sector and the public universities has also assisted the improvements made, both in admissions and in other research-related areas. This contact has also brought about informal benchmarking between the theology sector and public universities, a comparison which affirms the standards and processes of Australian theological research awards.

B1.2 Overseas students and research

As regards overseas students, it is not uncommon for a college to have limited control over their proposed programme: the sending church wants a person to complete a research degree, but the admission requirements may be lacking. There may also be issues regarding facility in English: a 7.0 average IELTS score is the usual standard required if an applicant has not already completed substantial theology essays in satisfactory English. The institution from which an overseas applicant comes is also considered: here faculty networks, ANZATS and bodies such as the *World Conference of Associations of Theological Education* (WOCATI) are of assistance. Where there are gaps, graduate coursework awards may be used to shape a pathway towards admission to a research degree.

English is the language used across the Australian theology sector for HDR awards, and theses are expected to be written in accurate and lucid English. Supervisors of NESB students sometimes find themselves becoming proof-readers and editors, though most theology HEPs indicate that this is not their role. The Consultation noted that some universities pay readers to do this work for second language thesis writers, to assist their writing—support such as this, or having research assistance, is almost unknown in the theology sector.

Some overseas students may have good English, but are unfamiliar with the processes of undertaking research on their own. It was suggested at the Consultation that overseas students who have completed a thesis locally be surveyed as to their research experience, though this might be more readily achieved by full participation by theology HEPs in the GCA Postgraduate Course Experience Questionnaire. Another comment was the importance of skills attainment and the formational aspects of supervision for an overseas student: time taken during the early stages of the postgraduate journey can be an excellent investment in the longer term.

B2 *Research training*

Research students in theology, until the past decade, were generally clergy who had done well in their initial theological studies, and completed a few years in ministry. The process of applying to study towards a master's or doctoral degree involved little more than applying, sometimes after conversation with a friendly scholar. The application form would include evidence that the necessary academic pre-requisites had been met, and ask that a research topic be nominated. The form would be considered by a committee, then a supervisor appointed (often the friendly scholar) and the student admitted. The committee would next hear of the matter when the supervisor asked that examiners be appointed, and the candidate submitted the thesis. Fees were minimal, covering administration and examination costs, and no research training was given beyond what the supervisor might provide.

The situation today is very different. An applicant will have been interviewed at least once, met with one or more potential supervisors, and been asked to provide a detailed statement of the intended research. Training in matters such as library and internet research resources is normally provided, and research training days are increasingly taking place, involving discussion of different models of supervision: students are diverse, and the supervisor has to adapt.

The major impetus for the development of more systematic research training in Australian theological education was introduction of Ministry Studies. An immediate need was for methodologies appropriate to situations where human persons and contexts constitute the primary research data, alongside library-based research. Cross-fertilisation with the social sciences is particularly useful here, assisting students to focus on the analysis as well as the gathering of appropriate data, and to take into account the impact of this on those researched. It has been increasingly appreciated that the researcher is a key subject in such research, not merely an external observer: in this respect, autoethnography has become a significant tool. Further, research involving humans led to the setting up of Human Research Ethics Committees, whose demanding scrutiny has been of significant assistance in sharpening research methods in the sector.¹⁸

Consultation participants indicated that (apart from the MCD's week-long residential schools) many HDR students have had little, if any, training in qualitative research methods. A general consensus emerged that research training for supervisors and candidates, especially in qualitative methods, would best be undertaken nationally, through ANZATS.

For consideration: That ANZATS, working with the *Council of Deans of Theology*,
 a) facilitate a co-ordinated, national approach to research training across the Australian theology sector, for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies;
and
 b) encourage the sharing of experience between those HRECs which assess research applications in theology and ministry.

18. Though a full submission to a HREC is necessary only when proposed research involves human participants, most theology HEPs now require all proposals to be considered by their HREC. Some students and supervisors are unaware of the possible ethical consequences of seemingly 'book-based' research, for example study of a church in a region where it is dangerous to profess Christian commitment publicly. Further, a proposal lacking a clear research aim can be questioned by an HREC on the ethical ground that aimless research is unjustified.

B3 HDR student progress

The university 'milestone year one' model is increasingly being used in the theology sector (for example in the ACTh, CSU, Moore Theological College and the MCD): a research student's progress is checked at the end of an initial period of study, by a presentation and defence of the research. In the MCD, each HDR candidate is initially classified as 'probationary', which changes to 'research status' when a Confirmation Panel is satisfied as to the research capability of the candidate (as evidenced by substantial written work).¹⁹ The Panel includes the candidate, principal supervisor, MCD Director of Research and two other scholars in the area of the research topic.²⁰

Unsatisfactory progress was raised at the Consultation as a significant concern. In the private theology sector there has been a reluctance to cancel a candidate's enrolment. This attitude is changing, not so much for financial reasons (which exert pressure for completions in the public universities) but as a realisation that ineffective research is good ultimately neither for the candidate nor for the limited research resources available. Supervisors need to be aware that they are responsible for ensuring that the research advances in an appropriate manner.

Consultation participants indicated that research institutions have to be clear in their processes regarding student progress. Early intervention, where there is doubt about a student's capacity to bring a project to a successful conclusion, is important: in this case, pastoral processes should be in place to support the student in continuing candidature, or to end it on just grounds and in a fair manner. Similarly, attention needs to be given to the number of students to whom a supervisor can reasonably give detailed attention. The *Universities Australia* (formerly AVCC) *Guidelines for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Degrees* should be followed in these as other appropriate matters.

B4 Supporting research students

Consultation participants agreed that the best way to ensure good progress is proactive support for research students. Regular reporting processes by students and supervisors can pick up unsatisfactory progress,

19. A Confirmation Panel for an MCD research master's candidate can also be used for the purposes of upgrading candidature to a doctoral award.

20. The cost of running such Panels is significant, both in terms of the administration time needed, and honoraria paid to the external scholars involved. Such a process would be difficult to support from tuition fees: the Commonwealth research funding which the MCD receives (but not other private theology HEPs) is of considerable assistance here.

difficulties in the student-supervisor relationship, gaps in research resources and the like.²¹ More significant is the enabling of students to experience a community of learning as they pursue their research. Exploration of a research topic, especially at doctoral level, can be a lonely experience, deepened for many theology HDR candidates due to small numbers of colleagues, possible lack of understanding by their churches, and isolation from Australian higher education generally. In response, some colleges have set up research centres where students can study within a communal learning environment, and where both informal discussion and planned seminars can readily take place.²²

Research seminars have taken place in the theology sector for many years, usually at college level, but the small numbers of participants in any one place challenged their effectiveness. These continue, but are now mainly gathered up into programmes arranged by the consortia, involving several colleges, and with some links to academic societies in the theological disciplines.²³ In Sydney, for example, the SCD Director of Research runs the seminars: SCD research students are required to present annually. In Melbourne, the MCD Director of Research organises research seminars, with opportunities for students to present their work.²⁴ In Canberra, CSU has similar arrangements in place, conducted in association with the *Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies* (CAPS) and CSU's *Strategic Research Centre in Public and Contextual Theology* (PACT).²⁵

In view of these factors, it can be fairly claimed that the opportunities, support and learning contexts for research students in the theological disciplines in Australia are the best they have been, and that the developments which have taken place in the past decade are welcomed across the

21. MCD supervisors are only paid once the Annual Report form, which has separate and joint sections for supervisor and student, has been received.

22. For example the HDR student study room in the Dalton McCaughey Library, and similar facilities at Moore, Morling, QTC and YTU.

23. These include the *Fellowship of Biblical Studies*, State chapters of the *Australian Academy of Liturgy*, and the *Forum of Australian Catholic Institutes of Theology* (FACIT), as well as the conferences run by ANZATS / ANZSTS and the *Australian Theological Forum*.

24. Research co-ordination at the ACTh is a major responsibility of the Associate Dean. Being a national consortium, the ACTh is less in a position to offer regular seminars across its constituency: a faculty consultation is held each year, along with occasional research seminars, and ACTh issues an Occasional Paper series.

ACU is in a similar position as a national provider: local campuses conduct seminars, and video conferencing each Friday afternoon is used to bring research students together for a nationally-based seminar.

25. PACT researchers include faculty from UTC Sydney and other scholars in NSW.

sector. Even so, this project has uncovered the reality that the various networks of researchers and scholars are not as well known to one another as they could be. Geography and historical relationships are factors here, but for HDR students, supervisors and other researchers, theological divergences ought not to be allowed to stand in the way of a more coherent approach to theological research. Time limitations have meant that the project was unable to gain student input, and participation in the *Graduate Council of Australia's* (GCA) Postgraduate Course Experience Questionnaire commenced only from 2006 in the private theology sector.

For consideration: That the Associate Dean of the ACTh, the ACU Associate Dean (Research, Research Training and Partnerships), the MCD and SCD Directors of Research, the Director of PACT and others holding similar positions in the theology sector, form a research sub-group of the *Council of Deans of Theology* to

- a) promote scholarly networks across the breadth of Australasian theological education;
- b) develop cognate administrative and review processes;
- c) encourage the offering of research seminars across HEPs in each capital city;

and

- d) monitor GCA PCEQ surveys for all theology HEPs with research students.

C Research resources

C1 Libraries²⁶

By the 1980s, library research holdings were deepening across the sector, beyond long-established research collections,²⁷ and a list of journals held in theological libraries was prepared, initially in hard copy but now electronically. The inaugural conference of the *Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association* (ANZTLA) took place in Canberra in August 1986, following a series of biennial ANZATS Library Consultations, and was incorporated in 2001. ANZTLA now includes librarians from across the sector, and its members communicate regularly.

The ANZTLA website (www.anztla.org.au) gives access to a number of research tools which have been developed by members:

- *Style Guide for Religion and Theology*
- *Professional Standards for Theological Libraries*
- *AULOTS—Australasian Union List of Theological Serials*
- *ARI—Australasian Religion Index*
- *New Zealand Bibliography of Religion and Theology.*

Several theological libraries maintain the research archives of sponsoring churches: the Baptist historical collections at Whitley and Morling, the Pentecostal Heritage collection at Southern Cross, the Australiana and colonial resources at Moore, Anglican archives in the Mollison Library at Trinity College (Melbourne), and Roman Catholic sources in the Mannix Library associated with Catholic Theological College (Victoria), the Pius XII collection at St Paul's Theological College (Brisbane) and the Veech Library in Sydney.

Some libraries, in particular those associated with consortia, co-operate to ensure that significant collections in each key discipline are held within the same geographical area. But it would appear that benchmarking with other higher education libraries is uncommon. This situation would be assisted if libraries could be externally moderated annually, and report regularly by discipline, including reports on discipline holdings. This major issue is one about which state accreditation bodies are not clear regarding criteria.

26. The use of electronic media relating to libraries is considered in Chapter Six, B4, *Libraries and technology*.

27. Notably the Moore and Veech libraries in Sydney, the Dalton McCaughey and Mannix libraries in Melbourne, and St Mark's Library in Canberra, as well as specialist collections such as the Carmelite and Mollison libraries in Melbourne.

In 2008 the ACTh Dean conducted an audit of ACTh college resources, with a view to encouraging improvement.²⁸ The audit revealed that all these colleges are committed to providing the best possible library and IT resources, especially those colleges enrolling research candidates. In particular, during 2008 the ACTh Board of Directors increased budget allocations for library expenditure on accessions and provision of resources, and the audit found that many colleges were already spending amounts on their libraries consistent with the ACTh's 2010 targets. Work has also begun in the Academic Board to review the library policy with a view to placing emphasis on performance rather than merely on acquisitions.

Many libraries now receive journals subscriptions online, and the larger ones subscribe to relevant scholarly primary document collections on CDROM. Electronic cataloguing and portals are being introduced to theological libraries: for example, *MCDcat* joins the 15 libraries associated with the MCD—this project was initiated by the librarians, and is paid for from the MCD's Institutional Grant Scheme funding. This facility enables information searches to be undertaken across these libraries both more quickly and more comprehensively, and is also linked to the National Library of Australia electronic gateway. A similar common portal is now being installed across the libraries of the SCD.

Several Consultation participants were not fully aware of these developments, and it was realised that only longer-serving librarians had a sense of the strengths and particularities of libraries associated with Australian theological education. The following suggestion was thus made:²⁹

For consideration: That ANZTLA, supported by the *Council of Deans of Theology*, undertake a scoping exercise of library strengths and research specialties across the theology sector, and make recommendations which may foster towards greater research co-operation.

28. This information is taken from the 2009 Report of the Board of Directors of the ACTh to the Annual Meeting.

29. Any teaching college must have library resources adequate to support the course-work awards for which it teaches: co-operation between libraries is thus less of an issue than for course delivery, but can still be furthered significantly.

C2 Journals

The *Australian Research Council* lists all recognised academic journals, ranked as A* (best in field), A (very high quality), B (solid, though not outstanding, reputation) and C (other quality, peer-reviewed journals).³⁰

Journals related to theology which are used in research mostly come from outside Australasia: journals related to biblical studies, church history and theology that are listed in the A* and A categories, and many in B, would seem, from a cursory survey, to be held in at least one library in each capital city. Assessing the level of publication by Australian researchers in international journals was beyond the scope of the current project, but as part of assessing the research strengths of Australian theological education, such an exercise is worth undertaking.

Local academic publications began to be issued before World War II: they have grown in number and quality since, most being sponsored by a particular college (including e-journals). Table 6.3 lists Australian theological journals which appear in the ARC list, including their ARC ranking: none is given more than a B ranking, probably because most have high acceptance rates or their subject matter is more of national than international significance.

Whether this is a sufficient list, and represents the research interests of Australian theological education and its stakeholders, is a task for further research.

For consideration: That ANZATS, in consultation with ANZTLA, ANZSTS and AASR, explore the extent to which the current range of journals related to Theology and Religious Studies published in Australia and New Zealand adequately meets the research needs of the Australasian theology sector and its stakeholders.

30. See www.arc.gov.au/pdf/ERA_Indicator_Desciptors.pdf, Appendix I, Tier Definitions for the Ranking of Journals, accessed April 17, 2009.

Journal	Sponsoring body	ARC Rank	First year
<i>Journal of Religious History</i>	University of Sydney, Studies in Religion	A	1960
<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>	Fellowship for Biblical Studies	B	1951
<i>Australian Ejournal of Theology</i>	Australian Catholic University	B	2002/3
<i>Australian Religion Studies Review</i>	Australian Association for the Study of Religion	B	1987
<i>Australasian Catholic Record</i>	Australasian Catholic Record	B	2003
<i>Interface: a Forum for Theology in the World</i>	ATF Press : the Australasian Theological Forum Ltd.	B	1997
<i>Journal of Christian Education</i>	Australian Christian Forum on Education	B	1958
<i>Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies</i>	Pacifica Theological Studies Association	B	1987
<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>		B	1941
<i>Australian Journal of Liturgy</i>	Australian Academy of Liturgy	C	1989
<i>Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society</i>	Australian Catholic Historical Society	C	1986
<i>Australian Journal of Mission Studies</i>	Australian Association for Mission Studies	C	2007
<i>Colloquium: The Australian and New Zealand Theological Review</i>	Australian and New Zealand Society for Theological Studies	C	1968
<i>Compass: A Review of Topical Theology</i>	Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart	C	1966
<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>	Australian Lutheran College	C	1967
<i>Anglican Theological / St Mark's Review</i>	St Mark's National Theological Centre	C	1923/55
<i>Trinity Occasional Papers / UCA Studies</i>	United Theological College	C	1981/95
<i>Vox Reformata</i>	Reformed Theological College	C	1962

Table 7.3: ARC-ranked Australian-originated Journals in Theology

C3 Supervisors

Policies and procedures affecting HDRs have been generally clarified and tightened in the private theology sector in the past decade, as the number of candidates has grown, and engagement with Australian universities has deepened. However progress in improving supervision has been less evident: one Consultation participant noted that ‘we often supervise in the way we were supervised,’ which was probably some time back. Nevertheless, each research-level theology HEP has in place clear requirements for the qualifications, appointment, payment and accountability of HDR supervisors, though these matters have been handled less formally until in the last decade.³¹

C3.1 *Payment and workload*

Considering payment first may seem unusual, but, until recently, most supervisors fitted this work around full teaching loads (including high expectations of personal contact with students) and the usual administrative responsibilities of any tertiary academic. In a theological college, involvement in formation programmes, church structures and ministry is also expected, both by the institution and the faculty member. This situation is not assisted by the widespread view in some churches that theological research is impractical, a waste of resources or even dangerous.³²

In the universities, research supervision is calculated as part of an academic’s workload: this has only recently started to be observed in theological colleges, as policies have been developed to enable a supervisor’s college to be paid for their work. The MCD now sets a limit of six candidates per supervisor at any one time, and CSU five.³³ The outcome of this policy development has been that college administrations are starting to ‘see’ research as part of the ministry / work of faculty.

31. Cf the SCD’s *Code for Supervisory Practice* (Handbook section 7, pp159ff), the ACTh *PostGraduate Manual*, and the MCD’s *Supervisors’ Accreditation* document, available on their respective websites.

32. Unusual evidence for this claim is the playing down of the academic dimension of theological learning in many colleges’ publicity materials and websites, and the tendency to use ‘ministry’ rather than ‘theology’ or ‘theological’ in college names. Colleges may teach to a good academic standard, and expect staff to keep learning themselves, yet the way they present themselves to supporters, potential students and even stakeholders can reflect the ‘anti-intellectual’ strand in some church circles, and historically in wider Australian society.

33. Moore allocates thirteen hours to a faculty member’s workload per semester for each doctoral student. Faculty from CIS (SCD), Morling (ACTh) and YTU (MCD) indicated that in practice 20–22 hours was needed.

C3.2 *Appointment, qualifications and training*

The formal qualifications generally required in a research supervisor across the theology sector are a research doctorate or equivalent, research publications, and having supervisor experience or training. Supervisors are drawn as far as possible from an HDR candidate's own HEP. It is common practice in the private consortia, however, for faculty from other theology HEPs, the universities or scholars in active ministry or retirement to be appointed. The main criterion for appointment is that the potential supervisor be the person best in a position to supervise the research topic and candidate.³⁴ In private Australian theological education, the most common barrier to such an appointment is the person's existing workload.

In practice, it has often been a supervisor's reputation, and feedback from other students supervised by the scholar concerned, which are significant in their appointment. It is now usual practice for a co-supervisor to be appointed to work with an inexperienced supervisor,³⁵ or where the research topic calls for supervisory support in a particular area. Some theology HEPs are appointing an assistant supervisor for all HDR candidates.

Supervisors in the private theology sector were until quite recently not required to undertake training for their role, a significant weakness. The inauguration of Ministry Studies in the 1990s led to informal training being given to supervisors of field-oriented research, while closer attention to research methodology arose through the establishment of HRECs. More formal procedures for supervisor training have been initiated in recent years, including the provision of readily available online workshops, and providing courses of training for new supervisors.³⁶

C3.3 *Supervision practice*

A wide variety of practice is used in the sector, with two main patterns reported at the Consultation. One is where the research student lives in a different location to the supervisor (in some cases, overseas). In this

34. One Consultation participant noted that the Chicago Theological Seminary (a major US school) uses such a model: this has had significant influence in Australia.

35. Thus CSU has an A and B list of supervisors: someone who has not supervised is on the B list and is paired with and mentored by someone from the A list. Murdoch requires an associate supervisor for each students unless a good case can be made for sole supervision.

36. Several theology HEPs use training courses available in universities—Macquarie, Melbourne and Western Sydney were mentioned at the Consultation: see those listed at www.gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au, for example.

case, regular email and Skype contact is expected, together with some face-to-face contact. The second is where student and supervisor meet face-to-face: fortnightly meetings are ideal where a student is full-time.

Consultation participants noted that no one model is 'right' for all supervision: the particularity of each student and his/her situation and topic, means that guidelines and supervision models tend to be more helpful than detailed regulations. In the ACTh, MCD and SCD, research is administered and overseen by the central administration, which seeks to maximise the use of resources across each consortium. MCD faculty present at the Consultation affirmed the complementary role in each RTI of the Research Co-ordinator, who is in a position to know each research student and his/her situation, keeps in regular touch with other co-ordinators and the MCD Director of Research and, where necessary, can advocate on a student's behalf with a supervisor.

Significantly, evidence was given at the Consultation that an institution's duty of care for supervisors is being taken more seriously. This includes involving supervisors in confirmation panels and faculty meetings, and encouraging supervisors to use resources from outside their student's HEP. Annual reporting procedures requiring supervisor and student to review progress together against a check-list, and report to the HEP's administration and Research Committee, were also affirmed: while such feedback is usually encouraging, if a student or supervisor has an issue, 'we are going to know about it'. Such a process calls for a fair degree of mutual respect and trust, but it allows for an honest exchange of information: are library resources adequate, for example?

It was also noted during the Consultation that the Bradley Review held a number of meetings regarding the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS). One took place in Canberra on November 7, 2008; it included parliamentarians, *Council for the Humanities and Social and Sciences* (CHASS) personnel, Dr Paul Beirne (MCD) and Dr Rob McIver (ANZATS). Paul and Rob reported on this meeting to the Consultation as follows:

The whole concept of what constitutes a HASS PhD is changing: it is on the move to becoming four publishable papers, produced under supervision, directed towards particular journals (and a higher-ranking journal gives more ticks). The current skill required is producing a book manuscript, though we want students to be writing regular articles.

Another matter raised was co-publication between supervisor and students (standard practice in the sciences). One university person stated strong support for such a policy: it gives students back-up when they might not have been able to do it, and also means that the supervisor had a publication. When ethical requirements were raised — ‘what is yours and what is mine?’ — the response made was that co-publication is a way to increase the university’s publications.

Consultation participants saw some advantages in student and supervisor co-operating in preparing joint publications, but the consensus remained firm on requiring a single thesis for an HDR award.

The ACTh Dean noted that his office maintains a register of research-active supervisors, almost all of whom are academic staff members of ACTh-affiliated colleges. This concept is used in many universities, and was affirmed at the Consultation.³⁷

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate meetings for faculty involved in research supervision (probably on a state basis), with a view to:

- a) identifying research training opportunities identified;
- b) developing guidelines and models for supervisory practice;

and

- c) a common approach being shaped to define ‘research-active’ status, and sharing outcomes across Australian theological education.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* facilitate a process whereby supervisors in the theology sector gain membership of a national Register of Supervisors.

37. Cf www.newcastle.edu.au/students/research-higher-degree/supervision/voluntary-register.html, accessed April 17 2009, and similar provisions at other universities.

C4 Research funding

C4.1 Church and government funding

The funding of research is a low priority for many Australian churches, and, where it does happen, it is often on the initiative of a particular individual or small group.³⁸ Exceptions include the long-term commitment to scholarly endeavour by Roman Catholic religious orders, and denominational support for the *National Church Life Survey* (which focuses on the existential life of congregations rather than theological exploration).³⁹ Theological research in Australia thus rests in large part upon the faculty of theological colleges, supplemented in recent times by university faculty and the establishment of a variety of Centres researching particular areas, mostly in association with universities teaching theology—ACU, CSU and Flinders.⁴⁰

Government funding for research in the humanities generally has not been a high priority for some time, and is only available to Table A (public universities) and Table B HEPs, the latter including the MCD. As noted already, the MCD's receipt of such funding since 2002 has been a significant factor in the deepening of its research culture.⁴¹ All submissions to the Bradley Review from the theology sector noted the disparities between the treatment of Table A / B and other HEPs, and requested that research funding be allocated on the basis of performance rather than categories. MCD personnel at the Consultation explained that the formulae currently used by Australian government include HDR completions, research funding from sponsoring bodies—encompassing such contributions as faculty study leave, library research purchases and staff time proportionate to this, and the like—and faculty publications.⁴²

38. For example the *Australian Research Theology Foundation Inc (ARTFInc)*, which awards grants for a wide range of theological research: see www.artfinc.org.au.

39. Other bodies related to Christian faith and living, many involving theological faculty, are the *Christian Research Association*, *Social Connections*, the *National Catholic Research Council*, and the *Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology (ISCAST)*.

40. ACU sponsors the *Asia-Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue*, the *Centre for Early Christian Studies*, the *Center for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality*, and the *Plunkett Centre for Ethics*; CSU supports the *Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Care*, and the *Centre for Public and Contextual Theology*; Flinders sponsors *The Centre for Theology, Science and Culture*; Monash supports the *Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology*, which has links to the MCD through CCTC.

41. Research funding received by the MCD was \$557,556 for 2005, \$759,227 for 2006, and \$1,057,358 for 2007: see the 2007 RRTMR for this and the next footnote.

42. MCD 'Industry funding' was some \$1 million in 2004, \$1.5 million in 2005 and \$2.1 million in 2006: this represents research support given through libraries, study leave etc.

In 2008 the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, released the new *Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification* (ANZSRC). Group 2204, 'Religion and Religious Studies', lists 'Christian Studies' (including Biblical Studies and Church History) as discipline field 220401.⁴³ This development forms part of the *Excellence in Research for Australia* (ERA) initiative, which will govern research funding in the future. During the Consultation, Dr Paul Beirne (MCD Dean) spoke regarding these changes, since it became clear that few participants were familiar with them.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* monitor developments in the ERA initiative, and institute workshops through which faculty and key administrators in the Australian theology sector can become familiar with it, including using university programmes where possible.

C4.2 Australian Research Council grants

The other potential source of significant research funding is *Australian Research Council* (ARC) grants, a few of which have been allocated to theological research.⁴⁴ ARC Discovery Project applications have a success rate of only 20%, given the strong field, and grants are generally available to research projects undertaken by a team working co-operatively, whereas theological scholars mostly work individually. MCD personnel at the Consultation noted that its ARC grant applications

43. www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/23BcA14713F62ACA257180004CA0C, accessed April 18, 2009. Other fields in the 2204 Group are Comparative Religious Studies; Islamic Studies; Jewish Studies; Religion and Society; Studies in Eastern Religious Traditions; Studies in Religious Traditions (excl. Eastern, Jewish, Christian and Islamic Traditions) and Religion and Religious Studies not elsewhere classified.

44. The Theology program at Murdoch University would appear to have been the most successful school as regards ARC grants, having been awarded a Professorial Fellowship and a Discovery Grant.

ARC Discovery Grants in 2008 showed a 22% success rate in 'Philosophy & Religious Studies'; three of those granted concerned contemporary issues in Islam, two were in the philosophy of religion. In 2007 a Postdoctoral Fellowship was awarded in Tudor church music's 19th century revival; in 2006 a Discovery Grant was awarded in religion and society, two Research Fellowships in early church history and two Postdoctoral Fellowships related to Islamic studies; in 2005 three Discovery Grants were awarded for research into theological topics relating to religion in Australian society: www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/dp/dp_outcomes.htm, accessed April 17 2009.

since 2003 have been collaborative applications with Melbourne and Monash universities, though none has succeeded.

Consultation participants were interested to hear of public university programmes which help faculty succeed in applying for internal grants, and thus be trained to apply for external ones (the University of Melbourne provides 'shepherds' for this purpose). They agreed that a national, co-operative approach across the sector was highly desirable.⁴⁵

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology*, in consultation with ANZATS, co-ordinate and develop one or more ARC grant applications involving scholars from a range of theology HEPs, as well as collaboration with scholars beyond the theology sector.

45. It was noted at the Consultation that the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia and University Departments* (now the *Council of Deans of Theology*) had been successful in obtaining funding from the *Carrick Institute* (now the *Australian Learning and Teaching Council*) for the current project: no single private theological institution would have been eligible to apply for such a grant.

D Conclusion: co-operation and collaboration in theological research

‘There is a natural synergy in theology,’ said one member of the Consultation. ‘Why don’t we co-operate more in training HDR students? The fundamentals are the same.’ The research cohort in any one college is small, and though increased co-operation within the consortia has improved the situation, more intentional co-operation across the sector, especially within particular sub-disciplines, could create viable, lively cohorts for HDR students and theological research more generally. It was noted that thesis examiners were commonly drawn from beyond the HEP concerned, though supervisors tended to come from within each HEP (for relationship and funding reasons).

These comments, coming at the end of discussing the range of issues noted already, drew widespread support. Such co-operation would be best initiated by geographic location. It was noted that existing conferences afforded opportunities for the gathering of scholars and researchers by discipline. ACU indicated that its 40 or so theology research students are spread over Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Ballarat and wider afield: video conferencing is used to gather them together (on Friday afternoons): while not wholly satisfactory, it does enable them to share their experiences, and develop a research culture. Consolidating numbers across the theology sector could allow further and better utilisation of such technology.

This review of research in the Australian theology sector, taking into account the numbers and spread of HDR enrolments, present and potential sources of funding and university relationships, and being aware of the close ties with New Zealand, comes to these conclusions:

For consideration: That all Australian theology HEPs involved in research collaborate in all aspects of HDR awards—admission, administration, supervision, research training, library support and examination.

For consideration: That ANZATS facilitate consultations on ways by which greater co-operation can be fostered to support research across the Australasian theology sector, including the use of its state chapters, conferences and co-ordinated IT communications.

Australian theological education has significant opportunities for greater co-operation in research. Failure to take this forward, however, including the possibility of institutional collaboration in reshaped HDR relationships, is likely to result in a significant diminishment of the contributions which theology makes to research in Australian higher education, and its consequent support from Commonwealth sources of funding.

Within the wider context of higher education, Australian researchers in theology need in particular

- to gain greater understanding of the ERA initiative of the Australian government, and of ARC grant processes; and
- to identify research strengths across the sector as a whole.

In sum, research in Australian theological education, more especially in private HEPs,

- has taken place since the beginning of tertiary education in Australia, has developed steadily since the 1980s, and strengthened significantly in the past decade, notably through federal funding to some parts of the theology sector;
- faces challenges in supervisor and research training;
- is supported by long-standing libraries, several featuring significant specialist collections, with a rapid deployment of electronic technology across most theological libraries;
- is attracting a good number of research students, for whom monitoring progress and support has improved in recent years, but where there is still room for enhancement;
- offers a full range of Higher Degrees by Research, including qualitative as well as library-based and quantitative research methodologies. □

Chapter Eight: Relationships with Australian Churches

Key findings: Theological education in Australia is in the first place a 'sector' in the life of the Christian churches, with whom theological colleges have their primary relationship. Church relationships are less immediate for the consortia and some stand-alone HEPs, but still important.

Church-college-HEP interactions are generally positive, but tensions can arise in two areas: the ways by which ordinands' preparation shapes curricula, and the appointment and review of faculty, who are generally supported financially by a church, but are academically accountable to a HEP.

Financially, the full cost of sustaining theological tertiary-level education is not as widely appreciated as in comparable higher education institutions or their industry partners. The churches continue to be the major sponsors of Australian theological education, but tuition fees and donations are of increasing significance, and endowment is looked to as the best long-term resource.

Sources: The material in this chapter is derived from each of the main data sources employed for the project

- college website and handbook information about church relationships, and links to church websites;
- the personal knowledge of the Project Manager and contacts with church leaders during the project; and
- comments on formation made at the Consultation day in the focus groups, and more especially the group on church-college relationships. The latter group included participants from 14 colleges related to four consortia, representing six theology HEPs in all.

Initial drafts of the chapter were informed by checks made with members of the *Council of Deans of Theology*.

A Introduction

In Australia, there would be little if any tertiary theological education without the past, present and intended support of the churches. The 'theology sector' is a 'sector' within the life of the churches before it is a sector within Australian higher education. Having said that, the rapidly changing relationships between the Christian churches and Australian society over the past 25 years must impinge on theological education. As the churches adjust to shifts in their contexts, the way colleges prepare people for ministry changes, often leading the churches in their adjustments—and both interact with the shifting ground in higher education and government approaches to it.

Academic bodies generally look more to medium and long-term trends, while the institutions they serve can give greater prominence to immediate concerns, and popular opinion can view 'egg-heads' with suspicion. So it is important to note that, while there have been occasional tensions between churches and their related colleges in Australian theological education, churches and colleges alike see themselves as existing to serve the purposes and goals of the kingdom of God. From time to time they may challenge one another as to the best way forward, and church leadership may assume that a college has not changed in the decades since they were students, but overall, church-college relationships appear to be positive. Relations between theological education, Australian higher education and governments, however, have until quite recently been characterised by distance, and a mutual lack of understanding.

The relatively 'external' nature of the research able to be undertaken at the institutional level, given the limited resources and time available for the project, means that nuances may have been missed. In particular, the initial plan to interview key church leaders carrying responsibility for theological education did not eventuate. Much deeper and more extensive research of all stakeholders is needed in order to give an adequate picture of the ecclesial and institutional relationships involved in Australian theological education.

This chapter thus seeks to outline the broad relationships between theological education and the churches in Australia: Chapter Nine takes up the particularities within each church tradition.

B The churches and Australian theological education

B1 Primary relationships

B1.1 Churches and colleges

Each Australian theological college lives in and responds to its local ecclesial environment, which is in turn shaped by the distinctive ethos of each capital city.¹ Yet each also relates to wider church settings: state (Baptist and Presbyterian colleges), national (Lutheran and Uniting), international (Adventist, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and The Salvation Army) and/or by theological stance (the predominant situation for the Anglican, Bible and Pentecostal colleges). Further, where colleges of the same tradition relate to different HEPs, difficulties can arise for church leaders in seeking to bring coherence to both the preparation of ordinands and the wider educational ministry of the church concerned. An overlapping set of relationships thus exists, producing a quite complex web of accountabilities: greater appreciation of this reality across Australian churches and theological education as a whole should assist understanding, which is one purpose of this book.

The wide variety of church-college relationships which exist in Australian theological education was represented at the Consultation, and typifies the situation:

- Some colleges represented at the Consultation have their principal focus on the preparation of candidates for the authorised / ordained ministry profession of a particular Christian tradition:
Booth College [SCD, Salvation Army], St Francis' College [BCT, Anglican], Trinity College Theological School [MCD, Anglican], Trinity Theological College [BCT, UCA].
- More colleges undertake this formatin role alongside offering general theological education to anyone: represented at the Consultation were: Churches of Christ Theological College [MCD], Catholic Institute of Sydney [SCD], Morling College [ACTh, Baptist], Ridley Melbourne [ACTh, Anglican], United Theological College [CSU, UCA], Vose Seminary [ACTh, Baptist], Yarra Theological Union [MCD, Roman Catholic].

1. Cf Charles Sherlock, 'Protestant Theology in Australia', *Dictionary of Theology* (Blackwells, 1994); Gideon Goosen, *Australian Theologies: Themes and Methodologies into the Third Millennium* (St Paul's, 2000).

- Other colleges represented at the Consultation, while having less formal church relationships, teach many students who will enter professional ministries:

The Institute for Christian Spirituality & Pastoral Formation [MCD, ecumenical], Tabor NSW, Wesley Institute [UCA].

This variety exists in all the consortia, and also in the universities who teach theology.²

B1.2 Churches and consortia

The consortia have quite different relationships with the churches than do teaching colleges, since they operate largely as administrative and research rather than teaching centres. The consortia also have differing ecclesial foundations and accountabilities, yet bear the major responsibility for handling government relationships on behalf of their constituent colleges. This mix of responsibilities can be seen in the Tuition Assurances required for ESOS and FEE-HELP, which has led to Deeds of Assurance needing to be signed between each consortium and the owners / sponsors of their affiliated or member colleges.³

The consortia, while having a firm identity in government and higher education circles, can seem to students and supporters of their member colleges to lack identity: 'no-one supports the AFL, but barracks for a team that actually plays football!' as one Consultation participant put it. Links between the consortia and the churches are less immediate than those at college level, through which consortia church relationships are mediated. Even so, the consortia see themselves as serving the mission of the churches with which they are involved:

2. The theological colleges related to CSU, Flinders, Murdoch and Newcastle all have close church links, teaching ordinands as well as others, and receiving significant church financial support. ACU has no formal church link, and has not taught ordinands: from 2010, however, Roman Catholic and Uniting ordinands will study at ACU's Brisbane campus, as St Paul's College and Trinity Theological College begin using ACU degrees. The University of Notre Dame is closely related to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of WA: some ordinands study towards the university's degrees, but formation is not undertaken at Notre Dame.
3. Obtaining these Deeds proved to be a complex task, since each church has a particular relationship with its college(s). Some churches operate a distinct college account, whereas in others a college's capital and recurrent costing is part of the overall operation of the church body. The process of gaining agreement on the Deeds illuminated the complex and diverse legal relationships between church, college and consortium. In the MCD, where the Project Manager was closely involved, the outcome was greater understanding and trust being built across them. Further, the need for Course Assurance Deeds in the FEE-HELP scheme brought about significant co-operation among the private theology consortia and with some stand-alone theology HEPs.

- The three member colleges of the ACD (Anglican, Roman Catholic, UCA) share the same site, with common library and chapel as well as the ACD administration, but ACD's relationship with the churches is through their colleges.
- The ACTh, established by and accountable to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, has little day-to-day contact with Anglican structures. The ongoing contact of ACTh staff with affiliated colleges is the principal way in which they relate to the colleges' respective churches (Baptist, Brethren, Presbyterian and Christian Reformed, as well as Anglican and inter-denominational), though as a national HEP these links are limited by geography.
- The BCT is a co-operative venture between three church-sponsored colleges: St Francis' (Anglican), St Paul's (Roman Catholic) and Trinity Theological College (Uniting).⁴ Each church appoints two Directors to the BCT Board, and together they constitute a majority, though (as with other consortia) the churches' relationships are primarily with the colleges, not with the BCT administration as such.
- The MCD, established by the main Protestant churches in Victoria, currently has appointees from the Anglican, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches on its Council, and includes the Salvation Army Training College in its RTIs. These formal associations, and the Melbourne location of the colleges, means that relations with church leaders are good, but church links are more distant. The MCD as a network sees its task as giving a broad space for people to 'reason, think and pray', and go out changed, seeking to enrich society and church as agents of change, set in the midst of changing churches and a changing higher education environment.
- The PCD operates today as the mechanism through which the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches relate to the Theology Programme of Murdoch University. The Perth Theological Hall of the UCA is the only college as such in the PCD: the Anglican Institute of Theology functions as an education agency, while the Roman Catholic church places its ordinands at Murdoch and/or Notre Dame for their academic studies. Church-college relationships in Perth are thus mediated as much through the faculty of the Theology Program as through college structures.

4. As noted elsewhere, BCT is not seeking re-accreditation from 2010, but failure to include it here would give a distorted picture of Australian theological education at the time of the *Uncovering Theology* project.

- The SCD has no direct ecclesial foundation, but is ‘a community of learners, teachers and researchers created through a federation of Christian theological education providers for the accreditation of awards in Higher Education’.⁵ As such, its contact with the churches comes through its Member Institutions, all but one of whom are sponsored by a particular church tradition (Australian Christian Churches, Brethren, Churches of Christ, Greek Orthodox, Nazarene and Roman Catholic).

Without these varied networks of church relationships, the consortia would lose their meaning, even though in their day-to-day operations explicit contact with the churches is minimal. This is an important factor when considering further development of relationships with higher education more widely, which is likely to continue to be negotiated through existing, new or changed consortia.

B2 *Church–college interactions*

Churches shape the overall direction of theological colleges in a number of ways, while college graduates and faculty influence the life of the churches. The relationships between church and college are thus interactive, with subtle nuances. In what follows, examples of this interaction are drawn from insights given at the Consultation day.

B2.1 *Ordinand training: church requirements*

The main purpose for most churches continuing to give significant support to a college is their ongoing commitment to the preparation of people for authorised / ordained professional ministries. This has the greatest influence on the curriculum of church-related colleges—academic, formational and ‘hidden’—as does the ministry ethos commended by the values of the college.

Particular church requirements for ordinands would seem to be the strongest in episcopal traditions, and in church-owned colleges. Yet formation programmes fashion the curriculum for ordinands more generally: typical requirements (beyond a degree including scripture, church history and theology) include being equipped to preach and lead worship, engage in ethical reflection, developing basic pastoral ministry skills (usually involving supervised placements, mission and evangelism experience), preparation for the responsibilities of leadership, and education in the particular heritage and ethos of the church tradition concerned.

5. *Constitution of Sydney College of Divinity Ltd*, section 3.

A good number of students studying theology for general reasons end up as candidates for authorised / ordained professional ministries.⁶ This has its advantages (not least for churches' budgets!), including the student maintaining a proper sense of inter-dependence with church requirements. But it can also mean that 'formation' is viewed as separate from earlier learning, and crammed into too short a time, insufficient to allow adequate reflection on the personal / vocational dimensions of learning, for example on how candidature might shape the way biblical studies prepare the person to use the scriptures in ministry.

Preparation for ministry in independent congregations (charismatic, evangelical, non-English speaking etc.) lies largely in the hands of a student's college, which is likely to tell the student what their needs are. Experience over the years has brought a degree of consistency to this advice, but a good deal of variety exists between colleges. In particular, Pentecostal traditions identify an 'anointed' ministry largely from the evidence of its practice, rather than discerning a 'call' which leads to ministry training. In such settings, it is usual for a person with ministry experience to enter formal theological study in order for this to 'catch up' learning to practice: graduate awards with a 'Ministry Studies' emphasis are proving to be useful. Competency is less of an issue than learning, yet similar issues can arise as with students who become candidates only late in their formal studies.

However candidates are prepared, Consultation participants acknowledged that predicting ministry outcomes from college life continues to be fraught: the correlation between success at college and subsequent outcomes in ministry (of whatever kind) is not as high as the expectations sought. In response, there is a trend towards shaping an academic pathway which encourages ongoing learning: resistance has been found from some church authorities because this can mean longer training periods, while many congregations do not see the benefit in ministers taking 'time off' for study. Most colleges seek to offer both award courses and non-accredited programmes to support ongoing learning and in-service education throughout the duration of professional ministry.

6. Sometimes intending ordinands complete as much theological study as possible before being accepted as such, in order to escape church requirements. This can result in 'de-formation', such as the allowing a 'lone ranger' mentality to continue into the student's later ministry, to the loss of both church and minister.

B2.2 Ordinand training: student perspectives

Consultation participants reported that theological students, including ordinands, can find their relations with a local church community to be difficult and conflicted. Sometimes this is because the student parades too much of their new learning; sometimes it may be because they raise uncomfortable questions, and the authenticity of their own faith-stance is put in question. Where this happens—especially for residential students—the theological college may become an idealized faith community, with faculty looked on as that community’s ministers.

A healthy college should be a living faith community of learning, but when treated as an idealistic environment, the transition to ‘normal’ congregational life can be problematic. There is a need to model the tension between teaching ideals to inspire, and communicating realism about church cultures, and how the vocation of faculty, ordinands and other students relate to this tension. Placements and internships offer resources to meet this challenge, but in the first place are designed for learning rather than as spiritual therapy. On the other hand, faculty involved in placements are often part-time or sessional, which has its challenges for the community of learning, but also brings the positive dimension of ongoing contact with ministry issues. Ongoing ministry involvement is significant for informing the teaching, mentoring and supervisory work of all faculty: yet a lecturer in homiletics who only preaches in a college chapel, for example, is likely to be less effective in promoting learning than one regularly engaged in congregational ministry.

Interviews with beginning students are used in several colleges to discover their understanding of why they have come to study theology, including any vocational intentions or explorations. This is followed-up annually to discern the shifts in formational and vocational expectations which are taking place. Consultation participants saw regular contact with relevant church authorities as important, not only for ordinands and those preparing for specialist ministries, but for all students, to ensure a congruity of expectations between church, college and student. Regular communications between a college and church bodies, including reports, are signs of good practice.

For consideration: That a project be initiated to ascertain student perspectives on the formation of ordinands, taking into particular account the changing patterns of ordained ministry and preparation for it.⁷

B2.3 Faculty appointment and support

Whether or not faculty at a church-sponsored college are appointed by the college itself, or there is church involvement, each will have been assessed by wider criteria than would normally apply in a university setting. In particular, these will include their anticipated contribution to shaping students' learning towards effective Christian ministry and discipleship. The personal lifestyle of theological faculty is expected to be above reproach, an issue familiar to faculty who are ordained, but which applies to all. Negatively, this can mean that difficulties in marriage, money or personal relationships may affect ongoing employment.⁸

One issue in some parts of Australia theological education is potential tensions between the 'employing' body and the teaching institution.⁹ The Academic Board of each theology HEP approves a new faculty

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7. It is not easy to identify who should undertake such a project, since it transcends academic and administrative boundaries, and in the first place is the responsibility of the particular churches. It could make a good HDR research topic for a limited range of similar traditions (episcopal, Reformed, Pentecostal etc.) or be done in association with the Faith & Unity Commission of the *National Council of Churches of Australia*.
 8. Most Bible colleges have policy documents which include clear processes to address situations where a faculty member's lifestyle comes into question: see for example the BCV Faculty Handbook.
 9. There is considerable resistance in the churches to speaking of ordained ministers as 'employees'. The 'stipend' ethos applying to most clergy means them receiving support sufficient to engage in life-long ministry without anxiety, and thus being able to minister independently of particular persons' influence. The 'faith mission' perspective of evangelical missionary agencies is similar: members are expected, in dependence on God, to raise their own support, which also applies to college faculty (for example at Worldview).

The stipend ethos remains significant in Australian theological education, but is increasingly difficult to relate to modern wage and salary structures, and Industrial Relations legislation: for example How does income tax apply to housing provision? What is the 'salary' level on which the compulsory 9% superannuation levy is calculated? What does an 'award' mean? Do clergy 'retire'?

One issue likely to affect theology HEPs is the abolition of AWAs by the Rudd–Gillard government. The previous government's requirement that all HEPs have individual agreements in place for staff could readily be adapted to a 'stipend' system, but it remains to be seen how this will work out under the new arrangements.

member to teach:¹⁰ yet where the HEP is a consortium, it may have little or no power over the person's ongoing employment, and diverse accountabilities can raise issues. Some examples given at the Consultation illustrate this:

- In the United Faculty of Theology (MCD), teaching staff are appointed and supported by the three member colleges—Jesuit, Trinity (Anglican) and Uniting, who need to have their staff ratified by their respective Order or church bodies. Each lecturer must also be approved by the UFT Senatus to teach, yet the UFT has limited capacity to ensure that all disciplines and levels are adequately covered, to influence how teachers are utilized, or to manage ineffective teaching and learning.
- Trinity Theological College in Brisbane (CSU) is owned and funded by the Queensland UCA synod from its Mission and Service Fund, but is accountable to the National Assembly for ministerial education. Trinity is thus accountable for its critical task, ordinand preparation, to a different body than the one which funds it.
- The Catholic Institute of Sydney (SCD) is itself non-residential: ordinands live at a nearby seminary, which is responsible for their ministerial formation, and with whom CIS must negotiate as to how this fits in with other formation. The core rationale of CIS is training ordinands, who study full-time, and for whom the time-table is shaped; other students are a majority in terms of student numbers, but since many of these are part-time, ordinands represent more EFTSLs.
- Booth College (SCD) is owned and funded by The Salvation Army, Eastern Territory. The core priority is officer training: others do not see Booth as a place to come to (cf the wearing of uniforms in class). Faculty appointments are made by the Eastern Territory Territorial Commander, and until recently all have been SA officers. Faculty in a higher education institution need to have academic qualifications, and be in place for five years or more: this raises issues for Booth, given the regular movement of officers which is entailed in Salvation Army structure and philosophy.

In practice, such situations are managed through high levels of trust and co-operation. Gaps in teaching areas can occur, however, and different accountabilities and responsibilities as regards funding, church committees and academic bodies can lead to limitations when taking

10. Such approval did not apply in the ACTh's pre-2008 governance structure: the ACTh is currently developing a mechanism by which academic staff who do not satisfy the normal academic criteria can be considered to teach units, which is an exception to its long-standing practice.

initiatives, or in setting research priorities. From a risk management perspective, the lack of clarity in conflict resolution processes can pose concerns for accreditation authorities.

Accrediting agencies (state governments, or HESA Table A and B members) are less interested in how faculty are appointed than in their qualifications, relevant experience and that they have space to be effective teachers and researchers.¹¹ Faculty succession has been noted as an issue, however,¹² especially in Roman Catholic theological colleges:¹³ a 2006 survey showed that some 40% of faculty in them will reach retirement age by 2012.¹⁴ This particularly affects colleges operated by religious orders, whose memberships have been declining for some years, with few novices of appropriate academic standing coming through. Lay faculty are being recruited as a result, but their expectations about time availability, openness to direction, and levels of financial support are likely to be significantly different from those of a religious who has made a life-long commitment to her or his order. A strong broad pool of scholars exists from whom faculty can be drawn, given the increase in theological research in Australia over the past decade. Yet the extent to which prospective teaching scholars are willing to take up the strongly formational / vocational dimension of theological education remains to be seen. As colleges come to have few religious order members on faculty (or even none), the ways in which the sponsoring body interacts with teaching staff will present new challenges and opportunities in church-college relationships.

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11. The SCD has undertaken annually since 2007 a classification of faculty associated with its MIs, using the five-point DEEWR and Australian university scale (E = international standing to A = early-stage lecturer), which showed that most were at level B (Lecturer) or C (Senior Lecturer) in university terms.
 12. Recommendation 14 of the MCD AUQA Report (2005) states: 'AUQA recommends that MCD develop a comprehensive staffing plan for the College as a whole that includes such matters as age and gender profile, succession planning, and professional development at each Recognised Teaching Institution'.
 13. Cf Gerard Kelly, 'Future Directions in Roman Catholic Theological Education', FACIT paper, 2002.
 14. Some Consultation participants reported that this is also a challenge for the humanities in Australian universities, since for some time vacant positions have not been replaced, resulting in unclear progression paths from junior to more senior academic positions. Graeme Hugo, *The demographic outlook for Australian universities' academic staff* (Canberra: CHASS Occasional Papers, 2008) notes that 'The humanities, arts and social sciences areas in universities generally have quite old staff . . . the levels [of staff over 50] are in the high 40% range for . . . Philosophy . . . Society and Culture' (23).

Academically, the project found that in all Australian theological colleges there is firm awareness of the normal higher education practice that faculty should hold an award at least one level higher than that which they teach, preferably a research degree in the relevant discipline.¹⁵ Criteria for the appointment of theology faculty typically include an accredited degree of appropriate standard, evidence of teaching experience and ability, and personal qualities appropriate to being a member of the faculty of the college concerned. A track record in reflective ministry practice is commonly viewed as of equal importance: theological faculty need to be people who integrate their teaching with their everyday living, and can maintain an ongoing connection with church and society. While ordination is common, it is rarely a requirement for employment, but faculty are normally expected to take an active role in a local congregation and the wider church, to participate in college chapel services and similar activities, and take a leadership and modelling role within them—involvements which faculty themselves would see as part of their own vocational ministry as teachers.¹⁶

More particularly, faculty teaching in ministry-oriented areas are expected to continue as ministry practitioners part-time; others will be long-term sessional teachers. As one Consultation participant stated, 'Ministry background is good, but without ongoing practice it dates'. Such faculty can also help maintain the bridges within and between the various learning and church communities which interact with a college's life.

Ongoing development of faculty is one of the strengths in Australian theological education. Long-established church-sponsored colleges for many years maintained a policy of sabbatical leave, and all theological colleges now make provision for regular study leave.¹⁷ Most faculty

15. Several colleges have policy statements and procedures in place to lift faculty qualifications: an excellent example is Vose Seminary WA. The two Salvation Army colleges acknowledge that this area challenges them, given the Army policy of moving officers regularly, but it is a challenge being attended to.

16. Thus UCTC faculty (UFT/MCD) take part in a 'Scholar on the Road' programme of teaching across churches in Victoria. Theological college staff are frequently asked for advice by bishops, church leaders and councils, and to represent their church on ecumenical bodies such as state and national Faith & Order/Unity Commissions.

17. 'Sabbatical' leave was one year away in every seven, usually required to be taken overseas, when Australian theological education at research levels was less developed. This had the advantage of faculty having to 'let go' their influence on a college's policy direction, as well as engaging with significant scholars overseas, and experiencing the round of different seasons, civic and church years in a foreign context. As with university practice, this has largely been replaced by 'study leave' to work on a particular project for a limited time.

take an active part in conferences: this is now encouraged by colleges, which increasingly expect faculty to contribute to the learning life of the churches, assist with in-service clergy training and undertake research and publication.¹⁸

For consideration: That church, college and consortia leaders, making appropriate use of the ANZATS network, seek to foster better understanding and collaboration between the churches in their common facing of the challenges of preparing future leaders.

B2.4 *Infrastructure provision*

All Australian theological colleges have had their physical facilities provided by church funding (including overseas sources), or raised through donations and building appeals.¹⁹ A number have been able to use the opportunity of relocating to make significant improvements.²⁰

Physical inspections of college premises have not formed part of this project. Until the 1960s, however, it would not be unfair to say that many facilities were relatively primitive, often using buildings adapted from other purposes. Those institutions visited during the project, or already known to the Project Manager, are universally of a good standard, notably libraries, chapels and the variety of learning spaces. This healthy situation is due in part to the commitment of college supporters and church bodies to providing excellent learning environments, in part to the tightening of government requirements about matters such as accessibility, fire safety and building regulations. To what extent the costs of maintenance are able to be met in the medium-term would seem to be a challenging question for many Australian theological colleges.

All staff or faculty handbooks examined indicated that study leave is provided for full-time faculty, typically three months' study leave for each three to five years of full-time teaching, granted after an application has been approved taking into account both the study proposed, and the college's teaching needs.

18. ANZATS, ATF, FACIT, SPABC and the Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible Colleges network (PCBC) conduct annual conferences, while Australian participation in international ones such as those conducted by the *Society for Biblical Literature* (SBL) and *Societas Liturgica* has grown significantly in the past two decades.

19. Murdoch and Newcastle teach theology on campus, providing staff offices and use of lecture rooms, but no other government capital funding would seem to have been made available to Australian theological education.

20. In Melbourne, CCTC (MCD) and BCV (ACTh), for example.

B3 Church funding for theological education

B3.1 The costs of theological education

Before considering what financial support churches provide, some estimate of the cost of theological education is needed. A 2007 paper by Richard Cardew, former Head of School of the Macquarie Graduate School of Management, is based on the following assumptions:²¹

- a) Costs include faculty remuneration (at stipendiary, not university levels, but including accommodation), faculty infrastructure (office space, equipment, heating, lighting etc.), and support staff (librarians, administration and technical services) and their associated infrastructure, plus a 50% oncost loading for all staff (including superannuation, leave and the maintenance of facilities).
- b) Faculty time is divided across teaching (the design, delivery and administration of a programme of learning), research (including supervision of HDR candidates), and professional service (for example academic committees, ministry formation and church involvement); support staff are provided in a ratio 0.5 per faculty member (about half the university rate in humanities).
- c) Each full-time faculty member teaches either four (70% time) or six (100% time) units each year, where eight units represents a full-time student load.

The outcome of calculations based on these assumptions is that, for class sizes of up to 30, the real cost of each full-time faculty member is around \$168,000 per annum, reducing to around \$110,000 if oncosts (largely maintenance) are excluded. This means that the annual cost of teaching a full-time theological student works out to around \$15,500 pa: since tuition fees for theology coursework awards mostly fall in the range of \$4–10,000 (see Table 8.1), there is a considerable shortfall between these and the real costs of Australian theological education.

For most church-related colleges, a significant proportion of staff stipends, library resources and maintenance needs to come from church recurrent funding: the above figures suggest that some 60–70% of costs need to be met from other than tuition fees. In a few cases, there is income derived mostly from endowment-based income, which gives a college some financial independence. More often, a significant proportion of funding comes from donations and church budgets, which can lead to financial pressures on a college when church or supporter priorities change.

21. Richard Cardew, 'Estimates of Teaching Costs in Higher Education,' COPHE Registrar & Business Managers Forum, Sydney Olympic Park, November 2007.

Consultation participants said that the most positive development as regards funding would be endowed lectureships, and long-term funding for qualitative research, including libraries: these are seen as key elements for the long-term sustenance of viable higher education in theology. With these 'book-ends' in place, recurrent funding to support students, together with occasional fund-raising for new facilities, would be found.

HEP	Level:	Diploma	Degree	Graduate C'work	HDR
Consortia					
ACD		5094	5094	6120	
ACTh		6400	8800	9600	6400
BCT		7040	7440	7440	
MCD		6162	6162	6162	7260
SCD		4440–7840	5200–7840	6000–10040	8584
Universities (<i>nett cost to student after CSP</i>)					
ACU			5201	7600	7600
CSU			5184	6880	11648
Flinders			5201	1400	15800
Murdoch		3755	7260	7260	17000
Notre Dame		5900	5900	5900	17150
Newcastle			5184		
Stand-alone HEPs					
Adel C Ministries		5390	6290		
Aust Lutheran C		5280	5280	9600	
Avondale C			5200	11200	
Campion C			12000		
Harvest		4720	7120	8600	
Christian Heritage		520	6800	6800	
John-Paul II Inst				6220	
Moore TC			14330	5100	3430
Perth BC		6960	7920	9600	
Tabor		4500	7296	7872	8260
Wesley Inst			6720	7200	7200
Worldview		4300	5000	5000	

Table 8.1 Tuition fees: fulltime domestic theological students 2009

B3.2 *Sponsoring relationships*

Church-related colleges have quite varied financial relationships with their respective churches, beyond the income derived from tuition fees:²²

- The majority of theological colleges are owned and funded by church bodies, with donations being another contributor to income: as far as could be ascertained, this is the case for the Adventist, Baptist, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Uniting Church colleges, Roman Catholic diocesan seminaries and the colleges supported by religious orders, JTC and YTU (MCD), and some Anglican colleges—Moore (Sydney), St Francis' (Brisbane).²³
- A small number of theological colleges owned by a church body are funded principally through endowment, rental income or similar sources: this includes the Churches of Christ Theological College (Victoria) and the Jesuit Theological College.
- The theological colleges associated with CSU, Flinders and Murdoch receive Commonwealth HECS funding, supplemented by church support and donations.
- Theology HEPs operating as Christian tertiary institutions receive Commonwealth HECS funding for teacher and nurse training: Avondale (Adventist), Christian Heritage (Christian Outreach Crusade), Notre Dame (Roman Catholic), Tabor Adelaide and Tabor Victoria.
- A good part of theological and ministry education takes place in colleges owned by a Christian agency or trust. These institutions rely largely on tuition and donation income, from local congregations as well as individuals: the Bible colleges in each state exemplify this category, which also includes Ridley and Trinity in Melbourne (Anglican).²⁴ Colleges in the charismatic / Pentecostal traditions embrace a variety of church relationships, some being owned by local congregations: their funding support would seem to be similar to that of the Bible colleges.

22. Evidentiary support for these lists came from Annual Reports, Consultation day statements, public church records, and analysis of the Tuition Assurance requirements of ESOS and FEE-HELP. Other information may locate some colleges differently.

23. The Reformed Theological College (ACTh) probably belongs in this category: it is not owned by the Christian Reformed Churches, with whom it is close associated, but receives funding from that denomination through a contractual arrangement.

24. Ridley and Trinity both receive an annual grant from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, based on ordinand numbers, representing 3–10% of costs (depending on ordinand enrolments). In 2007, Ridley ceased being a residential college of the University of Melbourne and in 2008 sold half its property, in order to establish a substantial Foundation to endow lectureships.

In addition,

- The consortia (ACTh, ACD, BCT, MCD, SCD) receive income from fees paid by related colleges on the basis of enrolments; in addition, the MCD receives Commonwealth research funding, in large part distributed to its research-active colleges.

It is difficult to formulate suggestions for consideration in the face of this variety, much of which is due to historical inheritance rather than principles of ecclesiology, but the latter remain significant, as the following commentary shows.

- Tuition fees for Australian theological students have historically been low, in comparison to higher education generally (except when no university fees were charged), and often met for ordinands by a church body in any case. With the increase in number of students since the 1980s, and a consequent lower proportion of ordinands, tuition fees have risen: some faculty have resisted these, but the rises have had little effect on enrolments. Most theological students believe that the costs of tuition represent good value for money, and expect to fund their studies out of a vocational commitment to learning. The advent of FEE-HELP has seen most tuition fees level out to be close to what a HECS Theology student pays at a public university: in the consortia, FEE-HELP means that fees are the same for each of their colleges.
- Most Australian Christian traditions remain committed to putting significant resources into ordinand training, including the Christian Reformed, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic (both dioceses and religious orders), Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventist and Uniting churches. Yet the level of support provided may not meet the demands resulting from government accreditation, the need to sustain research, and support faculty as long-term academic.
- Government funding to support all accredited higher education, as is the case in New Zealand, is seen by many as both just and desirable, but others ask whether this would lead to undue interference with the formative nature of theological education. As regards research, however, this is much less an issue, and—particularly in view of the experience of the MCD—would bring significant improvements for students, faculty and libraries.
- As noted above, endowments would free colleges from financial pressures, but they may also bring about a loss in accountability, and dependence on divine provision: some colleges will continue to choose to function as ‘faith missions’, relying on tuition and donations.

Ways forward as regards long-term funding for Australian theological education are by no means clear, but only those built on relationships of trust between supporters, churches, colleges, and consortia are likely to last. Theological education involves such close scrutiny of personal and corporate identity that the relationships involved need to be deeper than solely administrative, regulatory or financial concerns.

C Conclusion

Australian theological education remains closely inter-twined with the Christian churches, and derives its financial support from denominational, congregational and personal sources. Many institutions in the Australian theology sector continue to rely on tuition fees and donations for their ongoing ministry, but it is the latter which is viewed as of first importance.

Theological colleges seek to live in practical dependence on the resources which God provides, in whatever manner these resources are received, a tangible expression of their close partnership with the churches in living out the mission of God in Christ. □

Chapter Nine: Wider Relationships: *Government, Higher Education, Community*

Key findings: Until 1980, theological education in Australia operated largely in isolation from government and wider higher education. State recognition of private HEPs, and the teaching of theology in some public universities, brought improved changes in these relationships.

Nationally, Austudy becoming available to theological students provided students with financial support; PELS and FEE-HELP saw this increase substantially. Theology HEPs have consequentially become more accountable regarding governance and quality assurance (as required by the National Protocols), and detailed reporting of enrolments.

Relationships between theological education and Australian higher education remain insubstantial from both perspectives. Internationally, trans-Tasman relationships are strong, both personal, collegial and through formal association. Personal links with European and North American universities are long-standing; relations with higher education in the Asia-Pacific region have institutional as well as personal dimensions, and are continuing to develop.

Community service is a long-term dimension of theological education, in equipping Christians and ministers to be leaders in local communities, and by the community engagement of faculty, students and colleges.

Ultimately, however, Australian theological education views its central relationship to be with the churches and agencies whose mission it seeks to serve.

Sources: The material in this chapter is drawn from historical data and current websites (including those of DEEWR, DIISR, ARC, universities where theology is taught or with whom theology HEPs have relationships) and from the Consultation day focus group on theology in university settings. Written submissions from some of its members have also been taken into account, along with detailed responses from readers of successive drafts.

A Introduction

As noted in earlier chapters, relations between Australian theological education, higher education and government have until recently been characterised by distance, and a mutual lack of understanding. In the broader world of Australian higher education, for example, the perception is widespread that theological education is basically, or only, about training clergy. Consultation day participants believed that few churches understand this perception, so that church leaders do not seek to correct it. In turn, this makes the development of relationships between theological education and the university sector, and thus governments, more difficult.

The absence of relationships with government and higher education until fairly recently also facilitated the development of Australian theological education in quite separate streams of church and theological tradition, with little interchange between them (especially across the Protestant-Catholic border) until the last half-century.

One immediate conclusion of this project is the positive consequences which would flow from greater levels of co-operation within Australian theological education. Long-standing theological differences remain, and are unlikely to be resolved quickly (if at all), but the level of institutional diversity is much less than can be justified, and divisive theological issues cross church boundaries (see further Chapter Nine). With these perhaps depressing viewpoints in mind, this chapter turns to examine in turn the three major relationships which affect Australian theological education.

B Relations with Australian governments

Nationally, government involvement in higher education concerns funding: this was not provided for private tertiary education, directly or indirectly, until recently. At state level, it concerns the registration and accreditation of academic institutions. In recent years these differences have become blurred, especially with the introduction of National Protocols by the *Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs* (MCEETYA), which involves both state and federal ministers.

Other policy matters related to government oversight include non-discriminatory language,¹ occupational health and safety policies,² and the special needs of overseas students.³

B1 State governments

At state level, government involvement in higher education concerns the registration of teaching institutions and the accreditation of tertiary and VET courses. Since 1975, each state has developed its own mechanism for the processes involved, and for the five-yearly cycles of the re-registration of institutions and the re-accreditation of their awards. The opportunities this offers theology were warmly welcomed in the 1970s (as noted in Chapter One). This situation is now taken for granted, but theology HEPs report that (re-) accreditation has become increasingly complex and expensive, with unpredictable outcomes as regards detailed requirements, even for long-established institutions. Differing costs and processes from state to state have been of particular concern, especially for the multi-state consortia: diverse attitudes to multi-streaming in different states are a case in point.

These issues of cost, complexity and diversity between different States were major aspects of the submission to the Bradley Review of Higher Education by the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia*, complemented by letters of support from ANZATS and the SCD. In particular, these

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1. Those of BCQ are particularly detailed (developing ACTh policy); the language policies of CCTC / Whitley (MCD) include useful bibliographies on this issue.
 2. Colleges with a substantial residential population such as Avondale and SMBC have full procedures in these areas, including fire drills, first-aid posts, (non-)smoking, and are careful to keep up-to-date with legal requirements: see also CIS and the Tabors.
 3. Some aspects of the ESOS scheme to protect the interests of overseas students were also raised. Theological colleges have considerable experience with such students, are sensitive to the issues raised for them through learning in a western culture, and not defaulted with respect to their fees. Given this history, many colleges, while understanding the conditions imposed by student visas, have found the requirements of the ESOS Tuition Assurance Scheme to be overly burdensome.

submissions supported Commonwealth funding for all tertiary education (including research as well as coursework studies) on the same basis for private as well as public HEPs, and the creation of a national body (rather than State administrations) to accredit all tertiary awards, alongside the quality management role of AUQA. The theology sector looks forward with some anticipation to the outcomes of this Review.

B2 *The Australian government*

Formal engagement between the Australian government and theological education commenced when theology began to be taught at public universities (from 1980, at Flinders). The theological students studying at them became eligible for Commonwealth Supported Places. Yet this covers less than 5% of Australian theological student enrolments: a more significant shift financially was allowing Austudy and Abstudy to be available to (otherwise eligible) theological students from 1992, after protracted negotiations led by ANZATS.⁴

Recognition of the theology sector by the Australian Government has accelerated since 2001. The distinctive standing of the MCD, as a body established by a State Parliament, led to its being recognised at national level through its inclusion in Table B in the *Higher Education Support Act* (2003, along with Bond University and the University of Notre Dame).⁵ After extensive discussions with DEST, the MCD began to receive federal research funding from 2002. As noted in Chapter Six, this support, and the accountability processes associated with it, has seen a research culture of some depth develop across the MCD colleges, and bring the MCD into deeper conversation with humanities in Victorian universities.

The formation of the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia*, which began in the mid-1990s as an informal meeting of the Deans of the ACTh, MCD and SCD, provided a wider base for relating to government. In this it worked closely with the Executive Secretary of ANZATS. The Committee soon included the Deans of each theological consortium and the heads of university theology departments. In 2009 it adopted a new name, the *Council of Deans of Theology*, and invited the heads of all HEPs offering theological disciplines in Australia to join.

4. In addition, Centrelink payments are significant for full-time students with young children and a spouse doing less than full-time paid work – rent assistance, Family Benefit, health cards etc. add up to useful support.

5. The MCD 2008 Annual Report notes that the MCD Dean and Registrar met with the Vice-Chancellor of Bond University during that year, and that further meetings are planned with Bond and Notre Dame to explore what common action these Table B institutions may be able to take in the future.

The greatest change in relationships with the Australian Government, however, was the introduction of FEE–HELP from 2005, available to all Higher Education Providers (public or private).⁶ By the end of 2006, it is estimated that some \$20 million was being loaned annually to theological students.⁷ Beyond this significant indirect financial assistance, not least the near elimination of bad debts from student fees, FEE–HELP has had a profound effect on the relationships between DEST/DEEWR and the theology sector, in several ways:

- The National Governance Protocols for higher education have led to significant changes in the governance and academic structure of theology HEPs, most notably the consortia,⁸ and also entailed careful scrutiny of their financial viability by the federal Minister of Education, through DEEWR.⁹
- The National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes require HEPs to participate in an audit by the *Australian University Qual-*

6. FEE–HELP widened the Post-Graduate Education Loans (PELS) scheme, which had been available to the MCD from 2001. PELS began the process of sharpening government accountability in the sector, and, along with the need to account for research funds, led the MCD to commission a web-based database, TAMS (Theological Administration Management System). FEE–HELP meant that many other colleges needed such software: out of TAMS emerged *Paradigm*, now used widely across the Australian theology sector.

7. This estimate is derived from the DEEWR returns for 2007 of almost all theology HEPs, provided in confidence as part of the *Uncovering Theology* project.

8. The National Governance Protocols require that a majority of members of a HEP governing body be independent of the institution, and that there be members with financial and business expertise. Initially difficult for some theology HEPs, these provisions are now widely regarded as beneficial. In particular,

The ACTh undertook a long process of constitutional review, culminating in a new Canon being passed by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in 2007 which significantly restructured its governance.

In 2004 the Victorian Government asked the MCD to allow its Act to be opened: the resulting *MCD Amendment Bill* (2005) resulted in the most significant change to the *MCD Act*, and to the MCD, including equal numbers of Council members for each participating church.

The SCD, which operates as a federation of Member Institutions, and stand-alone colleges such as the Tabor network, have revised their governance structures to accord with the National Governance Protocols.

9. Meeting the financial viability requirements necessitated considerable work for some consortium colleges, since the financial records of some are not held separately but form part of wider consolidated church accounts (for example the Roman Catholic dioceses and The Salvation Army). One outcome of this scrutiny was the provision of evidence for the long-term viability of Australian theological teaching bodies.

ity Agency (AUQA) or equivalent state body. Several theology HEPs have now been audited: in each case, the process, though demanding, has been warmly affirmed, and also brought about increased awareness of the importance of ongoing reflection on the quality of learning actually experienced by students.¹⁰

- In the private education context of full-fee upfront payment, the vocational emphasis of theological colleges, and their self-portrayal as Christian institutions, their 'data culture' has been characterised by informal monetary arrangements. The reporting mechanisms required of all FEE-HELP registered HEPs has led to improved enrolment procedures, and brought college administrations into contact with wider tertiary education; conversely, DEST/DEEWR staff members have become personally familiar with their counterparts in the theology sector.
- FEE-HELP registered HEPs are also required to have approved procedures for academic and non-academic grievances. In theological colleges, policies were already in place on these matters, especially as regards academic appeals and misconduct, but the processes required by DEST/DEEWR called for a significant sharpening of both the procedures involved, and awareness of the broader issues.¹¹
- FEE-HELP has also helped change the perception of theology within the tertiary sector: a course not eligible for HECS will be regarded as 'not regular' by students, university staff and government personnel, whereas a FEE-HELP-eligible course is seen as more 'normal'.

Other changes have led to development in particular areas: thus the introduction of subsidies for school chaplains has seen several colleges introduce courses to meet this need. More widely, some private theology HEPs, most notably Avondale and more recently Tabor, have been able to access Commonwealth Supported Places for teacher and nurse

10. AUQA audited ACU in 2003, the School of Theology being chosen for in-depth examination. The MCD AUQA audit took place in 2005, after three years' preparation—it was the first private HEP in any discipline to be audited. AUQA audited the ACTh in 2006, Moore College and Avondale College in 2008, the SCD in 2009.

Christian Heritage College was audited by the Queensland Office of Higher Education in 2006. Tabor Adelaide is being audited in 2009 by the South Australian authority, as a test case for its own accreditation.

11. Details can be found on the website of each HEP (as is required by DEEWR). The SCD developed a set of forms and flowcharts for use in its Member Institutions which include means of response as well as notification of grievances. The Wesley Handbook's Staff Appendix is full and clear about the issues involved, while the MCD procedures address issues of particular relevance to HDR students and supervisors.

training ('national priority areas'), formerly only available to theology in the public universities (ACU, CSU, Flinders, Murdoch and now Newcastle).

For consideration: That the Council of Deans of Theology, working with ANZATS,

- a) Continue to make submissions to both State and Australian governments, including government enquiries, on all matters relating to Australian theological education and the churches this serves;
- b) Develop a common set of policies on academic and non-academic grievances (including flowcharts), privacy, harassment (including spiritual harassment) and discrimination (including language) and encourage their adoption across the Australian theology sector;

and

- a) Work towards putting in place ESOS and FEE-HELP Tuition Assurance Schemes which cover Australian theological education as a whole.¹²

12. Some evidence for the practicality of this suggestion can be seen in the Course Assurance Memoranda of Understanding signed between the ACTh and MCD, SCD and ACTh, and similar agreements negotiated between the ACTh, ACU, Avondale, Christian Heritage, SCD and Tabor NSW.

C Higher Education, international and community relationships

C1 *Australian Higher Education*

Theology is currently taught at five public universities: ACU, CSU (through St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra and the United Theological College, Sydney), Flinders (with the ACD), Murdoch (with the PCD) and Newcastle. Enrolments for theology awards across these universities, however, makes up less than 5% of Australian theological education, and only at ACU does Theology (with Philosophy) have Faculty standing. In addition, while ACU and the private University of Notre Dame offer degrees in theology, most of the theological education they deliver is through 'service teaching' (around 950 EFTSLs, some 15% of the sector).

Apart from ACU, the formal relationship between Australian public universities and theological education is insubstantial from both the university and theology perspectives. The inclusion of the Table B HEPS, Notre Dame and the MCD, adds some 650 EFTSLs in theological awards, plus 550 'service teaching' EFTSLs at Notre Dame—some 20% of the Australian theology sector—but this is of little consequence to the universities. In other public universities, notably at the University of Sydney and the University of Queensland, there are HDR enrolments in Philosophy and Religious Studies (which includes theology in DEE-WR coding), but this does not add significantly to its presence in public higher education.¹³

The co-operation of the churches (in particular, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting) is a key factor for all these universities except ACU, and includes subsidies for teaching faculty, and the support of libraries. Thus Flinders uses the Adelaide Theological Library related to ACD, while the two CSU campuses continue to support their respective college libraries.

Other relationships between Australian universities and theological education exist as regards research, and the mutual recognition of units for inclusion in degrees. In Sydney and Melbourne, the three private theology consortia (ACTh, MCD and SCD) have for many years engaged university faculty as thesis examiners and co-supervisors. Joint degree arrangements have been in place between them and several public universities, including Edith Cowan, Macquarie, Melbourne, Monash, Sydney and Western Sydney. From 2008, most of these ar-

13. See Table 7.2 in Chapter Seven.

rangements have been replaced with more general provisions, whereby some Arts, Education and Theology units are able to be mutually recognised as degree electives.

The strongest relationship between a private theology HEP and a public university is that between the MCD and Melbourne. The MCD was affiliated with the University in 1993, an arrangement which functions through the Joint MCD–University of Melbourne Committee. The main outcome is the ongoing contact fostered between the two bodies, including policy advice, library access, co-operation in HDR supervision, and the recognition of units as electives in the respective BA and BTheol degrees.¹⁴

The MCD's Table B listing in HESA (2003) also means that it stands alongside the universities in conversations with DEEWR and DIISR regarding higher education. The MCD Dean participates regularly in a wide range of Commonwealth and State bodies, on a par with university Vice-Chancellors, and is thus uniquely placed in Australian theological education to engage with current issues in higher education.¹⁵

Beyond these particular instances, however, the relationship between Australian theological education and the public universities is tenuous. The tertiary theology sector would appear to have ambivalent responses to this situation, though all the institutions involved—private and public—are committed to maintaining and deepening high academic standards of learning. Conversely, little interest in furthering relationships with the universities is shown by those in theological education who perceive divergent educational philosophies to be at work, or who are concerned about intrusions by government. On the other hand, some are keen to see theology regain what they perceive as its rightful place in higher education, including appropriate government funding support. The majority of theological institutions would seem to lie somewhere between these perspectives, especially since

14. In particular, when preparing for their respective AUQA audits in 2005, the draft Performance Portfolios were shared in confidence, and the Dean of Arts addressed the annual MCD Staff Consultation Day. The MCD has also been able to receive assistance from Melbourne faculty on applying for ARC grants and taking part in the UMAP programme for overseas student exchange.

15. In the universities, theology is best placed institutionally at ACU, having Faculty status: in the others it exists as a school or programme at levels three or four in the structural hierarchy. Despite its small size relative to the universities, the MCD's unique position alongside them means that 'Divinity' has a seat at the highest levels of Australian higher education: MCD leaders are well aware of the responsibilities and opportunities this affords.

they perceive their relationships with churches and supports to be of much greater significance to their ongoing survival and flourishing.

The proposal in the National Protocols that a new category of 'Specialist University' be recognised has already attracted interest from some theology HEPs (for example the ACTh, Avondale and Moore). This development may lead to new forms of relationship between private theological education, the public universities and Australian government departments. As is noted in Chapter Nine, the network of charismatic / Pentecostal colleges may be able to move beyond the 'Specialist' category to form a private university offering three broad disciplines, given the range of teaching in which they are already engaged.

Whatever position emerges, the present tenuous relationship between Australian theological education and the public universities needs to be acknowledged.

For consideration: That the *Council of Deans of Theology* consult widely in order to reach a common mind on the form and nature of future fruitful relationships between theological education and higher education in Australia, taking into account the implications of these for the well-being of relationships within the theology sector and its stakeholders.

C2 *International partnerships*

Especially since 1945, many Australian theological colleges have developed personal links with overseas churches and international higher education institutions. Some commenced with mission work, and have matured into ongoing partnerships, especially in post-graduate training: for example between Australian Anglican colleges and their counterparts in Kenya, Tanzania and Papua New Guinea; Whitley College's association with the Karen people in Burma / Myanmar; and Uniting Church and Anglican links with Trinity College, Singapore and Pacific Theological College, Fiji. Dioceses of the Catholic Church in Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere regularly send students to study in Australia, and exchange faculty. Some Catholic colleges have formal overseas links, for example the association of Yarra Theological Union (MCD) with the National Catholic Institute of Pakistan. Other relationships have developed through Australian participation in regional associations, for

example the *South East Asian Association of Theological Schools* and the *Asia-Pacific Association of Bible Colleges*, and especially the *World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions* (WOCATI) peak body.

Australian theological education has from its beginnings had close personal relationships with British universities and colleges, notably the theological faculties in the universities of St Andrew's, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Nottingham and Oxford. These continue, alongside developing relationships with European theological faculties such as those at Basel, Gottingen and Tubingen. Roman Catholic scholars and institutions have sustained active engagement with their counterparts in Rome, Europe and Britain. In more recent decades, relationships with North American universities have grown, in particular Andrews, Boston College, Chicago, Duke, Notre Dame, Princeton and Yale. Faculty from Australian theology HEPs are on study leave in these and other universities of international standing every year, and scholars from them visit Australia. Beyond the personal scholarly learning entailed, these regular contacts have been an informal form of benchmarking between Australian and international institutions.

Close relationships have existed between New Zealand and Australian theological education for many years. As well as bodies such as ANZATS, ANZSTS and ANZTLA, whose names begin with 'ANZ', formal links exist between a number of institutions both for teaching towards coursework and supervising candidates for HDR degrees. In particular, Alphacrucis (SCD) teaches through a campus in Auckland, as does the Catholic Institute of Sydney (SCD) through Good Shepherd College. Laidlaw College (formerly the Bible College of New Zealand) is the largest theological provider in New Zealand: affiliated to the ACTh for some years before becoming a stand-alone theology HEP, it continues to prepare candidates for ACTh HDR awards. Similarly, the Auckland Consortium for Theological Education taught the MCD BTheol until it became the School of Theology at the University of Auckland in 1994.¹⁶ The MCD continues to have HDR candidates in New Zealand, and a Memorandum with the University of Otago enables DMinStuds students to use Otago's courses and resources in preparing their thesis: admission, confirmation and examination remains with the MCD. These significant trans-Tasman relationships function

16. In New Zealand, all institutions (private or public) which teach for state-accredited awards receive government funding. Theology has been taught at the University of Otago for many years, and at the University of Auckland since 1994, in each case from undergraduate to doctoral levels.

as more structured forms of benchmarking, both between theological institutions in the two nations, and also with universities.

A growing number of faculty from Australian theological institutions take part in international academic conferences, some being held in Australia: the *Society for Biblical Literature* has twice met in Melbourne and once in Auckland, while *Societas Liturgica* is meeting in Sydney in 2009, its first conference in the southern hemisphere. Whitley College (MCD) in July 2009 is the base for the Fifth International Conference on Baptist Studies. Inter-institutional relationships are emerging in the Asia-Pacific region: United Theological College (CSU, Sydney), which teaches in Korean as well as English, has developed a formal link with Hannim University, Seoul Theological University and Busan Theological Seminary in Korea.

International partnerships through Australian Government agencies are open to theological institutions with university relationships, but involvement in these is in its infancy. Thus the MCD has been awarded an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship each year since 2003, and is registered for the *University Mobility in the Asia Pacific* (UMAP) student exchange programme.

In sum, Australian theological education has long-standing informal relationships and benchmarking with European and North American higher education, though frequent contact between scholars. Relationships with churches and theological colleges in the Asia-Pacific region are also of long standing, at institutional as well as personal level, and are continuing to develop. The strongest relationships are with New Zealand, including personal, collegial and institutional dimensions.

C3 *Community service*¹⁷

Australian theological education has an inseparable relationship with its 'industry partners', the Christian churches, whose presence in every local community in the nation—urban, suburban, regional and rural—is unique in its reach. Theology graduates in professional ministries serve local communities across the nation, seeking to discern, respond to and demonstrate the love of God shown in the depths and heights of human existence. The many graduates not employed by the churches

17. The ACTh, MCD and SCD included significant attention to community service in the Performance Portfolios they submitted to AUQA. This area is summarised by each ACTh affiliated college in their Annual Report to the Dean, and MCD RTIs include this in the reports prepared for their cyclic audits. Several theological college websites include sections on the work in which their graduates are involved.

or church agencies find their theological learning shapes and informs their Christian world-view, equipping them for their work, political engagements and social relationships. Beyond their own teaching and research interests, faculty typically contribute to the life of local congregations through regular involvement in their teaching, pastoral and community ministries.

By its own nature, theological education, both as oriented to preparation for professional ministry, and also for the overwhelming majority of theological students who are not ordinands, entails ongoing reflection on the nature and meaning of community identity and service. During the project, faculty offered significant evidence of the reflective and philosophical contributions they seek to make to Australian life, and prepare students to continue to engage in and develop as one of the outcomes of their learning. Theological faculty and graduates, as professionals, are committed to transformative engagement with a myriad of community issues—refugee advocacy, economic policy and welfare priorities, education trends, ethical issues, community development, crisis ministry, media awareness and the like. Such reflection is grounded in the experiences of daily living, especially where learning takes place in a residential community, and extends into intentional, corporate and communal action.

Some might suggest that gathering information on this sustained and widespread community service would serve the promotion of greater awareness of the contributions which theological education makes to Australian life. More, however, would find such a suggestion offensive, and undermining of the ethos of altruistic service within which theological education, and its 'industry partners', the Christian churches, seek to function.

D Conclusion

Australian theological education's relationships with the wider communities of government, higher education and society are mixed. Its dealings with state governments have changed significantly over the past three decades, and while those at the federal level are recent, they are developing quickly. Relations with higher education have moved from being distant before the 1970s, to interaction with a small number of universities in the decades since.

Theology EFTSL in Australian public universities is insignificant from the universities' point of view; conversely, it represents a small proportion of theological education generally. Even so, the greater opportunities now available to private higher education offer a new context within which the Australian theology sector functions: the growth of Christian tertiary institutions is a distinctive approach to this situation.

General community interaction remains of high significance for Australian theological education. Its future is bound up with the changing relationships between Christian churches and the societies within which they live.

In recognising these various dimensions, it is important to note that a number of times during the project, college faculty and church leaders made the point that they believe that theological education should receive similar levels of government support as do the public universities. Further, they are convinced that its academic standards and ethos are of a consistently high standard, at least on a par with Australian and overseas universities.

Ultimately, however, these leaders believe theology will further learning and teaching for its own purposes, and in its own manner. Such a position is not held to ignore or minimise the learning of other disciplines, nor in terms of what theological education owes to its 'industry partners'. Rather, these theological educators believe that theology makes its best contributions to both higher education and society by being true to itself, living out of the commitment it shares with the churches to being agents of the reign of God. □

Chapter Ten: *Uncovering Theology:* *diversity, co-operation, collaboration*

Key findings: Australian theological education is diverse and divided, partly due to history, heritage and geography, but also due to deeply-held theological differences, which have their effect on educational relationships. External observers, including government, can view this as inefficient and undesirable fragmentation.

The various Christian traditions engaged in theological education in Australia have diverse approaches and internal relationships, ranging from high levels of integration between church and college, to complex and difficult patterns.

Despite this complexity, long-standing levels of co-operation continue, especially in academic research networks. Significant opportunities exist for deeper co-operation and collaboration, motivated not so much for the sake of external bodies as to foster, encourage and fulfil the material tasks and purposes of theological education.

Sources: The material in this chapter is derived from each of the main data sources employed for the project:

- College website and handbook information about church relationships, and links to church websites;
- the personal knowledge of the Project Manager, and contacts with church and college leaders during the project;
- comments made at the Consultation day in the focus groups on formation, and more especially that on church-college relationships.

The latter group included participants from nineteen colleges related to five consortia, representing eleven theology HEPs and eight churches in all. Initial drafts of the chapter were informed by checks made with representatives of the church traditions discussed, and members of the *Council of Deans of Theology*.

What has this project uncovered?

In line with higher education generally, the Australian tertiary theology sector displays a long-term commitment to degree structures, learning and teaching commitments, and research processes of the highest order. More distinctive is the emphasis placed upon formational learning, and the vocational commitment of both teachers and learners, and the relationship between theological education and its 'industry partners', the Christian churches in Australia.

Yet the project has also come to highlight the divergences present since the beginnings of theological education in Australia. This finding, when stated at two progress presentations in July and September 2008, drew more response than any other area, and the recommendation for greater co-operation and collaboration was viewed by some as hopelessly idealistic. This chapter seeks to face the divergences, with a view to drawing out possibilities for future coherence across the sector. The divergences within Australian theological education can be characterised in three main dimensions: by Christian tradition, theological orientation, and consortium / HEP. The relationships involved are complex, and overlap and interact with one another, as the discussion will show.

A Fragmentation: division or principled diversity?***A1 Government and church perspectives***

Tables 2.3A and 2.3B in Chapter Two list Australian theological institutions in terms of their church and academic relationships. The first impression which such a table conveys is one of duplication and diversity, a picture which is perhaps so familiar to long-term participants in theological education that how it looks to external bodies is not fully appreciated.

When churches look at theological education, however, diversity is recognized as a necessary aspect of this perceived fragmentation. Some diversity is understandable in terms of the education needs of specific groups, youth ministers or spiritual directors for example. Some diversity is unavoidable, given the distinctive theological heritages of the Christian churches in Australia. And the 'tyranny of distance' is a further factor in the fragmentation of Australian theological education, not least because it tends to exacerbate perceived differences in theological emphasis between colleges which relate to the same Christian tradition. Yet the long-term Protestant-Catholic, and more recent Protestant-Pentecostal-Catholic differences, are transcended to varying degrees in the MCD and SCD.

When Australian governments look at theological education, they see fragmentation. As DEEWR and DIISR see it, theology is taught at five Table A universities, two Table B private HEPs (one private university and one consortium), 16 HEPs recognised as Non-Self-Accrediting Institutions (four being consortia), and three other NSAs whose awards are accredited by state agencies. All together, Australian tertiary-level theological education covers 26 HEPs embracing 69 separate colleges, making 75 institutions in all.¹ Total enrolment in theology, as noted in Chapter Two, was around 6,200 EFTSL in 2007—the most significant group in Australian private higher education, yet smaller than all but two regional universities (Charles Darwin and Sunshine Coast). A wide range of other single-discipline HEPs exist in Australian higher education (cf the College of Law), but no sector is as institutionally fragmented as theology.²

The larger lines of fracture do not run primarily along ‘denominational’ lines, however, but reflect divergent perspectives on key theological issues such as the place of the scriptures in theological learning, and how their study is to be approached. Less sharp, but important from a student’s perspective, is the variety of emphases on the best balance between ministry training and academic learning in preparation for the practice of theology. Related to this are implicit differences of ecclesiology reflected in different responses to the changing missional contexts in Australian society. Such differences—even if perceived more than real—are likely to continue for some time, if not permanently, so that some degree of institutional separation would appear to be inevitable.

Having acknowledged these two perspectives, it is hard to see how the present diversity in Australian theological education can be justified on educational, quality assurance, efficiency, accountability—and ultimately on theological and ecclesial grounds. This presents not only an organizational challenge, but an ecumenical and spiritual one: how do we as churches, colleges and Christian Australian citizens move forward in using the learning resources with which God has entrusted us? It may well be that the requirements brought about through greater engagement with Australian higher education will assist theological education

1. This total does not include three non-accredited colleges teaching at tertiary level, nor the two VET colleges engaged in indigenous education, Nungalinga College (Darwin) and Wontulp-Bi-Buya College (Queensland). At least ten other colleges teach at VET level, with a variety of church relationships.
2. The private consortia HEPs—ACTh, MCD, SCD—presented significant challenges to AUQA in explaining their complex internal structures, welcome though these are in terms of fostering co-operation and networking across a variety of Christian traditions, promoting benchmarking and easing the accreditation load.

in facing this challenge. As has been seen, its present structures have largely emerged only in the past 30 years: further change in order to meet its goals in a changing environment should be viewed as opportunity as well as challenge.

Australian churches' support for the colleges they sponsor is a major factor in the continued viability and health of theological education. For many colleges, however, financial support comes as much from personal donations as institutional commitments: and the former is strongly affected by individual perceptions of a college's graduates being 'sound', in whatever terms this is understood. Many colleges are thus highly sensitive to their perceived image in the Christian public they see themselves serving, especially those which describe themselves as inter-denominational, or have little connections to a particular church tradition.

A2 *Australian Christian traditions and theological orientation*

In view of the above, this section reviews the Australian theology sector in terms of ecclesial traditions. It must be stressed that the analysis is based on the narrow range of data obtained during the project—publicly available information, comments made at the Consultation, and insights and responses gained by the Project Manager. Time limitations meant that it was not possible to interview formally church leaders responsible for vocational discernment and ministry training: the observations made in these areas are thus tentative.

The analysis is not intended to criticise particular churches or colleges, but aims to shed critical insight on ways in which more effective relationships may be developed, given the reality of diversity and division both between and within churches. Collaboration and co-operation which is effective will function only when they are grounded in a realistic appraisal of the situation.³ They will need to function both between and within particular churches, and across the networks of teaching institutions which form the substance of Australian theological education.

3. In this book, colleges and churches are normally considered in alphabetical order. In this case, those with one national college are considered first, because the issues are clearer for these traditions. Colleges associated with Pentecostal traditions then follow, since these are the most recent group to emerge, and bring new models for both theological education and church-college relationships.

A2.1 Churches with a single national college

A number of churches support a single regional or national college:

- Avondale College (regional NSW, Seventh Day Adventist), which offers degrees for teaching, nursing and business, as well as pastoral ministers, who are a small minority in the student body of around 1500;
- Australian Lutheran College (Adelaide), which prepares teachers as well as pastors;
- Booth College School for Christian Studies (SCD, The Salvation Army Eastern Territory, Sydney);
- Nazarene Theological College (SCD, Brisbane);
- St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College (SCD, Sydney);
- The Salvation Army Officer Training College (MCD, The Salvation Army Southern Territory Melbourne).

In these cases, the relationships between the church and college could be expected to be straightforward, but this situation also brings particular challenges, not least that of geography, how the nuanced diversities within each church tradition are able to be given appropriate expression.

As discussed in Chapters Five and Eight, the extent to which a college has a fitting independence from the church which sponsors is a perennial issue in theological education. This matter may have a particular edge in the case of a single national college if college faculty perceive that they are less than fully trusted by their church to fulfill their vocation as teachers preparing the next generation of church leaders. The issue engaged some discussion during the project, but it is important to acknowledge that nothing negative came to light regarding church-college relationships. On the contrary, it became evident that faculty in these colleges are aware of the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities involved, and find themselves well-placed to make contributions to their church in facing them.

For consideration: That the insights of single regional / national church colleges into the integration between church and college be researched and made available across the Australian theology sector.⁴

4. It is difficult to say who should carry out this suggestion, since it transcends the brief of ANZATS and the *Council of Deans of Theology*. As noted in a similar case earlier, it would make an interesting HDR topic.

A2.2 Pentecostal / charismatic colleges

The relationship between Pentecostal churches and colleges is quite different from those of other Christian traditions. Ministers are generally initially authorised to take leadership roles because of their God-given skills, discernment that they are 'anointed' by the Holy Spirit to be representatives of Christ's ministry. Historically, training follows, so that colleges have been more oriented to 'rounding out' people with ministry experience than preparing them for future ministry responsibility. There is a discernable shift from this position to one that is more akin to that of other Christian traditions, however, with a young age profile among intending ordinands. Even so, the perception that a college is needed is more likely to arise from a particular congregation or group, than from the initiative of denominational leadership. A Pentecostal college is thus less likely to receive widespread church sponsorship, but (as with the Bible colleges) must make its way from donations and tuition fees. Further, as with ministers, teaching faculty are respected more because of their track record in ministry and teaching than due to academic attainment, though there is a growing trend to emphasise the latter in the more established Pentecostal colleges, as required in accreditation processes.

Two Australian theological networks are associated with the Australian Christian Churches (ACC, formerly the Assemblies of God)—Harvest and Alphacrucis. Harvest Bible College originated from a Dandenong congregation, and has several campuses in Victoria: it is associated with the ACC rather than being an official college. Harvest West was started by the church, however, and is an official ACC college. Both Harvest colleges are stand-alone theology HEPs in their own right. Alphacrucis, on the other hand, has a 60-year heritage on a variety of campuses in New South Wales and Queensland. Its various campuses are official ACC colleges, though they do not prepare 'ordinands' in the traditional sense.

The Tabor network originated from the establishment in Adelaide of a Bible college in the Pentecostal tradition, associated with the Christian Revival Crusade (now CRC Churches). Modern technology is widely used in many Pentecostal congregations, which include high participation rates of young people. Tabor Adelaide sought to encourage school-leavers to take higher education in a Christian environment, and was successful in adopting a Christian tertiary education model. As noted earlier, today it describes itself as 'a multi-denominational Christian Education Centre offering government-accredited courses at tertiary

level'. Tabor Victoria was established in 1988, Tabor campuses in Sydney and Perth in 1992, and from 1999 in Hobart: each is independent, but a national website presents a public face for the network. Today the Tabor network variously maintains the charismatic Christian ethos of its origins, but includes faculty and students from a range of Christian traditions. None of the Tabor colleges are directly church-sponsored, but (as with the Bible colleges) draw support from particular congregations and persons.

Christian Heritage College, like Harvest, grew from a local congregation, Citipointe Church in Brisbane, which is affiliated to the COC Churches (formerly Christian Outreach Crusade). Like Tabor Adelaide, Christian Heritage operates under the Christian tertiary institution model: it offers some theology courses, but most students take non-theological awards from a Christian perspective (especially teacher training), in each of which four core units in theology are required. Its focus is thus less oriented to equipping people for congregational ministry in the Crusade, than offering school leavers a Christian tertiary education.⁵

Closer co-operation between Christian Heritage (Queensland based), Harvest (Victoria and WA), Southern Cross (NSW, Queensland and New Zealand) and the Tabor network (SA, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and WA) would be of benefit not only to Pentecostal churches, but to Australian theological education generally, not least by enabling Pentecostal theological work to engage further with other Christian academic traditions.

Significant difficulties stand in the path of such collaboration, but there are also opportunities. Most of these colleges function as Christian tertiary institutions, teaching towards a range of disciplines as well as theology, and some already have government recognition in training teachers and nurses. The National Protocols set out criteria for the new category of 'specialist university', to which some theology HEPs aspire. The nature of the Pentecostal / Charismatic college network, however, may afford opportunity for the formation of a new private Christian university (alongside Notre Dame), if three broad discipline groups are able to be offered, along with pertinent research. With such a structure in place, collaboration with other Christian traditions in higher education would be more readily possible, without obscuring the distinctives of the Pentecostal tradition.

5. As noted earlier, Christian Heritage College, Tabor Adelaide and Tabor Victoria receive Commonwealth Supported Places for the National Priority training area of teaching. Apart from the financial implications, this is a significant development in relations between theology HEPs and the Australian government.

A2.3 Anglican

Moore Theological College is the oldest, and by some way the largest, Australian Anglican theological institution, with a well-qualified faculty and first-class library. It is registered by the NSW Department of Education to teach accredited coursework awards, after many years of association with the ACTh. Owned and generously supported by the Diocese of Sydney, it also trains ordinands for the dioceses of Armidale and North-West Australia. All students study full-time, preferably being residential; the standard course (BD) is four years, though students exiting after three graduate with a BTh (both degrees require New Testament Greek). Moore maintains a firmly Reformed theological tradition, and represents distinctive perspectives on ecclesiology and liturgy. As a consequence, relationships with other theological colleges and Anglican dioceses are characterised by distance more than closeness.

St Mark's National Theological Centre is owned by the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, is the Canberra campus for CSU (and so receives Commonwealth Supported Places for its students), and has close links with the ecumenical *Centre for Christianity and Culture* in Canberra. St Mark's Library, founded by Bishop Ernest Burgmann in the 1930s, has for many years offered its resources as a research base for parliamentarians. St Mark's prepares ordinands for other regional dioceses as well as Canberra and Goulburn, and has grown a strong research base in recent years, notably through CSU's PACT Centre.

Ridley Melbourne Mission and Ministry College has no formal Anglican church links, but has a close relationship with the Diocese of Melbourne, about half of whose clergy trained there, and its graduates have served in every Australian diocese. Ridley is governed by a self-appointing Council, and from 1965 to 2007 was a residential college of the nearby University of Melbourne. An ACTh college since its foundation by evangelical Anglicans in 1910 for non-graduate students, it is the one Anglican degree-level college teaching for ACTh awards, though non-Anglicans have in recent decades formed some 30-50% of the student body, and ordinands around 15%.

Trinity College Theological School is a department of Trinity College, the oldest residential college associated with the University of Melbourne. Its formal link to the Anglican church is tenuous—the bishops of Victorian Anglican dioceses form its 'faculty', and appoint the School's Dean—but (as with Ridley) its relationship with the Diocese of Melbourne is strong. From a century after its foundation in 1872, Trinity theological students

were graduates who lived in residence to 'read' Theology in preparation for ACTh examinations. In 1969 Trinity was one of the colleges which came together as the UFT, and in the past decade has also offered MCD diploma awards, and pioneered Australian online theological education for graduate coursework and diploma students. Today about half its students are ordinands, and come from a range of Anglican traditions.

The relationship between the two Melbourne Anglican colleges is not unfriendly, though co-operation is made less easy because they relate to different consortia (the ACTh and MCD). Ridley has a more 'working class / suburban' culture, and stands in the evangelical Anglican tradition; Trinity is more 'high culture' and seeks to represent the Anglican tradition comprehensively, though is perceived to be catholic in emphasis. Both colleges receive financial support from the Diocese of Melbourne, based on ordinand numbers, but this represents at most 15% of total costs.

St Barnabas' Theological College Adelaide, St Francis' College Brisbane and the Anglican Institute of Theology in Perth are smaller institutions, members of the ACD, BCT and PCD respectively. Each is owned and supported by its home diocese, and represents the catholic theological ethos of those dioceses. The three colleges also function as the centre for all education activities in their respective dioceses: while this underwrites their ongoing viability, it also means that maintaining a scholarly environment is a challenge for the small number of faculty in each.

As can readily be seen, the relationships between the seven Anglican colleges and with Anglican dioceses are complex. All belong to ANZATS, but they relate to seven different theology HEPs, so there is little opportunity for contact between faculty as Anglican scholars (and some faculty are not Anglicans). That the colleges represent a range of divergent theological traditions means that some competition exists between them, while students can be ill-informed about and disrespectful of colleges other than their own. Such factors, together with geography, allow little opportunity for corporate consideration of formation, national or international issues.

On the other hand, significant initiatives have been taken over the past decade towards training 'ordained local ministers' in regional and rural areas, in dioceses as varied as Bendigo and Gippsland (Victoria), Newcastle and Riverina (NSW), Rockhampton (Qld), Willochra (SA) and Perth (WA). Distance education resources provided by Trinity, St Mark's and now Ridley are being used to complement local programmes, as well as residential intensives at St Francis'. Academically, most courses are of Certificate type, but function at higher levels, and offer integrated approaches to learning, skills acquisition and ministry formation.

It would appear that Anglican theological education in Australia does surprisingly little to strengthen a sense of Anglican identity, which also weakens openness to robust ecumenical engagement—though many Anglicans would see this identity as having deliberately ‘soft’ edges. The Primate has facilitated some consultations on theological education which seek to move beyond the current situation, but stronger commitments by Anglican church and college leaders to foster greater co-operation in theology education would seem to be needed. Such collaboration should seek to serve not only the mission and ministry of the Anglican Church of Australia, but that of all Australian churches, especially those who share in learning partnerships with Anglican colleges.

A2.4 Baptist

The four Baptist colleges are each owned and supported by the Baptist Union in their respective states: Malyon in Queensland, Morling in NSW, Vose in Western Australia (each being affiliated with the ACTh), and Whitley in Victoria (an RTI of the MCD). Whitley is also a residential college of the University of Melbourne, and for some years was linked with the Churches of Christ Theological College, with whom it continues to co-operate closely.

Each of the four Baptist colleges identifies itself as ‘evangelical’, placing a strong emphasis on preparing students for mission-oriented ministries, and regarding the study of the scriptures as a priority. Each plays a significant part in providing on-going education for Baptist pastors and others in professional ministry. All belong to ANZATS, and have ties to a variety of evangelical agencies and networks. Malyon supports a Centre for Christian Leadership which seeks to prepare leaders who function from a relational style, and to work in networks. Morling has developed expertise in pastoral theology, public theology and Christian education, and made significant contributions in the areas of evangelism and mission. Whitley has strengths in biblical studies and urban mission, and is the base for the *Australian Association for Mission Studies*: for some years the *School of World Mission* was a department of the college.⁶ Whitley has maintained an ongoing research interest in Reformation studies, especially in the radical puritan traditions, which continue to shape its responses to the challenges of contemporary society. Its *TransFormation* programme brings creative forms of theological education to NESB people and refugees.

6. The 2009 MCD Conferral included the award of six doctorates to candidates supervised by Whitley faculty, four being in biblical studies—a record for an MCD RTI.

Given the congregationalist polity of the Baptist tradition, how each college is perceived at the local level is significant for its relationships. Morling initially explored becoming a Member Institution of the SCD, but affiliated with the ACTh after negative responses to its joining a consortium in which there were Roman Catholic members. Whitley, while maintaining its heritage of prophetic Christian communities of committed members, has sustained strong ecumenical relationships, which has sometimes placed it under pressure from the Baptist constituency. After wide consultation with pastors and church leaders, Vose Seminary, known since its beginnings as the Baptist College of WA, adopted this name in 2008 as a sign of a resulting re-formulation. In earlier years it has been affiliated with Murdoch, but moved to the ACTh as part of responding to local perceptions.

The Baptist tradition is thus served by four colleges sharing a common evangelical and congregational ethos, and offering a variety of emphases in the practice of Christian mission.

A2.5 *Churches of Christ*

Two colleges operating in different modes are recognised by the Churches of Christ in Australia:

- a) The Churches of Christ Theological College operates as a face-to-face RTI of the MCD, situated in the south-east area of Melbourne. CCTC used to be a national college, but has relinquished this in order to be accountable to the state conference, and currently supplies around 50% of ordinands, to whom it has a particular accountability. At the Consultation, CCTC indicated that it now has financial independence, with around 7% of funds from church sponsorship. This has enabled it to adopt a philosophy towards local congregations of 'how can we serve you well?' rather than an earlier perception of being 'an academy more enlightened than local congregations'.
- b) The Australian College of Ministries operates only in distance-education mode, using online delivery, across all Australian states (and beyond).⁷ ACOM also has a link with Fuller Seminary for the delivery of its DMin programme through intensive seminars in Australia.

How these colleges complement each other would appear to be an issue on which further work needs to be done, especially in relation to

7. ACOM derives from the former Churches of Christ college in Sydney, and Kenmore College (Brisbane); the latter was part of a ACTh-related consortium consisting of it, BCQ and what is now Malyon College. ACOM now has offices in several large cities.

the preparation of ordinands. In the Churches of Christ, as a congregational tradition, the local church alone calls a minister: a college must therefore attract students because of what it offers, more than because the denomination requires them to study through a particular place.

A2.6 Presbyterian and Reformed

The Presbyterian Church of Australia has two long-standing colleges, in Sydney (Presbyterian Theological Centre) and Melbourne (Presbyterian Theological College). While their main focus is the preparation of ordinands, over the last decade theological education for others has been developed, along with postgraduate coursework and research awards. More recently, the Queensland Theological College has formed, on the campus of Emmanuel College in the University of Queensland, and is the process of establishing a strong research centre.⁸ All three Presbyterian colleges are affiliated with the ACTh.

The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia has operated the Reformed Theological College (RTC) in Geelong for many years, and its campus is now adjacent to Deakin University. As a college in a regional town, as well as preparing ordinands it also attracts local students engaging in general theological study. RTC offered its internal BD until 1993, when state legislation no longer allowed this: RTC has since been affiliated with the ACTh.

A2.7 Roman Catholic

Theological education in the Roman Catholic church comes under several categories: diocesan seminaries, institutions run by religious orders, and HEPs offering a range of studies from a Catholic perspective.⁹ The latter group includes ACU, a Table A university, and the University of Notre Dame, a Table B private university: their courses include teacher training for Roman Catholic and other schools. Champion College is a liberal-arts undergraduate college of recent foundation, and the John-Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family offers graduate courses in its areas of expertise. Each of these HEPs has a relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, but is an independent teaching institution offering courses to anyone qualified to enrol, funded through its own work.

8. QTC Principal, the Revd Dr Bruce Winter, an Anglican priest, is a former Warden of Tyndale House in Cambridge, a significant research centre in biblical studies.

9. As well as sources used for this chapter generally, see Gerard Kelly, 'Future Directions in Theological Education and Formation', FACIT paper 2002; and 'Enrolments in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Theology Courses in Australian catholic Institutes of Theology. A 9-year Comparison', an ACU-FACIT report, November 2007.

Two colleges are associated with religious orders, both being related to the MCD; operating without explicit oversight by diocesan authorities, they work in close association with them:

- a) Jesuit Theological College (JTC) is a partner in the UFT, situated adjacent to the University of Melbourne. JTC's own programme prepares ordinands from the Asia-Pacific region for the *Society of Jesus*, using MCD awards as part of this purpose. Its student body is small and international, typically around a dozen, but its contribution to theological education is much greater than this. In partnership with the Uniting Church, JTC provides significant resources to the Dalton McCaughey library associated with the UFT, one of the two largest theological research libraries in Australasia. JTC faculty teach without charge for the UFT, are active in research and publication, and offer support to the Society of Jesus's wider ministries, notably advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers. Its funding comes largely from Jesuit resources.
- b) Yarra Theological Union (YTU) is quite different, being a coming together of nine religious orders on a single teaching campus to assist members of religious communities in their preparation for religious life and ministry. The large body of its students, however, consists of people (Roman Catholics and others) who wish to study theology. Several of the orders' vocational charisms involve emphases on spirituality, social justice, concern for the poor and disadvantaged, pastoral mission and outreach, cross-cultural mission and hospitality: these emphases pervade YTU, and shape the research interests of faculty. It is similar in some ways to the Bible colleges, and like them, funding comes largely from tuition fees and donations, but unlike them it relies significantly on the financial and personnel resources of the constituent religious orders and others who support the mission and independence of YTU.

The diocesan seminaries in each mainland state are owned and sponsored by particular (arch)dioceses, but are usually not themselves colleges teaching towards academic awards. Each trains deacons and priests according to the detailed requirements of the Holy See, as interpreted for local conditions. Vianney College in Wagga Wagga NSW prepares ordinands for several regional dioceses, teaching towards the Bachelor of Sacred Theology of Urbaniana University in Rome, as well as encouraging ordinands to take units in CSU's BA. Other seminaries provide residential spiritual and pastoral formation for ordinands studying theology at one of the Catholic colleges—Catholic Institute of Sydney (SCD), Catholic

Theological College (MCD, with religious as well as diocesan ordinands) and Catholic Theological College SA (ACD). St Paul's Theological College Brisbane, currently a BCT college, from 2010 will teach for ACU degrees (as will Trinity Theological College of the UCA). In Western Australia, ordinands are prepared through the Catholic Institute for Adult and Tertiary Education, which mainly works with the the School of Theology in the University of Notre Dame and also with the Theology Programme at Murdoch University.

Each of these Catholic teaching institutions has significant numbers of students who are not ordinands, but (except for Notre Dame) preparation of ordinands remains the main curriculum focus. Each receives church support, but also relies on tuition fees and donations in much the same way as do other church-sponsored colleges.

The Broken Bay Institute is different again: beginning in the *Centre for Christian Spirituality* in Randwick NSW, by 2001 it had evolved into a degree-level distance education SCD Member Institute. It is now owned by the Diocese of Broken Bay, and offers a wide range of courses in spirituality and theology, from adult education and certificates programmes to undergraduate and graduate coursework degrees. BBI receives some diocesan support, but is largely dependent on tuition fees and donations.

The broad reach of education in the Roman Catholic Church in Australia, from its primary and secondary schools, adult education courses, seminaries, universities and significant research, is a considerable theological strength. The ecumenical relationships within which almost all institutions teach are also noteworthy. There is a good deal of collaboration across the national scene, as represented particularly in FACIT, the *Australian Catholic Biblical Association* (ACBA) and the *Australian Catholic Theological Association* (ACTA).

A2.8 The Uniting Church in Australia

Responsibility for curriculum issues affecting the preparation of ordinands within the Uniting Church in Australia is held by the National Assembly. This brings a coherence across the UCA colleges which has similarities to the 'single church college' ones. On the other hand, funding and the appointment of faculty are the responsibility of the synod in each mainland state, and the different colleges relate to a variety of theology HEPs.

The ecumenical commitment of the UCA has been to the fore in these various academic accountabilities, however. Indeed, this ongoing commitment was itself largely shaped through the co-operation of former

Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian colleges, and their coming together with the formation of the UCA in 1977.

In Victoria, the establishment of the Uniting Church Theological College from its Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian predecessors was a key factor in the formation of the United Faculty of Theology in 1969, the first Australian theological institution in which Protestant and Roman Catholic faculty came together to teach. This co-operation found tangible expression in the joint ownership and support of the Joint Theological Library by the UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and the Society of Jesus, known as the Dalton McCaughey Library since its relocation in 2007 to a first-rate purpose-built facility at the Centre for Theology and Ministry. The Centre also brings together the former Otira College (originally founded to support Methodist lay preachers) and integrates all UCA educational ministries from the one site.

In NSW, the United Theological College was a foundational Member Institute of the SCD, and is now a CSU Sydney campus: it has strong links with South Pacific churches, as reflected in the faculty and the composition of the student body.

In Queensland, Trinity Theological College has been part of the BCT from the latter's beginnings. With BCT not seeking re-accreditation after 2009, from 2010 Trinity will teach for the degrees of ACU, continuing its ecumenical engagement with St Paul's Theological College.

In South Australia, Parkin-Wesley College was a foundational member of the ACD, later including Coolamon College, the UCA distance education provider: from 2009 the combined institution became the Uniting College of Leadership and Theology.¹⁰

In Western Australia, Perth Theological Hall helped form, and continues as an active member of, the Perth College of Divinity, the institution through which the Theology Program at Murdoch University functions.

The Wesley Institute is owned and supported by the Wesley Mission in Sydney, and was for some years an SCD Member Institute. Now a stand-alone HEP, the Institute functions as a Christian tertiary institution, offering a variety of courses from a Christian perspective, notably in the Performing Arts.

10. Parkin-Wesley has itself a fascinating story: see Andrew Dutney, 'Two Traditions of Theological Education', paper read to the Hidden Histories Conference, United Theological College NSW, August 2007.

B Co-operation and collaboration

B1 Existing co-operation

The diversity and fragmentation within Australian theological education is by no means the last thing to be said. As noted at a number of places in this Report, significant co-operation has been present for many years. Harmonious collaboration characterises internal relationships within the consortia, as the AUQA Reports on the ACTh and MCD noted. Since its foundation in 1968, ANZATS has embraced all the consortia, theological colleges from every Christian tradition, and all but a handful of teaching institutions. The *South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges* (SPABC), the *Fellowship of Catholic Institutes of Theology* (FACIT) and the *Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible Colleges* network (PACBC) bring together faculty from major theological traditions, especially through regular conferences. Structurally, the *Council of Deans of Theology*, now including representatives from each theology HEP, has provided a formal mechanism for the exchange of information and to provided a common voice to government.

Co-operation which promotes learning is seen in the working relationships between theological libraries, especially since the development of ANZTLA from 1978. As noted earlier, ANZTLA provides a Style Guide, Standards, and catalogues for Australian theological education, and facilitates information being shared about new developments such as technology for lending, cataloging and online databases. Theological librarians work with a double commitment, to their theological institution and as professionals in their occupation. Their commitment to supporting learning and research offers an example of collaboration which takes with full seriousness a particular ecclesial and theological stance, while not allowing these to become a barrier to effective co-operation. At a local level, colleges have reached agreements to allow students to share libraries: for example that between SOCS (ACTh) and Emmaus (SCD), while ACOM (SCD, operating only in distance education mode) has an agreement with the Wesley Institute (a stand-alone HEP) for ACOM students to use the Wesley library.

Co-operation also takes place across HEPs to meet new learning needs: this typically includes allowing a student to take a unit from another HEP to cover an area of learning not available in their home institution. But there are also examples of cross-HEP units, such as 'Chaplaincy in Educational Settings', initially drafted by Whitley College in co-operation with the *Victorian Council for Christian Education* to

meet the training needs of ACCESS (formerly the *Council for Christian Education in Schools*) chaplains and other working in state schools. This unit continues to be offered in co-operation with BCV, Ridley Melbourne, Tabor Victoria, Harvest and SOCS (in Sydney), and has led to the development of Graduate Diplomas to cover the area more fully after the Howard-Costello Government introduced grants to support public school chaplains. Again, the unit 'Looking Beyond Division' commenced as an initiative of the national Faith & Order Commission and the MCD for the 1991 World Council of Churches Conference in Canberra, was cross-registered with the ACTh and SCD. This unit has since been offered bi-ennially in different capital cities under the aegis of the *Centre for Ecumenical Studies*.

Co-operation also takes place between theology HEPs in being Course Assurance guarantee partners for ESOS and FEE-HELP, in providing research supervisors and examiners, and having external members of a HEP's academic committees.

The above examples indicate that both significant challenges and possibilities exist for greater co-operation across the varieties of theological, ecclesial and educational relationships which subsist in Australian theological education. In some case this will involve working together on administrative matters and academic arrangements. In others, especially where divergence is grounded in theological difference, it will mean the harder task of building levels of trust from which collaborative enterprise can be set forwards. In order to flesh these matters out, the following section offers suggestions regarding areas in which greater collaboration could emerge.

B2 *Possible areas of collaboration*

Other chapters in this book have included a range of matters 'for consideration' by various institutions in Australian theological education—individual colleges, HEPs and consortia, ANZATS (where co-operation is largely about learning and teaching) and the *Council of Deans of Theology* (where institutional collaboration and representation of the sector are to the fore). Of particular concern for promoting learning is the need to bring into line organisational matters such as points equivalence, and transfer, credit and cross-credit procedures, and educational policies on issues like degree models, course articulation, unit levels and nomenclature. Sharing information regarding tuition fees (especially for overseas students - see Table 7.1) could also provide greater coherence to their present wide range.

The Annual Report template which the ACTh requires to be used by its affiliated colleges offers a model for consolidating such information in a consistent manner. The ACTh template covers financial systems and risk management; legal status; governance, planning and management of stakeholder relationships, academic procedures and community service; resources, especially library; faculty CVs, review and development; student enrolments and services, and evaluation processes—with a concluding check-list of documents to be attached.

The advent of government oversight in many areas of private higher education has meant that private theological institutions are required to develop a range of policies and procedures to do with student safety and rights, and have these publically available on websites. Policies such as the following could be included:

- Privacy and confidentiality, especially of student records;
- Harassment, discrimination and non-discriminatory language;
- Academic grievance procedures; and
- Non-academic grievances.

Good examples of each of these have been noted in earlier chapters, but common wording across the sector (at least for the private theology HEPs) would provide assurance of quality, and save work in keeping up with government requirements.

A further area for collaboration is participation in the *Tuition Assurance Scheme* requirements of ESOS, and the Financial Guarantees needed for FEE-HELP. For ESOS, some HEPs have their own TAS (for example the MCD), and others participate in the ACPET or COPHE schemes. Since theological students from overseas are screened before being accepted, and theology HEPs have raised no problems for government in meeting their commitments to these students, a theology TAS offers distinct advantages from a risk management perspective. As regards FEE-HELP the situation is more complex, but at least one institution (ICSPF, MCD) has had a guarantee from an external body accepted: a collaborative arrangement across the sector would balance the Course Assurance Agreements already in place, and should see the costs of compliance reduced.

Both of these areas best fall into the province of the *Council of Deans of Theology*: the private consortia have considerable experience in dealing with these matters, and the ANZATS secretariat could possibly assist with the networking needed to see them realised.

B3 *Suggestions for further co-operation*

The general area of theological student life is a matter about which formal agreement is neither necessary nor appropriate, given the variety of institutional purposes across theological education. Nevertheless, a check-list available for use across Australian theological education would be helpful. The UFT seems to be alone in having policies on children in classes, and mobile phone use. A few colleges offer child care (UTC and Worldview for example) and family rebates: 35% at Ridley, Trinity WA and Tabor Adelaide, but 50% at Tabor WA. Youthworks requires Police and Working with Children checks to be submitted together with an Application form. Colleges with significant numbers of residential students (so Avondale and SMBC) are strong on OH&S matters and what to do in an emergency. Development of an outline check-list, with examples, could assist the work of administrations, and the networking involved would help them get to know one another and their particular areas of expertise.

More widely, the development of a common outline for a college prospectus, including shared wording where relevant, would itself deepen understanding between colleges, and enable smaller ones to benefit from the resources and skills of larger institutions. Areas to be noted should include matters such as the college's ethos, ecclesial relationships, formational and educational purposes, courses (with AQF ties), graduate attributes, faculty, library and learning resources, theological stance (and its relation to teaching and learning), community living requirements, and shared wording on policies and procedures touching privacy, harassment, discrimination, academic and non-academic grievances and the like.

Whether or not precise outcomes eventuate from these suggestions, the processes necessary to move towards them are just as important. If the research undertaken for this project has revealed one thing, it is that—beyond a good number of outward-looking research-active faculty—few of the many people who give themselves wholeheartedly to theological education in Australia are aware of what others are doing, and how much they have in common.

It is important to note that what ultimately matters—for all stakeholders—is not uniformity, but quality assurance. This Report has concluded that there is significant room and need in Australian theological education for greater co-operation and collaboration. Principled diversity will benefit from an ethos of hospitable openness between educational institutions, and assist a style of benchmarking which sustains best practice in learning, teaching and research.

C Conclusion

A major conclusion of this project is the positive consequences which would flow from greater levels of collaboration and co-operation across Australian theological education. Long-standing differences arising from different historical, social and class backgrounds continue to have their influence. More particularly, theological divergences remain, and are unlikely to be resolved quickly (if at all). Yet a high degree of co-operation has developed across Australian theological education in the past half-century, finding particular expression in the comprehensive memberships of ANZATS and ANZTLA, and now the *Council of Deans of Theology*. Yet the level of institutional diversity would seem to be less than can be justified, and divisive issues not uncommonly cross church boundaries.

Another finding is that while people in each college and consortium engaged in Australian theological education have a partial perspectives of what is happening, the full picture is not widely understood or appreciated. Lack of knowledge can breed perceptions about others which are at best uninformed, at worst false. Shared information will not resolve the evident differences which are present, but its absence will do nothing to resolve or re-situate them.

A key outcome of this project is the hope that fuller disclosure of the breadth and depth of the Australian theology sector may evoke shifts of attitude, and higher levels of collaboration and co-operation. The primary issue here is one building trust, trust that removes the suspicion that others are not as committed to the good purposes of God as we are, or even opposed to them.

The project has also uncovered the very strong sense across the sector that theological education is not in the first place accountable to government or higher education. Rather, it exists to set forward the academic, formational and spiritual well-being of the people of God, and in this distinctive way contribute to the wider communities—national, regional and international—in which Australian churches live, move and have their being. □

Appendices

A Project aims

The detailed aims established for the project were as follows.

a) *Teaching and learning within the discipline:*

- To evaluate the needs, expectations and goals of stakeholders, including students, and how current curricula meet those needs;
- To establish consensus on what would be a set of clear national standards for the sector in terms of the quality of awards and a process for achieving and benchmarking quality outcomes;
- To identify current areas of strength and potential resources in the discipline area, both nationally and internationally, and ensure their distribution across the theology sector;
- To identify the impact on teaching and learning, and curricula of the 'service' teaching theology offers to other sectors;
- To identify the needs of the sector for improving the quality of teaching and learning and to establish priorities and processes for meeting those needs.

b) *Structural development:*

- To develop a sector-wide strategic plan to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, set national standards, and meet the needs of stakeholders, including those other sectors which engage with the discipline of theology in the main as a service provider;
- To consolidate the role of the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia or University Departments* as a peak body in the discipline area across public and private providers, in taking responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning, and national standards across the sector;

a) *International collaboration and benchmarking:*

- To formalise productive collaborative relationships with key international bodies, namely *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Clergy Study), *The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada* (ATS), and the UK *Higher Education Academy* (Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies) (PRS);
- To collaborate further, with an emphasis on benchmarking, with theological providers in New Zealand, a country which has similar structures, members on the *Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia or University Departments*, and close connections through various theological bodies, especially the *Australia and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools* (ANZATS).

B Project methodology

B1 Sources:

- *Existing materials produced by theological colleges and Higher Education Providers teaching theology*, whether printed or on the web, were gathered in January–April 2008. Follow-up contact was made by email and phone to clarify unclear data, confirm its interpretation or provide further information.¹ This approach was very successful, with all but two colleges making timely responses, and all participating in a cooperative spirit.
- *Quantitative data on key learning-related areas* was collected in April–June 2008 and December 2008–January 2009. (The process was initially interrupted for medical reasons, then delayed due to the qualitative phase.²) Given the experience of the Project Manager in compiling DEST / DEEWR data, HEPs were requested to forward non-confidential DEEWR files for 2007, thus obviating the need for separate data-gathering: a very high response rate resulted, representing around 90% of EFTSL. Quantitative data-gathering was completed by direct contact with non-responding colleges, and by using some other sources, during January–March 2009. It became evident that most colleges did not keep information in sufficient detail to enable retention and completion rates, research strengths and the like.
- *Qualitative insights on key issues in theological education* were gathered from a whole-day workshop of college leaders and faculty held in Melbourne on 25 September 2008. (The initial research plan to conduct interviews individually proved to be quite infeasible.)
- Focus groups reflected on nine areas identified by the Project Team from earlier research as needing exploration. Discussion outlines for each focus group, prepared by the Project Manager and revised by the Project Team, were distributed to participants before the day (see Appendix D). Facilitators were selected by the Project Team, along with recorders (mostly postgraduate theological students): they met with the Project Team on the eve of the day to ensure that a common mind was formed on method. Opportunity was taken on the day for the Project Manager to present findings based on research to that date.

1 A written Report was made to the CDTUCUD on 18 April 2008, including preliminary and tentative reflections on issues and opportunities facing Australian theological education, based on this source.

2 An Interim Report was lodged with ALTC on 31 July 2008, and distributed across the sector. ALTC was informed in May 2008 of the Project Manager's impending surgery, and possible delay in reporting in view of his chemotherapy, a request for an extension was made in October 2008, and granted until 30 April 2009. This had the effect of data analysis being delayed until October 2008, and a longer period for writing, but also meant that planned interviews with church stakeholders in theological education did not eventuate.

- *The personal networks of the Project Manager* informed the project. Dr Sherlock has over 35 years' experience in Australian theological education, including policy and governance work for the ACTh and MCD, and teaching and research supervision in evangelical, ecumenical and Anglican theological environments. His own knowledge of most areas of Australian theological education was used sparingly as an evidentiary basis for the Report, but enabled the gathering of information to be undertaken with sensitivity and efficiency.

B2: *Limitations and difficulties*

The processes involved in gathering information generally proceeded smoothly, though lacunae in data were often encountered. The many college faculty and others approached about the project were positive in their responses, and raised critical comments and responses without rancour. This welcome ethos of cooperative engagement bodes well for theological educators taking this Report with full seriousness. It built on the networks of trust that have developed across Australian theological education through ANZATS, and more recently the *Council of Deans of Theology*.

Some aims could not be addressed or fulfilled, given the limited time and resources available for what proved to be an enormous task. Beyond drawing an accurate and nuanced picture of Australian theological education, priority was given to matters related to learning and teaching, for both coursework and research, in the use of project resources. Interviews with students and church leaders proved to be beyond the time available.

One unexpected difficulty encountered in formulating matters 'for consideration' was the question of who should take responsibility for action (which is also why 'recommendations' is used but once). In general, where decisions are needed regarding the relation of theology HEPs to one another or with government, the *Council of Deans of Theology* is the appropriate body, as is implied in the second aim under Strategic Development. Likewise, where learning strategies and inter-college relationships are to the fore, ANZATS is the relevant body, not least because of its comprehensive membership and long history. But matters of formation, requirements for authorised or ordained ministers, church-college relationships and professional development can only be worked through by the churches and colleges concerned.

C Project outcomes

Three ‘meta-outcomes’ were given in the Introduction. This Appendix gives further details, followed by particular matters ‘for consideration’.

C1 General outcomes

Other studies have covered the broad sweep of Australian theological education until the mid-1990s, and some historical research from the perspective of particular churches has been undertaken.³ In addition, the ANZATS Council usually receives reports from each state at its annual day-long meeting. As noted already, however, the *Uncovering Theology* project is the first of its kind in Australia. This book is the major outcome of the project, identifying a wide range of issues ‘for consideration’ by a variety of agencies in Australian theological education. How action is taken on these will in large part be the measure of the success of this project.

This project also brings together a large quantity of information about the various colleges and churches engaged in theological education in Australia, within the broad framework of contemporary higher education. In doing so, it sought to respect the distinctive ecclesial heritage and theological stance of each Christian tradition. As the project proceeded, it became evident that many faculty and church leaders are unaware of policy and practice in other colleges or traditions. Scholars are more familiar with colleagues in their theological disciplines (for example New Testament, Ethics, Church History) than with the structures of theological education in their own church. The comprehensive picture painted in this Report will hopefully foster greater understanding of both the common challenges and the distinctive contexts facing theological education in Australia.

One particular consequence of this project is that theological institutions, including those involved with a university, should better understand the opportunities opening to them in Australian higher education. Conversely, many in the university sector (especially in the humanities) will recognise the distinctive ethos claimed by theological education—formative, personal, communal and identity—as cognate with their own aspirations. Hopefully this book will also encourage the universities to appreciate what theology offers to higher education.

3 The Bibliography lists works relating to the Adventist, Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches in Australia. For overviews, see especially the essays edited by G. Treloar.

More particularly, 'religion' has been more in the news in the past decade, in part due to perceptions that religious differences threaten the stability of Australian society. Theological education should be better placed, as a result of this project, to make distinctive contributions in this context. They are unlikely to be as comforting to the *status quo*, or as affirming of an easy 'tolerance', as some may wish: believers do not see 'religion' as a matter of lifestyle preference, but as a way of life. Theology offers to higher education time-proven approaches to the exploration of personal and community identity, as well as its own Christian insights into these.

Internationally, the book will be of significant interest to New Zealand theological institutions and universities, though other international contacts were limited to literature and web surveys.⁴ Associations of theological schools in the Asia-Pacific and North American regions will be interested, as will the *World Organisation of Consortia of Theological Institutions* and journals whose focus is theological education.

C2 *Information outcomes*

A further outcome is a database of information on Australian theological institutions, including

- 2007 EFTSL data by college, HEP, and course level;⁵
- educational affiliations and church relationships;
- course structures and articulation;
- faculty qualifications, numbers (in 2008), professional development and research practice;

4 In particular, for the UK see *Theology and Religious Studies* (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Gloucester, 2007); Leslie Houlden, 'Education in theology: Story and prospects,' *Theology* May/June 2008 pp 170-177, who surveys the 47 university departments of theology and/or religious studies in the UK in 2005 (not counting theological colleges with university links).

For the USA, see Charles R. Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006). This book is particularly strong on appropriate pedagogies and their application to seminary formation issues.

5 Enrolment data was collected for 2007 because this was the first year in which all HEPs were required to report such information for all students (a consequence of FEE-HELP); data for 2008 was not available in time to be included in the project.

Summary data for years prior to 2007 could be provided by the private consortia university schools and some stand-alone theological colleges, but the task of preparing comparative figures over the previous five years fell beyond the time available.

- library holdings (2008) and other learning resources;⁶
- 2009 tuition fees.⁷

This data is included or summarised in the text or Appendix G.

On a more mundane level, the involvement of all HEPs in reporting to DEEWR is bringing greater familiarity between private HEP administrators, departmental officials, and their university counterparts. This is not an outcome of this project, of course, but naming it may help such contacts to be seen as opportunities for enriching administrative procedures in the support of learning.

It is hoped that this project will foster progress on these fronts through its endeavour to be accurate, direct and appropriately sensitive in its description, analysis and suggestions.

6 Library staffing and holdings data were collected for 2008 since this was the time-period of the project.

7 Tuition fees for 2009 are stated because, as is required by regulation, this was what websites listed from October 2008, after which time this data was collected.

D Matters for consideration

Throughout this book a number of matters 'for consideration' are noted. Because the project was a scoping exercise, and it was difficult to propose precisely who should take these issues further, they are suggestions rather than a plan of action. That said, opportunity has been taken to name aspects of Australian theological education in which improvements could or should be made.

These matters are here grouped in terms of who it is suggested should take action regarding them: ideally, each theology HEP would be active in doing so. Allocating some to ANZATS, CDT and other bodies is not intended to detract from this primary responsibility, but facilitate communication and co-operation across the Australian theology sector. The matters for consideration have been sharpened and combined to avoid repetition and promote clarity.

D1 ANZATS

ANZATS is asked to promote further consultations across the Australian theology sector

- between colleges, consortia and churches on the issues involved in **academic freedom for formation**, with a view to promoting deeper trust and greater co-operation across the institutions involved, and better understanding of theological education on the part of government agencies and humanities departments in the universities.
- on both undergraduate and graduate coursework teaching, with a view to developing guidelines for **pedagogies appropriate to the distinctive learning styles** these represent.
- to explore **learning strategies across different academic levels**, with a view to having such an agreement both implemented in the sector, and accepted by regulatory authorities as legitimate practice.
- on the place of **flexible delivery**, especially outside the capital cities, implications for communal and formational learning and preparation for Christian ministries, and the possibilities of greater co-operation.
- for faculty responsible for **online learning**, with a view to developing strategies for best practice, including appropriate pedagogy, intellectual property and copyright, quality assurance, and the use of online methods to complement face-to-face learning.
- for faculty engaged in **'service' teaching**, to consider the issues raised, share insights gained from their experience and encourage benchmarking across 'service' units.

- on teaching **theology in Asian languages in Australia**, including implications for English-language theological reflection.
- to encourage colleges to work together to ensure that introductory and advanced units in **Koiné Greek and Biblical Hebrew** are available to all theological students.
- to reach agreement on the length of an MA coursework degree, and the terminology used for graduate coursework degrees generally.

D2 The Council of Deans of Theology and ANZATS

The *Council of Deans of Theology*, in consultation with ANZATS, is requested to work on a number of matters:

D2.1 Government and Higher Education relationships

- continue to make submissions to both State and Australian governments, including government enquiries, on matters relating to Australian theological education and the churches this serves.
- monitor developments in the Commonwealth's ERA initiative, and institute workshops through which faculty and key administrators in the Australian theology sector can become familiar with it, including using university programmes where possible.
- consult widely in order to have a common mind form regarding future fruitful relationships between Australian theological and other higher education, taking into account the implications for the well-being of relationships within the theology sector and its stakeholders.

D2.2 Relationships with the Australian theology sector

- identify Graduate Attributes looked for by the stakeholders in Australian theological education—churches, mission agencies, colleges, consortia and government agencies—and shape such GAs, consistent with AQF guidelines, for use in the variety of theological teaching institutions in Australia, including the preparation of exemplars.
- develop a common set of policies on academic and non-academic grievances (including flowcharts), privacy, harassment (including spiritual harassment) and discrimination (including language).
- gather data on arrangements in place on internal moderation processes and external benchmarking, to facilitate further co-operation across the sector (for example with SPABC and PCBC) and with external higher education institutions

D2.3 Research

- initiate a project to identify the research strengths in the Australian theology sector, including agencies engaged in research related to theology, society and the churches.
- facilitate opportunities for theology / ministry HRECs to share their experiences of working with applications and research monitoring.
- encourage all research theology HEPs to
 - foster greater co-operation to support theological research, including the use of joint conferences, ANZATS state chapters, and co-ordinated IT communications, and
 - collaborate in all aspects of HDR awards: admission, supervision, research training, library resources, examination and conferral.

D3 The Council of Deans of Theology

D3.1 First degree in Theology

The Council (now open to all theology HEPs) is requested to take steps to initiate a project to develop a common structure for a first degree in theology / ministry, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. This project should take account of the following particular matters:

- shape consistent descriptors for units and levels, in order to simplify academic relationships and enable greater co-operation and collaboration in the use of learning resources;
- facilitate discussion between theology HEPs to resolve differences in unit values in graduate coursework awards, and seek some alignment of the programmes of NSAI theology HEPs with the latitude given to universities;
- design an evaluation instrument for each theological discipline, able to be used across the theology sector and analysed by an external body, and available for benchmarking;
- prepare grade descriptors and guidelines for a variety of assessment models (as appropriate to the various theological disciplines and levels of learning);
- reach agreement on methods of citation, cognate with those used in major theological journals;
- establish a fuller picture of retention rates in the pre-2007 period, and the implication of such research for Australian theological education.

D3.2 Research sub-group

Several matters can be grouped under the broad concept of a 'research sub-group' of the Council, consisting of the Associate Dean of the ACTh, the ACU Associate Dean (Research, Research Training and Partnerships), the MCD and SCD Directors of Research, the Director of PACT and others holding similar positions.

This group should provide a focal point and catalyst for coordinating theological research, and promoting scholarly networks, across the breadth of Australasian theological education. In particular, it is proposed that the group

- a) develop cognate administrative and review processes, and reach agreement on such matters as
 - structures for doctorates in Ministry Studies, clarifying their research status (including DEEWR classification and terminology);
 - outcome descriptors for the examination of theses, including field-based research outputs, taking account of the Universities Australia guidelines; and
 - a common approach to what 'research-active' status means;
- b) facilitate a coordinated, national approach to research training across the Australian theology sector, for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, identifying research training opportunities, and developing guidelines and models for supervisory practice;
- c) institute a process whereby supervisors in the theology sector gain membership of a national Register of Supervisors;
- d) encourage the offering of research seminars across theology HEPs in each capital city;
- e) monitor GCA PCEQ surveys for research theology HEPs;
- f) develop guidelines relating to the teaching-research nexus desirable in the Australian theology sector, including the meaning of 'research-active', taking account of university practice in the humanities.
- g) co-ordinate one or more ARC grant applications involving scholars from a range of scholars within and beyond the theology sector.

D4 ANZATFE, *working with* ANZATS

ANZATFE, in consultation with ANZATS, is asked

- to develop guidelines on the relationships between 'pure' and 'applied' elements in learning in a first degree in theology, in order to provide a framework in which varied emphases on study, ministry practice and personal development can be integrated.
- to work to identify and explicate
 - a) the contribution of experience-based learning to theological education, and its place in each theological discipline;
 - b) shared patterns in preparing candidates for pastoral and specialist ministries, with a view to encouraging principled ecumenical co-operation; and
 - c) the particular needs for the training of placement supervisors, to enable resources to be offered (in each state) to meet this need.
- to facilitate the development of common models for the length, academic level, assessment, ratios of theory / observation / practice, and supervisor requirements for internship programmes.
- to foster the identification and equipping of faculty in the disciplines of practical theology, and their engagement with other theological teachers and disciplines.

D5 ANZTLA *and others*

In consultation with ANZSTS, AASR and ANZATS, ANZTLA is asked

- to consider the extent to which the current range of journals related to Theology and Religious Studies published in Australia and New Zealand adequately meets the research needs of the Australasian theology sector and its stakeholders.
- to undertake a scoping exercise of library strengths and research specialties across the theology sector, and make recommendations which may foster towards greater research co-operation.

D6 Theology HEPs

Theology HEPs and their related colleges are asked to

- include learning and teaching methods in faculty appraisals and in college audits / reviews;
- regularly arrange professional in-service workshops for faculty on issues such as learning styles, how students have learnt at school, learner-focussed teaching, and the appropriate use of technology for education; and create opportunities for faculty to share effective teaching methods in each theological discipline.
- consider more fully how learning is affected by the varied Australian contexts in which teaching and ministry take place, in particular the opportunities afforded by engagement with indigenous theologians and colleges.
- undertake a thorough revision of unit descriptions in order to form consistent Learning Outcomes, using the resources of university Learning and Teaching centres;
- facilitate the sharing of assessment standards, models and resources across the theology sector, for example via the ANZATS website.
- keep academic data in such a way that student progress, unit and course completion and retention rates are readily available.

D7 Churches

Churches, together with their colleges and consortia leaders, and making use of the ANZATS network, are asked to

- initiate a project to ascertain student perspectives on the formation of ordinands, taking into particular account the changing patterns of ordained ministry and preparation for it.
- research the insights of stand-alone theological colleges into the integration between church and college and make these available across the Australian theology sector.
- foster better understanding and collaboration between the churches in their common task of preparing future leaders for pastoral, academic and community ministries.

E Group outlines from the Consultation, September 25 2008

Each group had a facilitator and recorder, and was given a suggested timeline for discussing the topics listed, with these general instructions:

The general aim is to gather insights, with some reflection—agreement is good, and must be noted, but the intention is not so much to promote debate as collect data which can be shared across the sector, with government and the churches.

In most cases three groups covered each area, and each was asked to begin with a different topic to ensure that all areas received coverage.

Group 1: Undergraduate learning

Aim: To gather input issues affecting undergraduate learning across the sector, with particular interest in benchmarking across the sector and beyond.

Topics for reflection:

It is recognised that many of these topics overlap: what matters is that major aspects of the area are named and clarified more than that the outline is followed in strict detail.

- What is *essential* for a first degree in Theology? What majors / minors / progression?
Is it more like a medicine / law degree, with a specified core, or an Arts 'open' one?
What differences of principle (if any) have emerged between BMin and BTheols?
To what extent should there be agreement across the sector about degree structure?
- What issues are there in *cross-crediting* between consortia / colleges?
How far is VET -> Higher Education articulation an issue?
What part could ANZATS / CDT play in this area?
- What *benchmarking* is in place now—for example consortia internal moderation requirements, moderation across institutions, cross-checking graduate attributes?
To what degree should the AQF structures be followed closely?
- Are there comparable statements of *graduate attributes*, both for a degree as a whole, and disciplines and levels within it? To what extent might the English QAA paper (attached) serve as a model across the sector?
- *Some more particular areas for possible reflection:*
To what extent are different *student learning styles* considered for undergraduate teaching?
In what ways are *diploma* courses different to degree ones?
To what extent is this area merging with VET?

How is *teaching in LOTE* working (Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Greek)? What insights are passing into English-language teaching? LOTE / English benchmarking?

What *primary language* requirements (Koine Greek, biblical Hebrew) are in place? Is there agreement on the place of these languages in a first degree in theology?

Group 2: Graduate Coursework awards

Aim: To gather input issues affecting graduate coursework learning *across the sector*, with interest in benchmarking across the sector and beyond.

Topics for reflection:

- Given that all students are graduates, what distinctive *pedagogies* are in place in comparison to undergraduate learning? If some ‘multi-streaming’ across awards is used, what learning / assessment strategies are taken? What issues have arisen (if any) in relation to ‘multi-streaming’?
- What *benchmarking* is in place now—for example consortia moderation requirements, moderation across institutions, cross-checking graduate attributes? In particular, at present some coursework MAs for non-theological graduates require the equivalent of three semesters’ work, some four. What reasons are given for these distinct patterns? Do they reflect differences of principle, and can they be resolved?
- Are there comparable statements of *graduate attributes*, both for a degree as a whole, and disciplines and levels within it? To what extent might the English QAA paper’s model serve as a model across the sector?
- How is the use of *technology* (data projection, online resources, Moodle etc) affecting graduate learning?

Group 3: Formation for Christian ministry

Aim: To gather insights about formation for Christian ministry, both for particular Christian traditions and across the sector, especially as it relates to academic learning (including academic freedom), and benchmarking across the sector and beyond.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- To what extent does formation for Christian ministry ‘drive’ the over-all curriculum (both explicit and implicit), an aspect of learning for all students? What tensions / opportunities arise from this stance?
- How far does a ‘confessional’ stance, whether explicit or assumed, shape formation and learning? To what degree does any particular doctrinal commitment or assumption affect the explicit curriculum?

NB: the *Uncovering Theology* project presumes that theology can only be taught effectively from a position of principled commitment: information is sought on how this affects learning.

- What church expectations regarding official ministry candidates bear upon learning? How do these affect the learning of other students?
- NB: In most colleges today, whether or not supporters view it in 'ministry training' terms, official ministry candidates form a significant minority in the student body, though in a few they predominate, and some colleges are not oriented to explicit ministry preparation. Please take care to give your input on this issue from your particular context.
- To what degree are Australian contexts for ministry taken into account in formation for Christian ministry? How does this relate to that paid to non-Western contexts?
- How is preparation undertaken for specialist ministries (life-long deacons, church planters, youth / children's ministers, school chaplains / religious educators, welfare chaplains etc.)? What 'core' requirements are laid down (if any), and to what extent do elements of specialist formation spill over to the college and other students?

Group 4: Learning by flexible delivery

Aim: To gather insights about learning by flexible delivery in the theology sector, as it relates to the courses for which it is employed, the students for whom flexible learning is employed, and especially the pedagogy used for different modes.

NB: For the purpose of this project, flexible delivery includes:

- *intensives*, where the main learning period is full-time study for one unit, typically with pre-reading and post-period assignment(s);
- *extensives*, where teaching takes place on several Saturdays during term;
- *correspondence*, where materials (printed, emailed or downloaded) are used by a student to prepare for assessments and / or examinations;
- *distance education*, where correspondence learning includes a tutorial group or other face-to-face contact
- *online learning*, where students engage in inter-active learning with tutor(s) and other students using the facilities of the internet.

It is recognised that these categories overlap, and that some are used as part of primarily face-to-face learning. Other groups are considering the use of technology in learning, and research (the latter does not form part of this group's brief).

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- What forms of flexible delivery are used generally, for more than a few special cases? What factors led to them being adopted? How do they complement face-to-face modes?
- What courses are involved in flexible delivery? Are there reasons for some not being offered (for example, some places view diploma and graduate courses as appropriate for flexible delivery, but not a first

degree in theology)?

Are their limits on the proportion of learning which a student may take using flexible delivery? What reason are given to support policy here? Have some courses been withdrawn from flexible delivery?

- What intentional pedagogies are employed for the modes of flexible delivery used?

How do they compare with and / or complement face-to-face modes?

To what extent is flexible delivery more a matter of doing the best for some students? What proportion of students use flexible delivery only?

What proportion of students complement face-to-face learning with flexible delivery modes?

Is there any particular profile which stands out among students using flexibly delivery?

Group 5: Technology related to learning

Aim: To gather input issues affecting technology related to learning *across the sector*, with particular focus on ways in which pedagogy is being adapted and information resources made available as a result.

NB: By 'technology related to learning' is meant resources which extend beyond person-to-person learning (lectures, seminars, supervisions, tutorials, etc.), including audio, CDROMs, iPod, DVDs, data projection, electronic library resources and catalogues, websites etc.

Another group is discussing flexible delivery, and technology for academic records is not part of this workshop day. The focus of this group is technology used in face-to-face modes for learning.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- To what extent is technology used as part of learning for all or most students?
What main types of technology are in use, and for what aspects of learning and community life (for example the projection of images during services of worship)?
- How have 'traditional' class-room pedagogies been modified or complemented by using technology (for example using online chat rooms for tutorial preparation)? What training has been needed for teaching and support staff in implementing and using technology for learning? How is the visual aspect of much technology being used: have staff simply replaced whiteboard points with data-projected words?
- What has been the effect of technology on library resources and use? In what ways is your library related electronically to other libraries?
- What resource issues have been raised by the introduction of technology related to learning?
Have any technologies been scaled back or reduced, and if so, for primarily resource or pedagogical reasons?

Group 6: Theology in university settings

Aim: To gather input regarding theology in university settings, with particular focus on how these affect learning in the sector, as well as wider aspects of how theological institutions relate to Higher Education.

NB: It is recognised that ‘theology in university settings’ includes a variety of settings. Two universities (one private, Notre Dame, one public, ACU) are of Roman Catholic foundation, in which theology fits naturally as a discipline in its own right. The CSU colleges are self-standing theological institutions of long standing: these, and the ACD campus, are not part of the main CSU and Flinders campuses, so that theology students and faculty do not mix easily with those from other faculties. Only at Murdoch (and presumably Newcastle) is theology taught on the main campus.

In addition, the MCD (along with Notre Dame) is a Table B HEP, affiliated to the University of Melbourne, and offers a double degree with Monash University; its leaders interact with the Higher Education sector at the highest levels. A range of informal relationships also exists between some non-Table A and B providers and some universities—for example that between the ACTh and the University of Western Sydney, between MCIS and Macquarie University. Again, some colleges are in receipt of Commonwealth Supported Places, the main financial advantage of a university relationship.

Finally, it is important to note that MEETCYA’s National Protocols now offer the possibility of non-self-accrediting institutions (NSAIs) becoming self-accrediting (effectively joining Table B), and of the latter becoming specialist university colleges, and then universities. A number of NSAIs theological providers are seeking to move down one or more of these paths.

The discussion outline offered below seeks to be open to each of these settings, but will need to be tailored to the input able to be offered from those present.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- [Overall context]: What are the positives from teaching theology in a university setting (or envisaged to be present)? What challenges arise? Is there a tension between academic and faith-formative dimensions to theology?
How are faculty appointed who are acceptable to both church and university?
Is theology accepted or merely tolerated in the university setting?
What are pros and cons of either position?
- [Curriculum]: What curriculum pressures does working in a university setting place on the curriculum? How legitimate is a faith stance to teaching theology in a university setting?

How can teaching from an explicit faith stance ground itself in university settings, where faith / ideological stances are implicit or unrecognised? In ways (if any) is the interaction of academic and formation issues affected in a university setting? How do colleges looking to teach in a university setting see these issues?

- [Teaching/learning]: What is the impact of large class settings [100+ students] on the teaching of theology? How do large classes impact on assessment processes?

What is the impact on teaching where the faith commitments of students remain largely unknown? How does the quality of, and satisfaction with, theological teaching compare with that of other disciplines within the university?

- [Resources]: What financial and other support has a university relationship brought? What are the resource advantages / disadvantages of a university setting in relation to a theological college?

Are library resources for theology properly resourced in the competitive environment which characterises much university life?

- [Inter-disciplinary opportunities]: To what extent have other disciplines contributed to theology departments (for example philosophy, history, English, social sciences)? To what extent has the theology department offered resources to these departments?

What joint teaching and / or research activities are in place?

- [General]: How would those teaching in a university setting advise SAI colleges seeking university status? What (dis)advantages (if any) do they see? How would those teaching in an SAI setting advise NSAI colleges seeking SAI status? What (dis)advantages (if any) do they see?

Group 7: Research and research training

Aim: To gather input issues affecting technology related to research and research training *across the sector*, with particular focus on ways in this is being developed in the light of changes in higher education.

NB: It is recognised that research undertaken in Table A or B HEPs (ACU, CSU, Flinders, MCD, Murdoch, Newcastle and Notre Dame) is eligible for government funding. The purpose of this group is not so much to discuss extending research funding to private bodies—that is argued in several submissions from the sector to the Bradley Review—as to gain insights into issues touching research, and research training, in the sector.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- [HDR students]: What processes are in place for assessing HDR applications, including any special provisions for those from overseas, and the allocation of a supervisor?

HDR students largely work on their own, given the nature of their learning: how does research training take place (especially in qualitative

methods)? What opportunities given for HDR students to present work in progress? How is satisfactory progress monitored?

What issues (if any) have arisen regarding examination processes?

- [Supervisors]: What qualifications are required and sought in supervisors? Must they be research active? What has proved to be (in)effective in supervisor training (both initial and in-service)?
Do supervisors understand and appreciate the role of the *Human Research Ethics Committee* (HREC)? What provisions are in place for co-supervisors, including those from other institutions?
What steps are in place for when the student-supervisor relationship breaks down?
- [Research strengths]: What research strengths have been identified? Who undertakes the main part of research—HDR students, supervisors, faculty in relation to their teaching, faculty undertaking research generally? To what degree are research strengths, personnel and resources—including library accessions policy—correlated?
What networking is your institution involved in across the sector regarding research?
- [Faculty]: To what extent is the ‘teaching / research nexus’ understood and accepted by faculty, and by administrators?
What criteria are used to determine that faculty are ‘research active’?
To what degree are faculty in a position to undertake ongoing research, alongside their teaching and supervision roles? How far is this seen as a significant part of your institutions’ identity and work? What opportunities are there for faculty to share their research?
Is study leave available, and on what terms?

Group 8: Placements, internships, STFE

Aim: To gather input issues affecting theology related to placements, internships, STFE and experience-based learning *across the sector*, with particular focus on ways in this is being developed in the light of the widespread acceptance of ‘practical theology’ across the sector, and changes in churches’ expectations of candidates.

It is recognised that practical theology embraces a wide range of disciplines (for example field-based ministry education, liturgy, communication, religious education, spirituality, missiology / inter-cultural studies, pastoral theology, CPE). As far as possible, discussion should seek to engage issues which cut across all of these disciplines, insofar as they embrace experience-based learning (in varying degrees), and seek to espouse an integrative ethos.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- [Overview]: What experience-oriented learning (practical theology) is offered, both in ‘standard’ theology degrees and in specialist courses?
Are degree majors and / or minors available?

To what extent do 'practical theology' oriented diplomas complement a theology degree?

What articulation from VET to higher education courses is in place (if any)?

- [Placements]: How are placements or internships accredited / approved academically? What criteria (of any kind) are used in arranging placements? What processes are in place for the training and accreditation of supervisors?
- [Integration]: What sense is there of practical theology of being an integrated field?

How is it viewed in relation to other disciplines and fields?

What integration takes place with other disciplines (for example between preaching and biblical studies?), especially noting that many units will take place away from a college campus, or in intensive mode away from term time?

- [Faculty and research]: Are distinctive criteria used for the appointment of practical theology faculty? What in-service and / or research opportunities are available, including for faculty who are part-time or sessional? If ministry-oriented research awards are offered, how do these relate to 'traditional' research degrees? How does the involvement of HREC relate to either?

What contribution is practical theology making to the teaching / research nexus?

Group 9: Church-college Relationships

Aim: To gather input regarding church-college relationships, with particular focus on how these affect learning in the sector.

NB: It is recognised that a wide variety of church-college relationships exist in the theology sector. Some colleges have their principal focus on the preparation of candidates for the ministry of a particular Christian tradition; others undertake this role alongside that of offering general theological education to church members; still others, while having no formal church relationship, teach many students who will enter professional ministries. The discussion outline offered below is open to each of these possibilities.

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- What official relationship(s) exist between college and church? What unofficial or implicit relationships? What implications arise for the curriculum (overall course, or majors, required of ordinands)? For more detailed curriculum matters (for example a language or field placement requirement)? What effects (if any) do requirements for ordinands have on the learning of other students?
- What accountability structures are in place as regards the church? What tensions have arisen (if any) between church and college, and over what type of issues?

- What support from the church is appreciated by the college?
- What resourcing issues affect college–church relationships?
How dependent is the college on the church for capital and / or recurrent costs?
To what extent do college governance and faculty appointments and reviews involve the church?
- In what ways do the college and church ‘speak to’ one another—that is, engage in ongoing dialogue?
How far is the college involved in offering in-service / post-graduate education and training to clergy and church leaders?

Extra: ‘Service’ teaching (*did not eventuate: used in personal conversations*)

Aim: To gather input issues affecting the ‘service’ teaching of theology in its varied contexts, with particular interest in benchmarking across the sector and beyond.

NB: ‘Service’ teaching means theology units taught to students for a non-theological degree. Such teaching includes ‘core’ units required for any degree (as at Avondale and Notre Dame), or units required for specialist courses (eg a GradDipRE at ACU, GradCertTRE at YTU, BEd at Avondale).

It is recognised that some ‘service’ teaching is given to students who have not chosen to study theology, while some is given to ‘specialist’ theology courses. This may be an artificial division, however: what matters is gaining qualitative insights into this aspect of theological teaching. The questions below seek to explore aspects of this area: for some institutions this is familiar territory, while for others it is a recent development: the key question is, what does the group believe that government and churches / sponsors need to hear from the project?

Topics for reflection: For your institution,

- [*Quantitative data*] What ‘service’ teaching is undertaken, and for what categories of students? How much EFTSL is involved, and what proportion of all theology teaching does this represent? How are ‘service’ units benchmarked against similar theology units?
- [*Student focus*] What factors (if any) differentiate between student learning in ‘service’ and other theology units? To what extent do students not committed to learning theology affect the ethos and / or pedagogy of ‘service’ units? How are the pre-requisites, usually required in a theology degree for units beyond first level, met for such ‘service’ units?
- [*Pedagogy focus*] How do faculty involved with ‘service’ units approach their teaching, in comparison to other theology units? To what degree is a distinctive pedagogy needed and / or employed?
- [*Faculty focus*] How is the teaching of ‘service’ units apportioned among faculty? Have tensions / issues / opportunities arisen among faculty involved in service teaching? To what degree, if any, has ‘service’ teaching affected the teaching-research nexus?

F Bibliography

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G Data Tables

G1 Student EFTSL 2007 for all Australian theological institutions

Institution	Undergraduate awards					
	Diploma, Ass deg	BMin	BTheol, UG BD	Core units	Other UG degrees	Total UG
CONSORTIA						
ACD		34.4				34.4
ACTh						
BCQ	18.0	6.0	10.0			34.0
BCSA	8.0	3.0	6.0		3.0	20.0
BCV	2.1	28.0	15.0			45.1
Malyon C		36.0	8.1			44.1
MCSI					16.0	16.0
Mary Andrews C	17.5					17.5
Morling C	32.9	97.1	2.3		6.1	138.4
Mueller C	13.6					13.6
PTC NSW	6.0	0.6	22.8			29.4
PTC Vic		3.8	18.6			22.4
QTC	7.1		11.0			18.1
Ridley	1.3	19.0	17.8			38.0
RTC	4.9	2.5	8.0		0.5	15.9
SAGST						
SMBC	54.3	35.0	20.0			109.3
SOCS	21.8		1.8		4.5	28.0
Trinity WA			16.0			16.0
Vose		15.8	8.0		1.4	25.1
Youthworks	81.0					81.0
ACT (total)	268.4	246.8	165.3		31.5	711.9
BCT			64.4			64.4

Graduate coursework awards					Research awards				TOTAL
Grad Cert	Grad Dips	MDiv BD	Mast Cwk	Total PG Cwk	Research Masters	DMin	PhD / ThD	Total HDR	
					5.6				34.4
	6.0	14.0		20.0					54.0
	3.0			3.0					23.0
	26.0	26.0	7.0	59.0	0.8	7.0	5.2	13.0	117.1
	6.0	16.0	11.0	33.0					77.1
	2.0			2.0					18.0
									17.5
2.3	38.0	37.1	23.5	100.9	1.3	5.5	1.5	8.3	247.5
									13.6
	1.4	16.6	6.0	24.0	1.8		1.8	3.5	56.9
	4.0	4.6	4.0	12.6			0.5	0.5	35.5
									18.1
	25.0	26.0	4.0	55.0	2.5		3.5	6.0	99.0
	1.4			1.4					17.3
			3.0	3.0	1.5			1.5	4.5
	45.3	66.0	18.0	129.3	0.5			0.5	239.1
									28.0
	7.0	9.0		16.0					32.0
	4.0	5.0	3.5	12.5					37.6
									81.0
2.3	169.0	220.4	80.0	471.6	8.3	12.5	12.5	33.2	1,216.7
5.8	1.5		11.4	18.6	3.9				83.0

Institution	Undergraduate awards					
	Diploma, Ass deg	BMin	BTheol, UG BD	Core units	Other UG degrees	Total UG
MCD						
CCTC	2.4		26.3			28.6
CTCVIC			69.8			69.8
ICSPF						
SATC	36.8					36.8
Trinity Diploma	21.5					21.5
UCTC Diploma	6.3					6.3
UFT	1.0		45.9			46.9
Whitley	1.9		29.1			31.0
YTU	1.8		32.5			34.3
MCD (totals)	71.5		203.5			275.0

SCD						
ACOM	11.4		108.9			120.3
Alphacrucis	11.4		444.3			455.6
Booth	25.3		29.3			54.5
BBI	3.6		41.0			44.6
CIS	2.9		115.1			118.0
Emmaus	8.1					8.1
Garden			18.5			18.5
Kingsley			66.4			66.4
Nazarene	15.6		8.0			23.6
NSWCPE						
St Andrews			16.4			16.4
SCD (total)	78.3		847.7			926.0

UNIVERSITIES

ACU	1.0		60.8	412.0	36.0	473.8
CSU St Marks	9.3		64.6		1.3	75.2
CSU UTC	0.4		32.9			33.3
Flinders			29.2		1.7	30.9
Murdoch			29.4		7.0	36.4
Notre Dame	4.5		26.3	526.8	3.3	557.6
Newcastle			21.0			21.0
Total	15.1		264.1	938.8	49.2	1,228.0

Graduate coursework awards					Research awards				TOTAL
Grad Cert	Grad Dips	MDiv BD	Mast Cwk	Total PG cwk	Research Masters	DMin	PhD / ThD	Total HDR	
	1.7								
	8.0	5.3	5.0	18.3					47.0
	16.0	1.7	11.8	29.5					99.3
1.6	7.5	0.3	2.8	12.2					12.2
									36.8
	1.7	0.7		2.3					23.9
									6.3
0.5	25.0	30.3	13.3	69.2					116.0
0.8	12.7	8.3	5.5	27.3					58.3
22.2	23.2	0.2	10.8	56.4					90.6
25.1	95.7	46.8	49.3	215.3	50.0	10.0	41.0	101.0	591.3
			10.8	10.8					131.0
		7.1	106.6	113.8					569.4
			13.4	13.4					67.9
27.9	4.0	11.0	46.1	89.0					133.6
		6.3	32.1	38.3					156.3
									8.1
1.6	6.3		8.4	16.3					34.8
	20.4		29.9	50.3					116.6
0.5	2.1		5.1	7.8					31.4
			1.8	1.8					1.8
0.8			13.6	14.4					30.8
30.8	32.8	24.4	267.7	355.6	1.9	2.5	7.7	12.1	1,293.6
47.0	47.0		64.0	158.0	5.0	2.0	33.0	40.0	671.8
7.1	12.1		6.0	25.3	13.3	3.0	7.4	23.7	124.1
	2.6	3.4	14.0	20.0	0.3	3.5	6.0	9.8	63.0
6.0	1.0		12.0	19.0	4.5		20.8	25.3	75.2
					3.0		13.0	16.0	52.4
1.8	11.5		29.3	42.5	3.3			3.3	603.3
					1.0			1.0	22.0
61.9	74.3	3.4	125.3	264.8	30.3	8.5	80.2	119.0	1,611.7

Institution:	Undergraduate awards					
	Diploma, Ass deg	BMin	BTheol, UG BD	Core units	Other UG degrees	Total UG
STAND-ALONE THEOLOGY HEPs						
Tabor NSW		2.1	8.1		17.5	27.8
Tabor SA	3.3	37.3	2.4		90.1	133.1
Tabor Tas		24.0				24.0
Tabor Vic	26.0	46.0	11.0		20.0	103.0
Tabor WA		3.9			15.7	19.6
<i>Tabor (totals)</i>	29.3	113.3	21.5		143.3	307.4
<i>Adel C Min</i>	4.0	4.0				8.0
ALC	41.0	19.7	24.3			85.0
Avondale C	14.0	16.7	16.7	46.0	39.0	132.4
Campion C					6.1	6.1
Harvest Vic	25.0	45.6			9.6	80.2
Harvest West	69.0	20.0			9.0	98.0
C'n Heritage C	8.9	41.3				50.2
<i>JP2 Inst</i>						
Moore	28.0		293.0			321.0
Perth BC	17.0	19.0				36.0
<i>Worldview</i>	3.5				7.5	11.0
Wesley Inst	4.5		45.3			49.8
<i>Totals</i>	214.9	166.3	379.3	46.0	71.2	877.7
<i>[Italics means that the college is not FEE-HELP registered.]</i>						
<i>Non-accredited:</i>						
Call Christian Higher Education						
Pope Shenouda Coptic College						
Manney Coll			6.0			6.0
TOTAL	677.5	560.8	1,951.7	1,240.8		4,430.7

Graduate coursework awards					Research awards				TOTAL
Grad Cert	Grad Dips	MDiv BD	Mast Cwk	Total PG Cwk	Research Masters	DMin	PhD / ThD	Total HDR	
	0.8			0.8					28.5
4.0	12.4		6.0	22.4		3.8			155.5
	2.0			2.0					26.0
	15.0		13.0	28.0					131.0
	4.7			4.7					24.3
4.0	34.8		19.0	57.8		3.8			365.2
									8.0
28.6	1.8		11.0	41.4					126.4
	13.0		3.0	16.0	5.0			5.0	153.4
									6.1
	1.3		4.0	5.3					85.5
									98.0
	8.9			8.9					59.0
	2.0			2.0			2.0	2.0	4.0
			21.0	21.0	0.5			0.5	342.5
	1.0			1.0					37.0
0.8	5.0			5.8					16.8
			1.0	1.0					50.8
29.4	32.9		40.0	102.3	5.5		2.0	7.5	987.4
									6.0
159.1	440.9	295.0	592.6	1,485.9	105.4	37.3	143.3	272.8	6,189.4

**G2 Faculty by time and qualifications
for all Australian theological institutions**

Category	College	Faculty - Full-time			Faculty - Part-time		
		Doct	Mast	Other	Doct	Mast	Other
CONSORTIA							
ACD			1				
	CTC SA	2	1		3	3	
	St Barnabas	1		1	1		
	Parkin-Wesley	5	3				
	Flinders	2					
	Totals	15	5	1	4	3	
ACT		2					
	BCQ	3	2		1	2	2
	BCSA	2	2			4	7
	BCV	11	5	3			
	MCSI	3			6	4	4
	Malyon	3		1	3	6	
	Mary Andrews		2	2	1	2	2
	Morling	9	5	4			
	Mueller	1		1	3		2
	PTC NSW	2	1		1	3	2
	PTC Vic	4	2		1	2	2
	Qld TC	2	1	1	1		3
	Reformed TC	4	1		2	2	
	Ridley	3	3	1	3	3	8
	School of CnSt	1			5	8	8
	SAGST				2	4	
	SMBC	5	6	6	4		20
	Trinity WA	2	3			2	1
	Vose	4			4	5	
	Youthworks		2	2		1	5
	Totals	61	35	21	37	48	66
BCT	BCT	1					
	St Paul’s TC	5			2	4	
	Trinity TC	4			3	6	2
	St Francis	3			5	3	2
	Totals	13			10	13	4

Category	College	Faculty - Full-time			Faculty - Part-time		
		Doct	Mast	Other	Doct	Mast	Other
MCD	MCD	2					
	CCTC	4	2		2	2	1
	CTC Vic	3	1		20	11	2
	ICSPF				4	6	2
	SATC	1	2	4	2	1	7
	UFT	18	3		14	2	0
	<i>Jesuit TC</i>	7			3	1	
	<i>TCTS</i>	3	1		2		
	<i>UCTC</i>	7	2				
	Whitley	5	2	1	5	7	7
	YTU	19	6		10	4	0
	Totals	52	16	5	57	33	19

SCD	SCD	2					
	ACOM	1		3	1	1	
	Booth	2		2	1		2
	BBi	3		1	1	1	
	CIS	11	1	1	4	3	1
	Emmaus	1					2
	<i>Garden City</i>	3			1		
	<i>Kingsley</i>		2				
	Nazarene TC	2	1	1	2		1
	NSW CPE			2			1
	St A GOTC	2		2	1		2
	Alphacrucis	9		4	1		3
	Totals	36	4	16	12	5	12
Consortia totals		177	60	43	120	102	101

Category	College	Faculty - Full-time			Faculty - Part-time		
		Doct	Mast	Other	Doct	Mast	Other
UNIVERSITIES							
ACU	Ballarat	2					
	Brisbane	8	1				
	Canberra	3					
	Melbourne	6	1				
	Sydney	5	1				
	Total	24	3				
CSU	United TC	7					
	St Marks	7	3		8		
Flinders	Flinders	2					
<i>incl above</i>	ACD	15	5	1	4	3	
Murdoch	Murdoch	6			1	1	
	PTheol Hall	4			1	1	
NDame	Fremantle	12	1	1			
	Sydney	5	2				
N'castle	Newcastle	2			2		
University totals		65	9	1	11	1	0
PENTECOSTAL NETWORKS							
Harvest	Victoria	2	1		5		10
	Harvest West	1	1	1			13
Heritage	Citipointe		4	3			
Tabor	Adelaide	5	3	6			
	NSW	2	3	1	5	4	1
	Perth		2	2			
	Tasmania			2	3	6	7
	Victoria	4	4				
Pentecostal totals		14	18	15	13	10	31

Category	Faculty - Full-time			Faculty - Part-time		
	Doct	Mast	Other	Doct	Mast	Other
STAND-ALONE HEPs						
Adelaide C of Ministries	1	2	2	2		7
Aust Lutheran College	9	2		5	5	12
Avondale C	7	1		6		
Campion C	6	1				
John-Paul II Inst	6		1	5	10	6
Moore TC	20	2		6	4	3
Perth Bible C	2	1	1			
Wesley Inst	2	2				
Worldview Centre	2	1	4	2		7
Stand-alone Totals	55	12	8	26	19	35
TOTAL AUSTRALIAN THEOLOGICAL FACULTY	311	99	67	170	132	167

G3 Library resources in Australian theological institutions

Library	Librarian (qualified)	Other staff	Books	Serials -print
Adelaide C of Ministries			13,000	40
Adel Theol Library (ACD)	1.0	0.5	60,000	200
Alphacrucis	1.0	1.0	16,000	Na
ACOM / Wesley Inst *	2.0	2.0	30,000	na
Aust Lutheran C	3.0	1.0	88,600	260
Avondale C	2.0	5.0	24,000	140
Bible C of Qld	0.6	0.1	21,000	55
Bible C of SA	0.2	0.8	27,000	70
Bible C of Victoria	1.5	0.1	43,000	135
Booth C	0.0	1.0	20,000	150
Broken Bay Inst		2.0	20,000	60
Campion C	1.0	1.0	18,000	na
Cath Inst Sydney (Veech)	1.0	4.0	80,000	280
Cath TC Victoria (Mannix)	1.0	3.0	100,000	220
Christian Heritage C	2.0	1.0	17,000	89
Churches of Christ TC	1.0	1.0	23,000	100
Dalton McCaughey (UFT)	3.0	5.0	140,000	400
Emmaus BC			12,000	60
<i>Garden City C</i>		1.0	14,600	na
Harvest BC		1.0	33,000	100
Harvest West BC		1.0	14,000	na
ICSPF (Carmelite)	1.0	2.0	30,000	na
<i>Kingsley C (now at Tabor Vic)</i>			30,000	na
Malyon C	0.6	0.6	21,000	468
Mary Andrews C		0.1	7,000	40
Moore TC	2.0	9.0	220,000	800
Morling C	0.8	0.6	44,000	220

Library	Librarian (qualified)	Other staff	Books	Serials -print
Mueller BC	0.2	0.3	5,000	0
Nazarene TC	1.0	1.0	35,000	na
NSWCPE			1,000	na
Perth BC			24,000	120
Presbyterian TC NSW	0.9		35,000	100
Presbyterian TC Vic	0.6	0.1	20,000	124
Qld TC	0.5	0.3	19,000	30
Reformed TC	0.7		20,000	50
Ridley (Leon Morris)	4.4	0.4	45,000	124
S Graduate School of T	0.6	0.8	43,000	453
School for Christian Studies	1.0		16,000	120
St Andrew's GkOrth TC		1.0	15,500	200
St Francis	1.0		26,000	110
St Marks National TC	3.0	9.0	90,000	300
St Paul's TC Qld	1.0		43,000	230
Sydney Missionary & BC	0.8	3.3	31,000	172
Tabor Adelaide	2.0	1.5	45,000	Na
Trinity V (Leeper, Mollison)	1.0	1.0	66,000	30
Trinity TC Qld	2.0		28,565	267
Trinity TC WA	1.5	0.5	18,000	46
United TC	2.0	2.5	45,000	120
Vianney C			14,000	0
Vose Seminary	0.6	0.6	38,000	351
Wesley Inst / ACOM *	2.0	2.0	30,000	Na
Whitley C	1.0	1.0	30,000	160
Worldview C		0.5	19,000	105
YTU (St Paschal's)	1.0	4.0	60,000	250
Youthworks	0.1		3,000	9
Totals	53.6	72.5	2,001,265	

* ACOM, a distance-only college, uses the Wesley library on a rental basis.

