

AUSTRALIA: THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN

Helen Connell

Von Hügel Institute, St Edmund's College, Cambridge
2009

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Introduction	3
Establishing and sustaining CSFP in Australia	3
Overseas Students in Australia – the emergence of education as aid, 1950s	3
Establishing CSFP in Australia, 1960	4
CSFP as an education budget program, 1960-1973	5
Scholarships to study in Australia	5
Fellowships to Australia	8
Australians abroad	8
Dual responsibility – CSFP shared between budgets for federal aid and education, 1974 to 1984	10
ADAA/ ADAB	11
Department of Education	12
Overseas students in Australia - from education as aid to education as trade - 1984 - 1990	13
Loss of CSFP identity in Australian government programs - 1990s	14
Beyond lack of governmental reciprocity, 1998 to 2008	17
Section II – The Scholars and Fellows	19
Australian scholars to the UK and Canada	19
Fields of study	19
Subsequent career	19
Effect of award on subsequent career	19
Effect of award on personal life	20
Maintaining links with study institution/ host country	20
Reintegration into Australia	21
Identification with wider Commonwealth community	21
Selection process/ award follow up	21
Overall significance of the award scheme	22
Explanations for decline of Australian commitment to scheme	22
Australian Fellows Overseas	24
Overseas scholars in Australia	24
Conclusion	26
Appendix 1 - Sources and acknowledgments	29
Appendix 2 - Changing context of Australia's participation in CSFP	31
Appendix 3 - Questionnaires	33

Preface

This paper is one of a number of regional reports commissioned as background for a history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. The history has now been published as:

Learning abroad: A history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan by Hilary Perraton
(Cambridge Scholars Publishing) 2009

Material has been drawn from the country reports, and is quoted and referred to in *Learning abroad* but it was thought that it would be useful for the reports themselves to be made available in web format. This report was drafted in 2009.

I am personally indebted to the scholars who wrote the country reports and we are together indebted to the four agencies that funded the research: the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Nuffield Foundation, the British Academy with the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the government of Canada.

Dr Helen Connell is a freelance researcher in Australia.

Hilary Perraton

Cambridge 2009

Introduction

Now separately published with minor changes, and an expanded conclusion, this report was prepared as a research input to the anniversary history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan¹.

In the first part administrative structures and responsibilities, changing policy environments over the years, and changes in the awarding policies of the Australian government are addressed. Part two deals with the experience of students and fellows – mostly Australian scholars studying abroad, but with some insights into the fellowship experience, and that of overseas scholars studying in Australia. A short concluding section contextualises the history of the CSFP within the changes in the broader higher educational and aid policy environments of the past 50 years.

Part 1 The Plan in Australia

Establishing and sustaining CSFP in Australia

Antecedents - Overseas students at Australian universities in the 1950s

Australian universities expanded considerably following World War 2, notably strengthening research performance and higher degree work, and introducing doctoral study from the late 1940s. Their financial position also improved, placing them in a strong position to receive increasing numbers of overseas students.

Until immediately after World War 2, overseas students who had been accepted by an Australian university were granted entry provided they were full-time students and could provide evidence of sufficient means to maintain themselves and pay tuition costs. While *private overseas students* had been enrolling in Australian higher education since 1904, it was only in the 1950s that numbers became significant, with rapid growth particularly from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia – countries whose higher education systems could not meet the growing local demand for places (Williams, ed. 1989, p.2). These were still the years of the White Australia Policy, and federal immigration authorities were ever watchful lest foreign students used their studies as a means of ‘back-door’ migration.

In the post World War 2 environment of reconstruction, decolonisation and the looming Cold War, Australia joined other Commonwealth countries in establishing the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia at a meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Ceylon in 1950. This saw the emergence of *government sponsored students*. Within a multilateral framework agreement, participating donor countries provided bilateral aid across a range of activities. Aimed at building economic and trade strength among low income Asian members of the Commonwealth, traineeships and scholarships to study abroad (through the Plan’s Technical Cooperation Scheme) became an important policy instrument. The Colombo Plan soon spread beyond the Commonwealth to include the US and Japan among donor countries and Indonesia and Thailand amongst recipients, while retaining a focus on the Asian region.

While Australia had longstanding budgetary responsibility for the then Territory of Papua New Guinea until its independence in 1975, involvement with the Colombo Plan marked a new engagement with a range of bilateral aid activities to South and South-East Asian countries – substantially the beginning of Australia’s overseas aid program. A 1952 memorandum by the Department of External Affairs, *A General Appraisal of the Colombo Plan*, indicates that for Australia “...foreign policy supplies the mainspring for support of the Plan. The possibility of economic advantage ... has been secondary.” Three key political objectives identified for Australia were:

- To halt communist encroachment into a poverty stricken region – support extended to all non-communist countries within region;
- To modify any resentments arising from differences between Australian and Asian living standards – a sharing of wealth, helping build up Asian standards of living, whilst maintaining immigration controls; and
- To strengthen and develop amicable political relations with recipients of economic aid, both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth. (Lowe and Oakman, 2004, p.493)

¹ Hilary Perraton (2009) *Learning Abroad – the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan*. Newcastle upon Tyne. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Despite the strong element of education and training within the Colombo Plan, its administration in Australia from the start was through the Department of External Affairs. The Commonwealth Office of Education became responsible for the operational side of the program through a "Training Agreement" with DEA's Economic and Technical Assistance branch (a predecessor of today's AusAID). Between 1951 and 1980, more than 20,000 Asian students studied in Australia under the Colombo Plan, mainly at undergraduate or sub-degree level. 1977 was the peak year with just over 3,000 students, but numbers had diminished to 1,000 by 1980 (Auletta, 2001), and then further, with substantial reorganisation in Australia's aid program leading to alternative means of sponsoring students from Asia. Among Commonwealth countries key beneficiaries of Australian involvement with the Colombo Plan were India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

A key restriction on training overseas students in the 1950s was lack of adequate student accommodation. This was recognised by the Australian government, in a variation in Colombo Plan spending in 1954, with a grant towards the building of International House at the University of Melbourne as a residence for Australian and overseas students (Lowe and Oakman, 2004, p.xxxii)

Establishing CSFP in Australia, 1960

At the first Commonwealth Education Conference in Oxford in 1959 the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan was launched to focus primarily on postgraduate level educational exchanges between Commonwealth countries. As with the Colombo Plan, the CSFP formed a multilateral structure within which countries operated on a bilateral basis, as award donors, award recipients or both.

From its first CSFP awards in 1960 until the mid 1990s, Australia participated as both an award offering and award recipient nation. The broad process as outlined in the first Australian report to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in London in 1960 remained the same, although details of administration and the awards offered changed over time².

The agency responsible for administering CSFP in Australia in 1960 was a statutory body, the Commonwealth Office of Education, whose responsibilities for the Plan included: inviting nominations for Commonwealth Scholarships tenable in Australia; the subsequent selection and placing of scholars at Australian universities; and for nominating Australians for Commonwealth Scholarships tenable in other countries. The Office was also responsible for the welfare of students holding Commonwealth Scholarships in Australia.

A committee to advise on all aspects of Australia's participation in the scheme was established on which vice-chancellors of Australian universities, directors of state departments of education and the Commonwealth Office of Education were represented.

In 1960 the Australian government instituted 100 scholarships under the Plan over a two year period, with awards tenable from March each year. While the majority of the awards were intended for postgraduate study or research, provision was made for the award of undergraduate level scholarships tenable at universities, technical, agricultural or teachers' colleges. These awards were only made, however, '...when the desired course [was] not available in a student's own country and when it appeared that it is in the best interests of a country and its students that undergraduate training in Australia should be made available. ...'

Benefits, applying equally to undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships, comprised: economy return air fare; all compulsory fees; living allowance (paid fortnightly); clothing allowance; married scholars allowance (for male married scholars whose wife was neither a scholarship holder nor in paid employment in Australia); travel within Australia; and various supplementary allowances, for example for unusually high costs of essential books and equipment, or for extraordinary medical expenses. As scholarship holders were receiving full-time education at a university or college, these benefits were not taxable in Australia.

² Part 1 of this study draws extensively on the unbroken series of annual reports of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission from 1960 to 2006. Most include a section on Australia based on material forwarded from the relevant departments of the Australian federal government. While all annual reports have been published by the Commission, specific publication details have varied over time. For full information, refer to Perraton, H. (2009) *Learning Abroad – A History of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan*. Newcastle upon Tyne. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p.213.

The first set of Australian award holders began their studies from March 1961. Through its branch offices, the Commonwealth Office of Education arranged for all scholars to be met on arrival and taken to their accommodation. As with Colombo Plan students, short induction courses were held to assist scholars to settle into the Australian social and cultural setting, and special English tuition provided if required.

Awards at a more senior level were also made, known initially as Senior Visitors' Awards, and becoming known in 1962 as Australian Visiting Fellowships. These awards enabled leaders in various fields of education to visit Australia to discuss educational problems and to advise on methods and techniques associated with their particular fields of expertise. These awards, by invitation only, varied in length dependent on the interests and availability of the Fellow.

The Commonwealth Office of Education distributed to all universities details of invitations it received to submit nominations to other awarding countries within the scheme. Awards of general interest were also publicised in leading daily newspapers in all states. Australians applying for CSFP awards to study in other Commonwealth countries in the first instance lodged applications with the registrar of the Australian university from which they had graduated. Applications were screened by academic committees at each university and forwarded to the Commonwealth Office of Education with a list of recommended candidates in order of merit. The Office established a nominations committee consisting of seven professors nominated by the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee, to consider all applications and decide on the candidates whose names were to be nominated to each awarding country (*CSC Annual Report 1960-1*).

CSFP as an education portfolio program, 1960-1973

Scholarships to study in Australia

While the majority of scholarships offered by Australia were at the postgraduate level, a fairly consistent pattern was established from the beginning whereby 20 – 25% of scholarships were offered at the undergraduate level. These were restricted to recipients from countries where either undergraduate study in specific fields was not available, or where little demand existed for postgraduate qualifications. The *CSC Annual Report 1961/2* noted that the Plan appeared to be fulfilling a dual purpose: "it is not only providing the opportunity for an interchange of Scholars between Commonwealth countries, but it is also making a contribution in some countries of the Commonwealth to their plans for national development."

Australia made an initial commitment in 1960 to offer 100 awards at any one time - increased to 150 in 1974. At the end of the 1960s, the 101 CSFP students were the second largest group of overseas students funded by the Australian government, following the 1,051 Colombo Plan students (Bochner and Wicks, 1972, p.21).

At its inception in Australia the CSFP was administered through the Commonwealth Office of Education located in Sydney; when in 1966 this became absorbed into the newly established federal Department of Education and Science, administration moved to Canberra. Since 1966 federal administration of education responsibilities has undergone a number of structural changes, through several departmental mergers and demergers with associated name changes³ over the course of CSFP's history, a process which has had its impact on CSFP policy decisions.

For the first three decades of its participation in CSFP, data from the Commonwealth Register indicate that Australia averaged between 37 – 41 new awards each year, (at the higher end during the 1980s) (Table 1). During the 1990s this pattern collapsed for reasons discussed below. Table 1 figures show 40% of Australia's awards

³ Federal education responsibilities were subsequently merged and remerged in several structural changes, in sequence:

- in 1966 Commonwealth Office of Education (based in Sydney) merged into the newly established Commonwealth Department of Education and Science (DES) in Canberra;
- in 1972 the Department of Education became separate ;
- in 1983 the Department of Education and Youth Affairs (DEYA);
- in 1985, the Department of Education again became separate;
- in 1988, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET);
- in 1996, Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA);
- in 1998 Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA);
- in 2001 to Department of Education Science and Training (DEST);
- and in 2008 the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

were made to the developed countries of the Commonwealth (UK, Canada and New Zealand), with 60% of awards to developing countries, comprising, in regional terms, Africa 16%; West Indies 11%; Asia 18%; Pacific 11%; Mediterranean 2% and Indian Ocean 2%. The awards tended to be well spread, in regional terms, over the entire period.

Table 1: Australian Government Awardees 1960 – 2002

Country of origin	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	1				1
Bahamas			1		1
Bangladesh		11	11		22
Barbados	1	4	1	3	9
Belize			2	2	4
Bermuda		1			1
Botswana				2	2
Canada	61	43	41	6	151
Cook Isles			1	1	2
Cyprus		2	10	1	13
Fiji	28	35	7		70
The Gambia	1	2	1		4
Ghana	12	19	20	1	52
Guyana		4	4		8
Hong Kong	11	11	13		35
India	28	16	20		64
Jamaica	3	8	24		35
Kenya	8	8	10	2	28
Kiribati		1		1	2
Kiribati/ Tuvalu	1				1
Lesotho		1	4		5
Malawi		3	3	1	7
Malaysia	11	10	10		31
Maldives			3		3
Malta		5	8	2	15
Mauritius	7	7	4	1	19
New Zealand	25	16	19	2	62
Nigeria	11	15	32	1	59
Niue			3		3
Pakistan	11	1		1	13
Papua New Guinea				1	1
St Kitts Nevis			2		2
St Lucia			2		2
St Vincent & Grenadines		1	1	1	3
Seychelles		2	4	1	7
Sierra Leone	6	4	3		13
Singapore	10	7	7		24
Solomon Isles	3		4		7
South Africa	6				6
Sri Lanka	13	7	8		28
Swaziland			10		10
Tanzania	10	3	9	4	26
Tonga	9	11	11		31
Trinidad & Tobago	6	3			9
Tuvalu				2	2
Uganda	9	7	4		20

United Kingdom	82	89	84	34	289
Vanuatu	1	1	1	1	4
West Indies	1				1
Western Pacific	2				2
Western Samoa	4	7	3		14
Zambia		5	6	1	12
Zimbabwe	1	1	3	4	9
Zimbabwe/Malawi	4				4
TOTAL	387	371	414	76	1,248

Source: Table constructed from data in Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (2003) *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960 – 2002*. London. Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Maintaining the level of 100 scholarships per year proved challenging. Firstly, the initial idea of 100 scholarships over a rolling two year cycle was quickly undermined by allowing study for both undergraduate and doctoral programmes – only masters programs and various post-graduate diplomas and, later, post-doc study, fitted the initial two year time line. Thus, to maintain the 100 level, fewer than 50 new scholarships per year could be offered – in consequence the number of new awards offered varied somewhat from year to year. In 1963/4 new awards available were 35 to 40. Secondly, while the target figure of 100 had been reached in 1963, the number of awards fell to 86 during 1964 largely due to an unexpected number of withdrawals at a very late stage from candidates offered awards. “It seems that many candidates did not make adequate enquiries, in anticipation of receiving an award, on personal matters such as making provision for the maintenance of their dependants and on other factors which will affect their decisions concerning the awards eventually offered them.” Also, many candidates accepted other awards without advising the CSFP authority in their own country. The high withdrawal rate continued among candidates nominated for 1965 awards, prompting Australian authorities to take steps to reduce the withdrawal rate and minimise its effects.

One such step appears to have been the publication of a handbook for students during 1965 to provide scholars with detailed information on the awards, their purpose, benefits and conditions, the relevant administrative arrangements and the procedures recommended if certain problems occurred. The booklets were distributed to Australian posts overseas and scholarship agencies so that candidates could receive it prior to their arrival in Australia. The publication, *A Handbook for Holders of an Australian Award*, was subsequently updated by education authorities on an annual basis. By 1966/67 the difficulties of significant numbers of last minute withdrawals appears to have been resolved. Variability in the numbers of scholarships held at any one time continued, however. In 1972/3, the number of scholarships stood at 78, having been below 100 for several years; by 1973/4 the number was 90, and in 1974/5, 99.

Scholarship nominations were invited in January with closing date end July for scholarships for the following academic year (beginning March). The authorities welcomed early receipt of nominations, as it helped ensure that nominees could be placed in their preferred institutions. Authorities found continuing difficulties during the 1960s with nominations reaching Australia after the closing date and incomplete documentation. Late submission of nominations, especially for cases where more than one university needed to be contacted to obtain the required study facilities, led to late offers of awards, and rushed departure for students.

Throughout the life of CSFP there were periodic increases in the level of specified benefits of Australian awards, such as living allowance, married student allowance, and travel allowance. The provision of the married student allowance in 1960 was for “married male Scholars undertaking postgraduate study accompanied by their wives...”; it was not until 1975/6 that the CSC *Annual Report* talks of the “scholar’s spouse... with him/ her...”. To complement the marriage allowance, a new dependants’ allowance was introduced in 1973 payable for the second and each subsequent child, if the wife and children of the scholarship holder were resident in Australia, and the wife not in paid employment. The married scholar’s allowance was never intended to be a sufficient support for a dependent spouse, and in any case was not paid if the spouse was also a scholarship holder or was in paid employment. The 1964/5 report noted that “The allowance... is provided only as a contribution towards the support of a scholar’s wife in Australia. A scholar who is accompanied by his wife will need other resources to supplement this allowance.” So for married students, ensuring sufficient additional income to cover the needs of their accompanying family would have been an important consideration in deciding to take up the offer of a scholarship.

As the Australian program under the Plan was fairly small, the education authorities noted that it was not possible to offer an award to every Commonwealth country. In order that all Commonwealth countries had the opportunity to nominate a candidate for an award, Australia decided as an experiment to reserve a number of its 1968

awards for a group of smaller countries with the intent that, in future, other similar groups of Commonwealth countries could be invited to nominate in rotation for Australian awards. Some awards were set aside in 1969, 1970 and 1971 for competition between some of the smaller Commonwealth countries not previously included in the Australian allocation.

By the end of March 1965, all but four who took up scholarships in 1960 or 1961, and more than half of those taking up awards in 1962 had left Australia and, with few exceptions, had returned to their own countries. Those remaining in Australia were continuing study.

Fellowships to Australia

While the bulk of awards in CSFP have been scholarships tenable by individuals under the age of 35, fellowships have also played an important role for contacts at a more senior level. By contrast with scholars who applied for the award, fellows were nominated for the award by an Australian institution or organisation. At the inception of CSFP in 1960, Australia offered two *Senior Visiting Awards*, one for four, one for six weeks. The program grew, so that by 1963/4, up to four invitations for *Australian Visiting Fellowships* per year could be issued, with a duration of up to three months each. Emoluments included first-class return air fare, cost of travel within Australia and a maintenance allowance for the period spent in Australia⁴. These fellowships were designed for “persons prominent in various fields of education, including universities, colleges and schools”. The Plan helped bring prominent figures in different academic fields to Australia, and to enable their expertise to be accessed in different parts of the country. The bulk of visiting fellowships were awarded to candidates from the UK, although also from Canada, India, Nigeria, Uganda, New Zealand, Ghana and Singapore. Visits programs frequently included conferences/ seminars, especially in the earlier decades of the program.

In 1970/71, four additional awards classified as Australian Visiting Fellowships (Consultants) (later Australian Visiting Consultants) were made, and the designation was repeated for a few years. The significance of the distinction is not apparent from annual reports.

In 1962/3 a new category of award was added, the *Visiting Professorship* which was to enable a professor from another Commonwealth country to be attached to an Australian university for teaching and research. Tenure was normally at one Australian university and for one academic year. CSFP provided a grant equal to a first-class return air fare, with other costs to be met by the university⁵. Two awards were available per year, with a third added from 1967, to enable (then) newly established Australian universities to take advantage of the awards⁶. During the late 50s early 60s a number of new universities in greenfield sites⁷ were established in major Australian cities, in a significant expansion of capacity to meet growing student demand. This scheme, which lasted until 1986, was designed to strengthen the research and teaching capacity in Australia’s university sector. As with fellowships, holders were predominantly from the UK and Canada. Over the years in which they were offered, the visiting professorships were well distributed around different Australian universities and different fields of study.

Australians abroad

Although Australians seeking awards to study in other Commonwealth countries have predominantly chosen postgraduate study in the UK and in Canada, over the years of the scheme Australian recipients have studied in eleven Commonwealth countries (Table 2).

⁴ From 1975/6 travel for all fellowship level awards was at economy level, reflecting changes then happening more generally within the Australian federal public service. From 1982, visiting fellows were accorded business class travel, although visiting professors remained at economy level.

⁵ From 1975/6 economy air fares were offered; from 1985 tenure was minimum 4 months, maximum one academic year. This latter change probably reflects the increasing use of the semester system in Australian universities over this period.

⁶ While no evaluation of this program was ever mentioned in Australia’s annual reports, in 1986 the Visiting Professorship Scheme was discontinued ‘because it was recognised that this part of the Australian programme was no longer seen as operating effectively’ (1986 CSC Annual Report). It is possible that by 1986 this was no longer the most appropriate or useful way of strengthening of Australia’s research and teaching at university level.

⁷ Monash, Flinders, and Macquarie universities.

Table 2: Awards to Australians made from other Commonwealth countries 1960-2002

Awarding country	Number awards granted to Australians	Year of latest awards granted to an Australian
Canada	224	1998
Ghana	3	1975
Hong Kong	14	1989
India	20	1992
Jamaica	2	1975
Malaysia	9	1976
New Zealand	35	1996
Nigeria	5	1991
Sri Lanka	1	1963
United Kingdom	1,060	2002+
Zimbabwe	2	1963
Total Awards	1,375	

Source: Table constructed from data in Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (2003) *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960 – 2002*. London. Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The Plan was seen to provide valuable opportunities for young Australian graduates to gain experience in other parts of the Commonwealth, with awards made to Australians by other Commonwealth countries covering a “satisfactory range of disciplines” (CSC *Annual Report* 1960-61). In 1962/3 there was “pleasing evidence of increasing interest in the Plan among young Australian graduates of high quality”⁸.

Australian authorities regularly expressed their wish to see Australian students taking up opportunities to study across a spectrum of Commonwealth countries. However, it proved difficult to make inroads into the early established pattern of Australians favouring study in the UK and Canada. Australian authorities also noted “It has not been possible to accept every invitation ... as it is not Australian policy to make nominations unless high quality candidates are available. In some cases, lack of knowledge in Australia of facilities in some other parts of the Commonwealth has meant that applications received have not been of sufficient quality for a nomination to be made.”

This situation was expected to change with increasing educational co-operation within the Commonwealth, yet the 1963-64 report noted that notwithstanding an increasing interest in the Plan by Australian applicants, “the number of suitable applications received for the awards of countries other than Britain and Canada is still very small.” This was seen in some measure due to the difficulty of giving effective publicity to the offer of scholarships when there was little time between the receipt of the invitation to nominate for scholarships and the closing date for nominations. “Even more important is the lack of information available to prospective candidates of facilities available in some of the countries offering scholarships. Information on the principal fields of study and research available in donor countries together with details of academic staff supervising research projects in these fields should do much to stimulate a response from candidates who would derive considerable benefit from further study in the countries concerned.”

While administrative inefficiencies and lack of adequate information were undoubtedly contributory factors, it remains the case today that it is difficult to encourage Australians to take up scholarships available for study in developing countries. In 1964/5, authorities again noted that numerous and good quality applications continued for awards in UK and Canada, but only small numbers were interested in the awards of other countries. “It is expected that this may remain the pattern of applications for some time until the facilities available for postgraduate study and research in some Commonwealth countries become better known.”

This situation may have been paralleled in a number of countries, given a recommendation from the Third Commonwealth Education Conference that awards, especially those of developing countries, might be used to cover only part of a candidate’s course, enabling students to begin research in their own country. The CSC *Annual Report* 1965/66 noted that all Australian universities indicated that their PhD regulations were sufficiently

⁸ That high standards have subsequently been maintained was attested in a personal communication by the responsible officer at IDP in 2008.

flexible to enable their students to take advantage of such a possibility. Further, the universities reported favourably on the proposal, hoping awarding authorities in other Commonwealth countries would see fit to make provision for this kind of arrangement in the conditions of their awards (CSC *Annual Report 1965/66*).

In 1966/67 an increase in applications by Australians to study in India was noted, alongside a continuing intensification of competition for awards in the UK and Canada. With the numerical increase came a rise in the quality of candidates selected for nomination. For British awards it was possible to adopt a first class honours degree as the minimum standard for nomination. In 1967/68 candidates continued to be of high academic calibre and represented a wide diversity of interests.

During the 1960s annual reports indicated regular follow-up of students on their return to Australia – most scholars returned, and indicated positive experiences. Of the 23 returnees by September 1963, 20 had completed their designated course of study. Eleven had taken up teaching or research positions in institutions at tertiary level, three had entered government service, three to industry (all engineers) and one private practice (an architect). “Scholars generally were appreciative of the opportunity afforded by the Scholarship to work in the stimulating environment of a country with a different culture and under overseas bodies in their field. The main criticism offered concerned the lack of opportunity to travel in countries close to the awarding country to gain additional experience in the field of specialization.” Of 47 returned scholars by 1965/6, 31 had taken up positions in tertiary institutions (of which a third were at the institutions from which they had graduated originally); three had positions with the federal public service, two had returned to the countries in which they had studied for government positions, seven were privately employed (four engineers, two lawyers and an architect). By 1967/68, of the 117 Australian scholars who had taken up awards in other Commonwealth countries between 1961 – 1964, 96 had returned to Australia or were continuing their study or obtaining relevant experience in the awarding countries. Most of those who had returned to Australia had taken up positions as staff members of Australian universities. All had spoken highly of the value to them of the academic work which they had been enabled to do under their awards.

Dual responsibility for the CSFP education and aid portfolios 1974 to 1984

In 1974, responsibility for CSFP awards was moved to the then newly established federal Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA)⁹, one of a raft of statutory authorities established by the reforming Labor government, after more than two decades of successive Liberal/ Country Party governments. A year later, responsibility for CSFP was split: ADAA retaining responsibility for awards for recipients from developing countries of the Commonwealth to study in Australia; the federal education authorities regaining responsibility for Australian awards for recipients from the developed countries of the Commonwealth (UK, Canada, New Zealand) and for nominating Australians for awards to be held in other Commonwealth countries. Split responsibility for CSFP continued until the termination of the CSFP as a definable entity in Australia in the 1990s, with both bodies – and their successor organisations - sending annual reports to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in London. While there was liaison and contact between the responsible officers within the Department of Education and ADAA – and their successor organisations – funding from separate budget allocations and decision-taking appears not to have been coordinated, reflecting rather the policy priorities of the education and the aid/ foreign affairs portfolios respectively. This division of responsibility also formalised a splintering of the once unified policy orientation towards the Commonwealth, with the schism based on respective levels of economic development.

In 1972 the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs published the first public review of Australia’s aid, in its *Report on Australia’s Foreign Aid*, with a consequently greater emphasis on aid projects in agricultural, social welfare, and educational fields - a move towards aid having a more direct bearing on improving the quality of life in developing countries (Cleverley and Jones, 1976).

In 1972 the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Nigel Bowen, commended the great strength and flexibility of the Colombo Plan over its then 21 years of operation, acknowledging its birth as one of the early initiatives of a

⁹ The federal administration of Australian overseas aid has undergone several structural and organisational changes subsequent to the Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA):

- in 1977 it became the Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB) within the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- in 1987 the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB);
- in 1995 the Australian International Aid Agency (AusAID).

previous administration. Bowen announced a new long term program, based on the same principles as the Colombo Plan, for the South Pacific, an “area of considerable importance for Australia, outside the Colombo Plan region” (Bowen, 1972, p.vi). Over its years in office the Labor government considerably increased the aid budget, and the CSFP was among the beneficiaries with the Australian government announcement in 1974 that fifty new awards would be made available under the CSFP in future years, with eleven available at the senior level.

Australian Development Assistance Agency/Australian Development Assistance Bureau

The establishment of ADAA as a statutory body in 1974 for the first time consolidated into one organisation the discrete aid related programs of a range of federal departments, notably Foreign Affairs, External Territories, Education, Labour and Immigration, and Treasury. It was in this context that the Education Department passed to ADAA its major responsibilities for sponsored training and the Commonwealth Cooperation in Education program, including the CSFP. The federal Education Department retained (or in the case of CSFP regained) responsibility for a number of international education activities, notably those to do with developed countries.

With the advent of the “small government” policies a new federal government, ADAA was, in 1976, relegated it to the status of a bureau within the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB), thus, had neither the budgetary nor reporting autonomy of its predecessor. Staff shortages and other obstacles to efficiency, along with political and diplomatic objectives predominating in the determination of aid policy characterised these early years (Jones, 1986). A Parliamentary Committee noted that: “[b]etween 1973 and 1983 there were at least eighteen reviews of various aspects of the Aid Program. As the primary concern of most of those reviews was to achieve savings, the net effect was a demoralised aid administration with little or no consequent improvement in the effectiveness of development assistance” (Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 1989, p.5). Not until the Jackson Review of 1984 (see below) did Australia’s aid program begin to shape a definitive and coherent policy approach and gain some measure of institutional stability with eventual control of its own budget and direct reporting to the Minister.

ADAB indicated in 1976/77 that while it considered CSFP should remain principally a scheme for post-graduate university study, in practice Australia showed a fairly flexible approach in those cases where less developed countries had either insufficient tertiary institutions or where little demand existed for post-graduate qualifications. ADAB considered that there was adequate scope in Australia’s bilateral training programs (e.g. Colombo Plan, Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan) for training of a more practical and technical nature.

In its 1977-78 annual report on CSFP, ADAB indicated that awardees from developing countries tended to take longer to complete their studies: 2-3 years for masters; 3-5 years for PhD. Scholars studying at PhD level had for a number of years been granted three year awards, with consideration given to requests for extension of awards (CSC *Annual Report 1977-78*).

ADAB changed the way it allocated CSFP funds in 1977/78, no longer offering a set number of awards or scholarships to each country, but an allocation of training months aimed at increasing flexibility in the nature of the courses which could be taken. At that time ADAB was increasing its overall emphasis on the development of short group courses while at the same time decreasing its emphasis on training at the undergraduate level. It expected that CSFP awardees would benefit from the flexibility of the training month system and that some would attend the short courses¹⁰. Thus, differences began to emerge in how CSFP awards were managed within the aid and the education fields - the awards system for the developed countries through the Department of Education continued unchanged.

In 1980, ADAB noted a number of developing countries were failing to make sufficient nominations for the CSFP awards made available for them by Australia. As a result, in 1981, ADAB began to make its financial allocations on a regional rather than individual country basis, thus enabling it to use its full allocation. “This assists those countries within a region which are able to utilise more CSFP awards than they would normally be allocated on an individual basis in circumstances where other eligible countries in the region fail to nominate for awards.” Nominations were to be made by 1 September to enable full utilisation of financial allocations made available by Australia for CSFP awards. This would allow re-allocation to another region should sufficient nom-

¹⁰ While no further reference to the training month approach was made in annual reports, Denis Blight indicated it was relatively short-lived (pers. comm.)

inations to fully utilise an allocation not be forthcoming from a particular region. The concern had shifted from the number of scholarships currently held to utilising to the full each year's CSFP financial allocation.

The Harries Committee, set up by the Fraser government and reporting in *Australia and The Third World* to the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1979, provides valuable insights into how the Commonwealth was viewed at the time from Australia, although the CSFP itself is not discussed.

[T]he Commonwealth offers us several advantages. ... gives direct and sometimes intimate links with important countries beyond our region...provides ... a regular forum in which [the Australian Prime Minister] meets Third World leaders as a matter of course... is a forum in which Australia is able to play a major role. ... it is not the most important forum available to any of its members and their commitment to it is subordinate to their commitment to other organisations. Trying to make it bear more weight than it can sustain could destroy what usefulness it has" (Harries, 1979, p.170).

A thread of ambivalence towards the Commonwealth was identified

...we also need to bear in mind the 'British' associations which the Commonwealth still, inevitably, carries. These associations, and the fact that the Commonwealth is a 'club' to which some Third World countries belong while others (including important ones in our region) do not, set limitations on its possibilities as the main instrumentality for our Third World policies" (Harries, 1979, p.170).

Harries also supported Australia continuing to concentrate its aid, including provision of education and training, in the South East Asian and South West Pacific regions, with a small proportion set aside for other developing regions.

While the CSFP continued little changed through these years, this was the period during which Australian educational scholarship involvement in the Colombo Plan was winding down, with scholarship monies being transferred to alternate programs. An important, although consequential effect of the merging and rebranding of scholarship budgets relating to developing countries has been a substantial loss of scholarship funding to Commonwealth developing countries. This can be seen firstly through the experience of the Colombo Plan which in the 1950s and 60s provided considerable assistance to India, Malaysia and Singapore. After the 1960s, for a number of reasons, Australian aid for India dropped. With the move in the late 1980s to the Equity and Merit Scholarships (see below), Australian scholarships went disproportionately to Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam on the basis of economic need, and away from Malaysia and Singapore. So the effect was a decrease in Australian scholarship support for major Commonwealth countries within its region, even though Australia maintained an active scholarship program for developing countries. While these changes were not directed at minimising support to Commonwealth countries per se, it appears that there were no strong champions who sought to maintain strong scholarship support for Commonwealth developing countries as a category. As the Harries Report remarked, for many countries the Commonwealth was not the most important forum; for Australia in particular it has proved not to be the main instrumentality of "Third World policies".

Department of Education

In 1974 government funding for Australian higher education became a federal government responsibility, although universities remained under State legislation. At this time, also, tuition fees for university study were abolished.

The CSFP was not immune from one of the significant tussles in Australian tertiary education at the time – the ultimately successful challenge by the Colleges of Advanced Education and the Institutes of Technology to abolish the binary divide in tertiary education between the universities and the colleges and institutes. In its 1981 annual report on CSFP, the Department of Education indicated that it hoped consideration could be given to allocating an increased percentage of awards to Australian postgraduates from Colleges of Advanced Education, "if the standard of the applicant was sufficiently high. ... Selection committees would need to judge such applicants on a more individual basis utilizing criteria such as the value and quality of completed courses as the normal university "yardstick" – the honours degree – is not generally awarded at CAEs" (CSC *Annual Report* 1981).

Overseas students in Australia – debates and policy changes - 1984 - 1990

The evolution of government policy towards *private overseas students* – culminating in significant change in the 1984-1990 period – increasingly shifted attention from the aid to the trade dimensions of Australian educational policy, with ultimately negative consequences for CSFP in Australia.

From the 1950s Australia saw considerable growth in both private and sponsored overseas students at higher education level, with the vast majority of both being from Asian countries. While some were Commonwealth members, it was geo-politics and trade not traditional associations that were reflected in the policy shifts.

Until the mid 1980s private overseas students effectively gained a subsidy from Australia for their study - this became an increasingly contentious issue with the growth of wealth in some of the key source countries of Australian private overseas students. The financial dimension of international education policy was becoming increasingly prominent.

Also by the late 1970s, with the growth in Australia of both domestic and foreign higher education students, issues re-emerged over the availability of student accommodation and competition for places in higher education. For the first time the government gave significant attention to assessing the benefits, notably economic, of international student mobility to the country.

During the years that the 'White Australia' policy remained in force, official policy had been more focused on preventing foreign students treating higher education study as a 'back-door' method of migration (a recurring theme in Australia); in 1956 requirements concerning courses of study and satisfactory progress were introduced, and in 1966 it was decided that the reason to grant entry to foreign students was to educate and equip them to contribute to the economic development of their country of origin. However, in 1973 - the year the 'White Australia' policy was abolished - the economic development criterion for entry of foreign students was dropped, and a limit of 10,000 was imposed on private overseas students, along with the requirement that proposed courses of study were unavailable in the student's country of origin. This change coincided with the abolition of tuition fees for all students in Australian universities - effectively increasing the subsidy to all foreign students studying in Australia, whatever their background.

By the end of the 1970s, differing views were held on policy towards overseas students by three key federal departments. The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs believed the policy was being abused by students to gain 'back-door' entry; the Department of Foreign Affairs argued that the policy on foreign students achieved aid and cultural exchange objectives along with better understanding of Australia within source countries; the Department of Education believed the benefits of foreign students for Australia justified subsidy, while needing to control entry to avoid significant displacement of Australian students. The growth in the number of foreign students was such, however, that the Australian government concluded that while a charge was needed, some subsidy was also justified because of the benefits to Australia. The *Overseas Students Charge (OSC)* was introduced in 1979 at a rate well below the full cost of tuition - although the rate was increased progressively so that by 1988 it was at 55% of the average full cost of a higher education place. A further government decision was that all overseas students had to return home for at least two years after graduation before being eligible to migrate to Australia. While the limit on the number of foreign students was removed at this time, target numbers of entrants from particular countries were set to guide Australian officials abroad.

Two governmental reviews bearing on overseas students were established by different Australian ministries in 1983. The Jackson Committee, appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, recommended, in March 1984, in *The Report of the Committee to Review The Australian Overseas Aid Program* a two pronged approach: charging full-cost fees; and providing scholarships funded from the aid budget to promote development and equity. The Goldring Committee, appointed by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, argued, in April 1984, in *Mutual Advantage – Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy* that a system based on full fee cost recovery would discourage students from coming to Australia. In the end, the Jackson Report formed the basis of subsequent government policy.

Sport rated over education in the Jackson Report's view of the Commonwealth:

[t]he Commonwealth of Nations continues to be important to Australia. All but four of the 39 members of the Commonwealth are developing countries. Relationships in sport through cricket and the many activities arranged through the Commonwealth Games are as strong as ever, and for many Australians these are the major contact with developing countries. (Jackson, 1984, p.38).

In March 1985 the government introduced a new category of foreign students who would pay *full-cost fees*. It also empowered and encouraged tertiary institutions to recruit such students, raised the level of the Overseas Student Charge for subsidised foreign students, and moved towards the policies recommended by the Jackson Committee. Institutions could enrol full-fee students in those existing courses where places could not be filled either by qualified Australian applicants or by the quota of subsidised overseas students. Also institutions could offer extra courses or increase fees in existing courses for full-fee overseas students where capacity existed or could be developed.

In December 1988 the Government announced that the subsidised private overseas student program would be phased out by 1990, that there would be no quotas on the number of overseas students and that funds equivalent to the value of the subsidy would be used for a program of targeted scholarships for overseas students based on merit and equity to enable access for those who could not pay (Williams, 1989, p.13). The substantial Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme (EMSS) was subsequently introduced.

The debate over full-fee cost recovery was not limited to Australia – the UK had introduced full fees in 1980 – and the issue and its implications occasioned the Commonwealth to establish first a Consultative Group on Student Mobility which reported in 1981, and subsequently a Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation which produced a series of seven reports between 1982 and 1992 monitoring the level of fees and the volume of student interchange in the Commonwealth, along with recommendations for action on the part of the Commonwealth (Williams, 2003, p.22).

At the same time as these policy changes were reshaping the world of private overseas students, further changes flowing from the Jackson Report were bringing new emphases within the work of ADAB/ AIDAB (Australian International Development Bureau from 1987). Most significant was a shift away from sectoral and towards country programs. Country programs were to be developed in partnership with each recipient country, and a geographic focus on Asia and the Pacific was identified. Alongside these Country Programs, however, AIDAB maintained responsibility for a set of Global Programs where the multilateral CSFP was located.

On the education side, in 1988 a *Higher Education White Paper* saw the creation of the Unified National System of higher education in Australia, leading to widespread institutional rationalisation and mergers as the binary system collapsed. Alongside full fee courses for international students was the introduction of the universal Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for domestic students and a commitment to growth in student numbers through an increasingly user-pays approach. The ultimate outcome by the end of 1994 was a higher education system of some 36 universities, with some 585,000 students.

During these years, Australian participation continued in CSFP as both an award giver and receiver, with no obvious changes to what was, in effect, a relatively small player in the overall numbers of overseas students being funded.

An important change, however, occurred in 1988 when the liability for payment of the Overseas Student Charge – earlier waived for CSFP - was discharged from programme funds, thereby reducing the number of awards available for overseas students (CSC *Annual Report* 1988). This confirmed that CSFP awards had become subject to an annual budgetary limit rather than its earlier scholarship target number.

In 1986 the Visiting Professorship Scheme was discontinued due to perceived ineffectiveness. The remaining single category of senior awards, Visiting Fellowships, were by this time described as for: “Eminent academics and other distinguished people from Commonwealth countries ... selected by an independent committee from nominations put forward by Australian institutions and organisations. Fellows participate in programmes providing a wide range of relevant contacts throughout Australia and familiarise themselves with recent Australian developments in their fields.” Award tenure was from one to three months and was supported by a business class return airfare, travel costs within Australia, and per diems for the award tenure. In 1993, Fellowship awards were reduced to 30 – 40 days.

Loss of CSFP identity in Australian government programs - 1990s

By the 1990s the very considerable changes during the 1980s and early 90s in government policy towards overseas students finally impacted on CSFP as a distinct entity in Australian education and aid policy.

With the termination of the subsidised private overseas student program by 1990, all foreign students were liable for compulsory full tuition fees. In the absence of evidence that any CSFP scholars had this charge waived, full tuition costs would, from 1990, necessarily have had to be paid from the CSFP allocation (as had the Overseas Student Charge from 1988) in addition to existing scholarship benefits. Tuition costs would have made a considerable dent in the budget, further reducing the number of awards available.

During 1991-2 changes emerged in the focus of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) policies on international education: a shift from seeing overseas students mainly in terms of education exports,

...to seeing them as part of a wider concept of international education that includes a complex of education, cultural, diplomatic and trade benefits. These changes of policy focus take into account that international student flows are inseparable from other aspects of international education, which include Australians studying abroad, international movements of teaching, research and administrative staff, research and other international institutional links DEET, 1992, p.177).

How far and in what ways the benefits to Australia of overseas students were more than export earnings as the new focus became 'internationalisation' of higher education in Australia is a matter for debate, given the importance of 'international education' in Australia's trade balance. Scholarships and aid feature but a significant shift in policy was occurring.

By 1991 DEET was finding the processing of the plethora of small scholarship programs for which it was responsible - amongst which was CSFP - too intensive of staff time. It decided to outsource the administration of its foreign scholarships as a package to the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC)¹¹, which in turn sub-contracted to the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (IDP)¹². IDP had already established a good scholarship management infrastructure, largely through AIDAB scholarship management contracts¹³. Outsourcing as a practice was becoming increasingly common within the federal bureaucracy and was consistent with a continuing bureaucratic shift away from direct service provision to a greater focus on policy. At this stage, DEET funded eight full CSFP scholarships per year for developed countries - 4 for students from the UK, and 2 each for students from Canada and New Zealand - and up to three fellowships from the UK. This administrative arrangement continued until 1996 at which time DEET arranged a contract directly with IDP, and AVCC had no further responsibilities for the administration of the CSFP scholarships.

In 1993, a letter from DEET to AIDAB¹⁴ noted that the key to the CSFP was the high quality of its awardees - CSFP was unique in offering such opportunities for overseas qualifications to Australians. Regret was expressed at the few opportunities offered by Commonwealth developing countries for Australians to study there. The letter also noted, perspicaciously, that a good alumni program would help.

Gender equity became a priority in awarding scholarships during the 1990s - reflecting a broader Commonwealth-wide move to boost the number of women receiving scholarships. In their annual reports for 1993 both DEET and AIDAB indicated a policy of, where possible, maintaining an equal balance between men and women in awards. AIDAB noted that country quotas were not generally used, and awards were made as far as possible on merit, most awards being scholarships (fellowships being granted under different programs). The total number of awardees was subject to the availability of funds under annual financial appropriations and existing commitments. Specific country criteria for selection could vary to take into consideration issues such as the participation of women in the program and the specific development needs of each country (*CSC Annual Report* 1993).

In 1993/4, Australia indicated its intention to increase award commitments within CSFP when circumstances permitted (the country at the time was just pulling out of a recession), in line with a wish expressed at the 12th Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education in 1994 to increase overall CSFP awards to 2,000 by the year 2000.

Between the publication of 1993/4 - 1995/6 triennial report and the 1996/7 - 1998/9 triennial reports, however, Australia closed down both the AusAID (the Australian Agency for International Development from 1995) and the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) funded parts of its CSFP

¹¹ Now Universities Australia

¹² IDP was originally established by the AVCC as a separate company, and by the 1990s was managed independently.

¹³ Roger Peacock, pers. comm.; Lyn Brooks, pers. comm.

¹⁴ Letter on files held by AVCC.

awards program. The exact steps taken and reasons behind the closure remain unclear, but one effect, in both cases, was to roll the CSFP funds into newly established/ or re-branded, more generic, scholarship schemes which, while open to prospective students from Commonwealth countries, were specific neither to them nor to a grouping of them.

AusAID indicated that for developing countries, as of November 1996, it offered only one category of scholarship, the Australian Development Scholarship. In November 1996 the decision was taken to amalgamate AusAID's then two main scholarship schemes - Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships (ADCOS, the equity and merit scheme) and Australian Sponsored Training Scholarships (ASTAS) - into a single scheme – the Australian Development Scholarships¹⁵. It seems likely that CSFP scholarships were also rolled into Australian Development Scholarships at this time, although despite enquiries this has not been confirmed. This new scheme brought the scholarships within AusAID's country programs which meant that scholarships were – for each country – prioritised against all feasible other activities in the aid budget for that country.

One Clear Objective – poverty reduction through sustainable development, the 1997 report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade from the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program, chaired by Paul Simons showed a rather less sympathetic view towards scholarships than previous or subsequent reports or government statements. Whilst acknowledging that scholarships have major benefits for Australian institutions and for developing links with the countries from which students come, it noted major drawbacks in terms of cost – the high cost of bringing students to study in Australia is also an opportunity cost in terms of other types of education forgone. In addition, by attracting students away from local and regional universities, the incentives to ensure quality in developing country institutions would be decreased. The report showed scant respect for either the Commonwealth as a community of nations or for student and staff exchanges as themselves of mutual value to countries as well as individuals.

It is clear from this report that by 1996 a climate had developed within AusAID whereby overall expenditure on scholarships was being openly questioned. Even so, in practice significant reductions in overall scholarships were not made, although for efficiency and branding reasons, all AusAID scholarships had been consolidated into the single “Australian” scheme. Neither were significant reductions in scholarships made in subsequent years. Throughout the decade of the 90s, policy and structural changes at times had somewhat ambiguous results as “scholarships” passed through various nets.

The Department of Employment, Education and Training indicated that for developed countries, 1998 would be the last round of separate CSFP awards¹⁶. Subsequently, students from the UK and Canada would be eligible for

¹⁵ Within the AIDAB stable, the Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme (EMSS) announced in 1988 was changed in 1990 to the John Crawford Scholarship Scheme (JCSS) which, “to identify them more clearly with Australia” was changed to the Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships (ADCOS). Also in 1993, AIDAB's Sponsored Training Program (STP) was changed to the Australian Sponsored Training Scholarships (ASTAS). (DFAT Annual report 1993/94) In 1996 both of these were absorbed into the single Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) which remain current at the time of writing.

¹⁶ Although the official cessation of Australian awards through CSFP (as noted in Commonwealth Scholarship Commission annual reports) was 1996 for AusAID and 1998 for IDP via DEET, Table 1 shows that the latest individual awards holders listed for developing countries – through AIDAB - were in 1991 (Botswana, Ghana, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Western Samoa and Zimbabwe). The last individual holders of Australian awards recorded in the CSFP Register for developed countries – through DEET via IDP - were, for UK 1998, Canada 1992 and New Zealand 1991.

However, file records from the AVCC of responses to Association of Commonwealth Universities questionnaires on awards holders indicate that Australia offered 8 new scholarship awards in each of 1993, 1994 and 1995: 4 awards to UK; 2 to Canada; and 2 to New Zealand¹⁶. In addition, three new fellowship awards were given in each of 1993, 1994 and 1995 to UK recipients. It is unclear why the holders of such awards are not recorded in the official register, although it should be noted that as of 1993, the annual reporting procedures of CSC changed, becoming much less detailed, and no longer including names of scholars and fellows, merely total numbers, and with publication only every three years linked with the triennial Ministers' meetings. Also Australian reports sent were more sketchy and often details of scholarship holders were incomplete. In the mid 90s, for a few years AIDAB reporting is noted as including statistics on its scholarship programs which were open to Commonwealth applicants, although not specific to them (thus somewhat over-stating awards granted by Australia within the Commonwealth, and not specifying when the CSFP awards via AIDAB ceased as an independent entity).

the new International Postgraduate Research Scholarships, and New Zealanders were eligible to apply for Australian domestic postgraduate scholarships, including the Australian Postgraduate Awards program. It noted that of 300 new IPRS scholarships awarded in 1999, 88 were for students from Commonwealth countries other than New Zealand.

Thus, CSFP appears to have become absorbed – both within AusAID and the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) – into other programs as part of broader administrative changes, rather than by any specific decision to abandon the program for political or financial reasons. The demise of the Australian government contribution to CSFP may have been largely collateral damage in an uncoordinated effort within Canberra bureaucracies to re-badge international scholarship programs as identifiably Australian in an era when competition for the private overseas student market was intensifying between different national providers. It was also an era when federal bureaucracies were endeavouring to reshape administration, moving away from service provision and towards becoming slimmer, more policy focused bodies.

The CSFP was not the only scholarship program which was absorbed into new, more general scholarship programs whose repackaging then underwent further changes¹⁷. It is nevertheless the case that the absorption of the CSFP in this way could only have happened in a climate where there were no strong champions of CSFP or indeed of the Commonwealth education link – within government, the public service, or external interest groups such as alumni – to lobby on its behalf. The Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee was one exception, but as mentioned below, it was rebuffed. It was certainly the case that the significance of the Commonwealth within Australian foreign policy had reduced by the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, the UK's entry to Europe and Australia's growing regional identity in and engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.

The last ten years – 1998-2008

In this new climate, from 1998 Canada ceased offering CSFP awards to Australians, apparently in response to lack of reciprocity from Australia. Until 2008 the UK continued to include Australians in awards to developed countries of the Commonwealth, and Australians are also included in new arrangements from 2009 for CSFP (UK) scholarships to developed countries.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities, which administers the CSFP (UK) scheme, approached the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) on several occasions in 1999/2000 expressing its concern about the withdrawal of Australian government support for CSFP, and indicated increasing pressure to take the lack of reciprocity into account when making selections for UK awards.

The AVCC was unsuccessful in getting the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) to reconsider its position, being "advised that the Government would not reverse its 1998 decision." In 2000, the AVCC wrote to Australian universities seeking their support for the CSFP (UK) by offering awards in their own right, similar to those offered by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee following the withdrawal of the New Zealand Government from CSFP also in 1998¹⁸. Between 2001 – 2004, eight Australian tertiary institutions offered a total of ten CSFP awards (Table 3). These appear to have been one-off arrangements by specific universities, and in the main were for participation in taught masters' level courses, in specified fields, as indicated in Table 3. They have not continued.

While there was an apparent change of heart on the value of scholarships as part of Australia's aid strategy in the 2006 White Paper on the Australian Government's *Overseas Aid Program, Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability*, this has not – as of the present - been of any assistance to the CSFP. While the new strategy maintains the key focus on Asia and the Pacific, with secondary attention also to the Middle East and Africa, it

This is supported by entries for Australia of all new CSFP awards (i.e. combining those from both AIDAB and DEET) in the 1993/4 – 1995/6 triennial CSFP report. This indicates: 1993/94: 128; 1994/95: 125; 1995/96: 85. The report indicated a 'constant drift towards fewer new awards being offered and taken up each year', so the decline was not confined to Australia. "Principal awarding countries have indicated that, in general the reductions reflect current economic circumstances and are consistent with general budget cuts across a variety of Government sectors." (Section C, and Table 3).

¹⁷ Within DEET, in 1990 the Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships were introduced; in 1998 the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships were introduced; and these were both integrated within the single Endeavour Scholarship program, introduced during the early 2000s. Within AusAID, see footnote 14 above.

¹⁸ Letter from Stuart Hamilton, CEO of AVCC, to all Australian Vice Chancellors, May 2000, on file at AVCC.

Table 3 – Awards from individual Australian Universities

Year of Competition	Institution	Discipline	Degree
2001	University of Melbourne	Social Policy and Administration	MA taught
	University of Queensland	Politics and International Studies	MA taught
2003	University of Queensland	Politics and International Studies	MA taught
	Murdoch University	Communication and Media Studies	PG Diploma
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	Communication and Media Studies	MA taught
	Swinburne University of Technology	Computer Science	MA taught
2004	Victorian College of the Arts	Arts Communication and Media Studies	MA taught
	University of New England	Education	MA taught
	University of Sydney	English Language, Literature and Comparative Studies	MLitt taught
	University of Sydney	Physical Education and Sport Studies	MA research
	Total		10

Source: Personal communication from the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

observes that “[t]here is a strong accord within Australia and the region on the value of scholarships as a means for promoting development and fostering relationships between Australia and people from the region. ... A major initiative under this White Paper is *Australian Scholarships*, which will double the number of education awards offered by Australia to the region over the next five years” (p.53). Under the Australian Scholarships three scholarships schemes are grouped: Australian Leadership Awards, and a refined Australian Development Scholarship program both under AusAID, and an expansion of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)’s Endeavour Programme.

From 1998, the federal education authorities contracted the administration of foreign government awards no longer via AVCC, but directly to IDP. This contract ended in 2006, and in 2007 a new contract concerning just CSFP(UK) was awarded to IDP. This contract is for promotion of CSFP (UK) within Australia and nomination of CSFP applicants. The IDP has continued long-standing practice: promoting the available scholarships to institutions in Australia; receiving recommendations from individual institutions; establishing a selection panel which meets to draw up a short list of Australian candidates to forward to the awarding country, in this case the UK. The process does not involve interviewing, but relies on university transcripts, references, and the candidates’ application.

In recent years, around 150 applications per year have been received for study in the UK: between 20 – 40 applicants have been shortlisted (with 4-5 reserves) through the selection panel process which ranks candidates (taking into account UK nominated priority areas). The very high calibre of candidates was noted by the responsible officer. Reporting lines on the activity to the Commonwealth have remained through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

Part 2 Scholars and Fellows

Australian scholars to the UK and Canada

A sample of 52 Australians who studied as CSFP scholars in the UK and Canada - identified through the CSFP Profiles in the *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960-2002* - responded to a questionnaire about their experience (Appendices 1, 3). Respondents undertook study across a wide range of fields during the period 1960 to 2001, mainly in the UK or Canada.

The experience of these scholars was overwhelmingly positive in and of itself, and proved to be key in opening career opportunities which otherwise would not have been as easily accessible, dominantly within the academy (even for some within the professions). The scholarships enabled study overseas for many who would not otherwise have been able to afford it. Most students came to know about the award from their undergraduate university, sometimes honours supervisors. Application was made often together with application for several other awards for postgraduate study.

Fields of study

Respondents enrolled in studies in the fields of: science, arts, engineering, law, music; mostly at PhD level, although a number at masters' and some bachelor's level (in law and music).

Subsequent career

In large part subsequent careers were academic, with many reaching senior levels – professorships, deanships, vice-chancellorships and other senior university management. In the professions, several legal scholars have followed the academic path for at least part if not the whole of their career. Some have had business interests in addition to holding down academic posts (e.g. an academic psychologist working as executive coach and leadership development facilitator for executive programs). A few have worked in business and consulting, notably those from science and engineering backgrounds.

Of those not in academe, careers have included: federal politician, biotechnology consultant, lawyer in private practice, public servant, journalist, business (engineer); consultancy (engineer); research scientist (CSIRO).

The majority returned to work in Australia, although not necessarily immediately after completing their studies. A few have alternated working in the host country and working in Australia. A number established their careers in the host country, and a few moved to a third country, notably the US. Reasons given for not returning to Australia were lack of employment opportunities or research grants in their particular research field in Australia, the opening up of interesting employment opportunities in the host country, and in one case a spouse from the host country who couldn't settle in Australia.

Effect of award on subsequent career

'The scholarship changed my life' was a frequent refrain. Two common themes emerging from respondents were, firstly, that the scholarships enabled access to study which was either not possible at that time in Australia, or with the best scholars in a particular field; and secondly, that the prestige of the host university was seen to have opened subsequent career doors, especially in postdoctoral positions and in gaining entry to academic appointments on return to Australia. The quality of the intellectual life of host universities was frequently commended. A further theme was the value of the international networks of scholars and friends established during the study period.

Some responses:

- It put me in one of the best labs in the world in my field to get my PhD enabling me to experience research at its best. This prepared the way for outstanding postdoctoral and career experiences that have followed.
- The scholarship was invaluable for my career, because it enabled me to gain experience of a good overseas institution, broadened my intellectual horizons, and provided me with access to extensive expertise unavailable in Australia.

- The experience transformed me in the most profound ways both intellectually and personally.
- I still find myself having a natural affinity for and understanding of Canadians, which perhaps partly explains the success of [subsequent] consulting relationships [with three Canadian biotechnology clients].
- The experience of a university [Sussex] where multidisciplinary was valued has been extremely valuable for me personally as I have taken on roles with broader academic leadership and HE management responsibilities. The award influenced my personal life in career choice and trajectory.
- Short term the greatest advantage was being immersed in a different community and culture. This helped me to be more aware of issues from an international perspective and to be more aware of career options. As a consequence I changed my immediate objective from academic work to being active in public affairs – initially through journalism.
- I think that the department I was in was very cooperative (faculty worked well together) and that has been my model as a faculty member.
- Having a Cambridge PhD never fails to impress. I could not have done this without financial support. It also opened up a new world of contacts and people, many of whom I am still in contact with, and a much broader vision of research and scholarship. This has been and continues to be important in my present (long-running) professorial position.
- I was the first in my extended family to undertake university studies and the Commonwealth Scholarship from 1970 to 1973 enabled me to complete my doctorate at Oxford in Mathematics. I believe that, along with many others, I have provided a rich return on the investment the Commonwealth Scholarship made in my future – a return both to my own country, and also to the United Kingdom.

A couple of respondents observed that times have changed, and that in the sciences whilst in the 1960s a PhD from overseas was essential for an academic career, today it is possible to gain a PhD of suitable standing from an Australian university in sciences and with a postdoc stint overseas to gain a good academic position.

Effect of award on personal life

The central theme in responses was the broadening of life experience through study and travel overseas, leading to a broadened outlook on life. A number met spouses and partners during the study years, and many attested to establishing enduring friendships as well as professional contacts during those years.

Some responses:

- The experience as a scholar was a profound one. I worked with some figures of towering intellect whose influence on me went beyond science and research. I have never ceased to draw on the intellectual tools I gained then, nor the values. It was also an opportunity to expand my musical interests, which have been lifelong, but which flowered during that period. In my spare time I studied music, law and Japanese language. I emerged a minor Renaissance man, but doubt this would have been possible elsewhere or under different conditions. To regard these scholarships as mere research opportunities is to devalue their true worth.
- The three years saw an amazing amount of personal growth – though much of it was hard. Some challenges included: the subtleties of culture shock (some of the hardest adjustment experiences are in cultures which are largely similar rather than hugely different to the person's home culture); climate (lack of sunshine); health (severe depression during first year). Some positives: friendships which have endured over 25 years; travel; chance to experience a different country and its people; experience the difference between 'travelling to' and 'settling in' another place, with consequent need to change or adapt to the new environment.
- I have increased tolerance of diverse cultures from exposure to a wide variety of international students over and above the experience of living in the UK.

Maintaining links with study institution/ host country

While relatively few respondents have maintained professional relationships with the institution in which they studied, most have retained professional relationships with staff and fellow students they met during their overseas study. The scholarship thus served as a base for developing continuing professional networks. The most significant continuing links appear to be between host and home countries rather than specific institutions. This is due to the mobility of academics, and the tendency of former scholars to maintain and extend their contacts through networks of individuals rather than through institutions. It also depends on the field of study; as one respondent noted, many in the field of music do not work in universities.

Some observations:

- I have visited on several occasions, and given invited lectures. In turn I have invited scholars from that university as visiting professors in my own institution. I continue to engage with Canadian scholars and scholarship and draw on Canadian developments in my research and teaching. I participate from time to time in Canadian conferences and publish in some Canadian outlets.
- I no longer have very strong links to Oxford except through my supervisor. On the other hand I still collaborate with people I have met through Oxford. These connections have been important for my career.
- Because of subsequent change of career emphasis, no special links continued with host university academics, however, strong links with other British scholars have since been developed and this is undoubtedly a result of my experience of studying in Britain.

One former scholar spent three subsequent sabbaticals in his host country: 'My links with and affection for the UK were greatly nurtured by my experience there as a scholar. I still have strong personal and professional ties with Britain.' A number of other former scholars have alternated their employment between periods of time in their host and home countries.

Several respondents maintain linkages through their host institution alumni activities; but only one scholar mentioned involvement with a CSFP alumni organisation, and that was from Canada.

Reintegration into Australia

While the vast majority of respondents returned to Australia following their studies and indicated no difficulties re-integrating into the work/ research/ social environment on return to Australia, some key challenges emerged for others, notably around employment. One respondent noted that her return coincided with a period when university funding was reduced, and it took three years to secure a continuing academic position. For one there was disappointment that Australia at the time was not ready for the research he pursued; another, as a young researcher, found difficulty in securing grant funding for several years and eventually returned overseas; for a third it proved difficult to recreate the stimulus of the research environment at his host university and after some years he left research; a fourth was unable to secure employment in Australia and did not return until her retirement. Another, now an expatriate, found the return very difficult: 'Australia did not appreciate the research expertise I had returned with and in general did not support intellectual life.' Several found academic employment in their host country immediately following their studentship and did not seek to return either at all or for many years. Another noted that: 'like many who travel, I eventually found the attraction of staying overseas too strong to resist'.

A number of those returning found difficulties re-adjusting to social life in Australia particularly at first (*having loved living in London*); one felt homesickness for an adopted country at the same time as deep gladness to be back. One who had married in the UK found that his wife felt cut-off from her friends and family, as well as finding the climate uncongenial, so after two years returned to the UK. For another: 'beyond the sense that people other than immediate family were not too interested in the amazing experiences I'd had (now I know this is a common repatriation experience), not too much difficulty re-integrating as I returned to a different part of Australia for work and future study opportunities.'

Identification with wider Commonwealth community

The question of identification is always tricky and difficult to pinpoint, but is surely one of the underlying goals of the scheme. There is no doubt that respondents have in practice established strong, and for most primary, professional networks linking Australia and their host country. Respondents indicated a positive overall experience in their host country, and a large number continuing friendship and travel linkages.

Not all respondents indicated an identification with the Commonwealth as an outcome of their CSFP experience. Of those who did, it was most commonly understood as a bilateral link with the host country, and the broader Commonwealth as a whole in the case of those who met other Commonwealth students in the course of their study or in orientation/ welcome activities such as those organised by the British Council in London.

Some comments:

- Mainly through the links with other Commonwealth scholars I met while in Canada (I retain friendships with several from different countries) but I also feel some affiliation with other Commonwealth scholars I have met in subsequent years. My study in Canada has also given me an interest in and skills for comparative research.
- Student mobility is an excellent vehicle for removing cross-cultural and cross-national barriers, at a time of life when people are inquisitive yet not set in their views. In addition to developing a strong feeling of identification with British scholarship, I met a large number of scholars (Commonwealth funded and otherwise) while in Britain.
- I met students from Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and other countries. I keep in touch with many – even if only once or twice a year. I have not found another forum in which this has occurred.
- A current federal parliamentarian noted he developed: a wider understanding of the benefits of the Commonwealth. I still enjoy contact with some of the other scholars.
- The experience of being in Oxford taught me how much Australia has in common with other post-colonial societies and opened my eyes to the excellent work of the Commonwealth across a broad range of activities.

For the vast majority there was little contact with CSFP following the scholarship, and in the case of Australia no alumni organisation (although establishing one was considered in the late 1980s by federal education officers). There has been no attempt to draw on the individual experience of scholars in orienting new scholars, and in Australia there has been no structure which might over the years have reinforced a Commonwealth identity as follow-up to the CSFP.

Most noted little if any contact with CSFP following their awards until the past few years, presumably contact dating from the compilation by CSFP in London of the *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960-2002* and its publication in 2003. Even so, one former scholar who now receives CSFP newsletters felt his personal experience was ignored:

All the present networking and newsletters seem to focus on recipients from developing countries. The CSFP as an elite award to the academically best from countries like Australia to enable further study tends to be ignored.

This comment indicates the often difficult balancing act inherent in the structure of the CSFP, and indeed the Commonwealth as a whole.

Selection process/ award follow up

Because of the lack of interviewing during the CSFP selection process, for most scholars the selection procedure was opaque beyond completing the application. A number indicated that the CSFP was, for them, one of several options for overseas study that they pursued. A few indicated that they were not placed in their preferred institution, but that things worked out perhaps better for them where they went.

Follow up during the study period from British Council in the UK was warmly commended by several, both the 'welcome event' in London where they met with other scholars, and help in solving subsequent difficulties as they arose. The scheme was seen as extremely well administered and generous, notably for married couples. Informal support during the award was good, particularly 'home visits' to people in Britain. Experiences in Canada were also favourably reported, although distance there precluded as much contact between scholars.

As indicated earlier, most noted little if any subsequent contact with CSFP until the past few years

Overall significance of the award scheme

One respondent spoke for many:

The scholarship truly changed my life in a very positive way, providing me with an international educational and life experience which is with me forever, and some of which I have passed on to my family and colleagues. I became a 'citizen of the world' which would not have happened without the benefit of the scholarship.

Another:

It is a fantastic scheme, especially in providing scholarships allowing people to gain experience at overseas institutions. Excellent research requires broad experience of universities throughout the world; the scholarship scheme promotes scholarly links between Commonwealth countries and, more importantly, makes a contribution to excellent research. Mobility is very

important for postgraduate students, and I fear that without schemes facilitating such mobility, research is in danger of becoming insular, stagnant and lacking in global vision.

Some further observations:

- Longer term, it has been rather the more general advantages of maturing, consolidating thinking and seeing things from a more international point of view which have been of greatest advantage.
- It also exposed me to many other views which, though I perhaps did not then recognise it, encourages tolerance of differences.
- I certainly found it a remarkable scheme and did not appreciate the scale of it till I met all of the scholarship holders after arriving in England. I think the benefits of a scheme like this are extremely valuable in helping to enhance the lives, not only of the recipients themselves, but also those people who they come into contact with back in their home countries.
- It has been a valuable means of supporting higher education options for people in different countries – sometimes as their only chance of studying at a higher level, and in others as a valuable option to choose from.

The merit basis of the award was much valued by recipients: ‘one of the few ways an Australian can get a scholarship, purely on academic merit to study at Oxbridge’. Another was of the view that: ‘...without the CSFP scheme most Australians would go to the US’. Another respondent felt that there was more bi-lateral than multi-lateral value in the award. Another that loss of the scheme would undoubtedly lead over time lead to gradual weakening of inter-country and inter-institutional links, in spite of good will on both sides.

Explanations for decline of Australian commitment to scheme

were unaware of the decline in Australia’s commitment to the scheme, and a number of answers indicated a lack of awareness of how the scheme operated bilaterally within a multilateral structure.

One former scholar saw several possible elements explaining Australia’s declining commitment to CSFP:

It’s a shame that Australia has not been as much of a leader in the CSFP organisation as it has in, for example, the Commonwealth Games movement. I wonder if the declining support is due to the general economic reorientation of Australia away from the UK and towards non-Commonwealth countries such as the USA, Japan and China. Regardless, inadequate awareness of the medium- and long-term accomplishments of CSFP scholars is probably a contributing factor. In the more than 20 years since my award, I have had regular contact and surveys from Canadian representatives of the CSFP – but this is my first contact from the Australian side of the house.

Some further observations:

- Part of this is probably due to the evolution in Australia’s approach to international education in the context of globalisation; part to the relevance/ salience of the ‘Commonwealth’ in the twenty-first century. Strategic repositioning of the scheme in the context of such changes is no doubt required to ensure support and resourcing.
- Australia is increasingly more closely linked to Asia than the Commonwealth. This is understandable, but there are some areas where links to Asia cannot replace those with, say, the UK.
- I suspect that the Commonwealth linkage is not as highly regarded as it once was.
- I think any country will gain significantly in the long term through encouraging future professionals from other countries to gain their qualifications in that country. It is as much about maintaining a positive reputation as it is about direct links and benefits.
- Perhaps more effort should have been made to organise political support for it from former scholarship holders. I suspect our various governments have had little awareness of the benefits of the scheme to our country.
- The scheme has been enormously important for Australian academic institutions and for other sectors which have benefited from the enhanced knowledge and skill, and international networks, of Commonwealth Scholars. While the notion of ‘the Commonwealth’ may have less purchase in contemporary terms, it remains the case that the shared interests and histories across the Commonwealth generate links and commonalities that are useful and can be built upon. Australia has unfortunately not invested sufficiently in promoting academic achievement.
- The scheme provides support for scholars to travel abroad to study, but equally to bring scholars from elsewhere in the Commonwealth to study in Australia. It is vital that international exchange, dialogue and encounter are maintained if Australia is to continue to retain its academic profile in the wider world.

Another former scholar commented:

CSFP has historically served two fundamentally different functions: support for developing country students, and support for developed country students. Overseas study for both categories of students is valuable, but has different social impacts. However, political support for the 'Commonwealth' waxes and wanes in developed countries, collaterally affecting government support for developed country students. Arguably, developed country government support for overseas graduate study should be decoupled from association with the 'Commonwealth'.

This is precisely what has happened in Australia over the past decade, however, with the consequence that overall Australian government support for Australians to undertake graduate study in other developed countries appears to have dropped.

Australian Fellows Overseas

An Fellowships, awarded at mid-career, have been associated with further professional development rather than degree study. An interview with an Australian mid-career academic invited to take up a fellowship in Canada in the early 1990s showed how his three month visit both built on previous professional collaboration with the Canadian academic who nominated him for the fellowship, and consolidated a professional relationship which continues to the present, including several co-authored articles and books and subsequent reciprocal visits. The Australian viewed the fellowship as highly significant in the consolidation of his academic orientation and career, as well as opening up new areas of experience and research, notably intercultural understanding through work during the fellowship with indigenous Canadian Indians, building on his existing engagement with teaching indigenous Australians at his Australian university.

An Australian awarded a UK medical fellowship in the early 1970s already possessed specialist qualifications in Australia, so sought professional experience, not further qualifications, while attached for two years to a hospital in London. He returned to Australia following a further two years at a US university. The CSFP fellowship effectively started his career as a thoracic physician. In addition to specialist medical practice, he continues to tutor part-time at a Brisbane university. The award widened his perspective on ways of life and the practice of medicine in other countries, although he noted that over the years the differences in the practice of medicine have narrowed considerably between countries. 'CSFP provided both tangible specific training and even more importantly I think a widening of the overall perspective of the recipients of the scheme. The intangible benefits may well outweigh the more specific ones'.

A second Australian awarded a UK medical fellowship undertook clinical training in nephrology in Birmingham during the mid 1970s, enabling him to undertake a career in nephrology in Australian hospitals. He has maintained a number of contacts with the UK hospital at which he trained, swapping jobs for 4 months in 1989 with a nephrologist there, and training another with whom he jointly published a clinical report. He regards the CSFP award as a vital component in his training.

Overseas scholars in Australia

In the absence of any alumni records available through either AusAID or DEEWR, the process of seeking current contact details for overseas scholars who had studied in Australia was via internet search and email follow-up using names from the *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960-2002*. This proved both time consuming and disappointing in the few former scholars able to be identified. Although four individuals contacted identified themselves as former scholars, only one completed questionnaire was received.

Of these four former scholars, three had followed an academic career: and two who completed PhDs in Australia during the 1980s currently hold university chairs¹⁹; and the third, who studied in Australia in 1990-91, a lectureship. All three who had followed an academic career currently hold posts in Commonwealth member developing countries²⁰ in the same continent/ region, but not same country, of their origin. The fourth scholar, who held an award in the early 1980s, currently holds a senior public service position in his home country. Two further former scholars who could not be contacted are known to have held professorships in universities in their home countries, one also having served for a period as Foreign Minister in his country's government. As with Australians who studied overseas, this small sample of overseas students who studied in Australia indicates a bias toward an academic career, and achievement at a high level.

¹⁹ One of these in fact studied twice in Australia under CSFP – first at master's level in 1978 and second at doctorate level in 1985.

²⁰ Or former Commonwealth member country in the case of Hong Kong.

While no government files could be accessed which provided specific insights into the experience of CSFP scholars in Australia, over the years a number of studies of overseas students in Australia, including at the post-graduate level, have drawn attention to language challenges for non fluent English speakers, social and cultural adjustment challenges and, for many from Asian backgrounds, different learning environments, particularly the greater emphasis on problem solving over rote learning in Australian teaching (Bochner and Wicks, 1972; Development Training Branch, Australian Development Assistance Bureau, 1981; Harris and Jarrett, 1990; Rao, 1976; Williams, 1989). It is possible these issues are more keenly experienced at the undergraduate than post-graduate level.

The former scholar who responded to the questionnaire, her PhD was seen as ‘a stepping stone for a lifetime in research. It gave me the opportunity to become a researcher which I still am today. It has given me opportunities that I had not previously envisioned’. She has maintained links with her host university: ‘I visited the University as a visiting fellow recently, not to my former department but to another which is more closely linked with my current research. It was good to visit the university, professors and friends at the university’. She found support during the scholarship period very satisfactory, with outings organised by ADAB helpful in making new students feel welcomed. Both of her parents were university graduates who had lived overseas, both educators (one in the civil service, one a school teacher).

The former scholar noted that:

[t]his award presented me an opportunity to live in another Commonwealth country for over 4 years. I see similarities in the ‘university set-up’ in Commonwealth countries, as part of the British legacy. I see similarities in universities (especially the older ones) in UK, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong.” The CSFP award was seen as “...very valuable in giving opportunities to young people, to lay the groundwork for them to become academics. It promotes goodwill between Commonwealth nations. Links in collaborative research may come later. Sowing the seeds for such ties in collaboration may take time but when the opportunity comes up, there is no doubt that I would naturally seize the opportunity to work in research with someone from my alma mater.

Part 3 - Conclusion

From their inception CSFP scholarships have been highly regarded and highly sought after. Their alumni have achieved senior positions particularly within the academy. Evidence of their value has come primarily from recipients, and while this is significant and of direct value, it would be useful to have evidence as well from other sources. It is not known just what impact the scholars and fellows have had as a result of study and travel outside their own countries; further investigation through interviews in receiving countries with officials, employers, community groups and others are recommended.

Although they were merit scholarships, not specifically equity, many Australian CSFP recipients indicated that they could not otherwise have afforded to study overseas. Well administered, embracing a wide range of disciplines, the scheme has provided opportunities for scholars and fellows across the length and breadth of Australia, as well as from a good regional spread within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Within Australia CSFP lost its distinct identity in the 1996/8 restructuring of federal government program support. While the overall level of Australian government support for scholarships was maintained, new arrangements entailed losses, in particular the reciprocal exchange component among developed countries. Australian government scholarships today are heavily biased towards recipients from developing countries within Australia's immediate region and while this includes some Commonwealth countries, importantly the Commonwealth as such is no longer a selection criterion.

Despite attempts, the CSFP did not succeed in establishing a consistent flow of Australians to developing countries – so the scheme tended to operate at two levels. This was formalised in the structural changes made to its operation in Australia during the 1970s, with the aid portfolio taking responsibility for awards to individuals from Commonwealth developing countries to study in Australia and the education portfolio having responsibility for awards to individuals from Commonwealth developed countries to study in Australia, as well as for nominating Australians for awards to study in overseas Commonwealth countries, dominantly the UK and Canada.

Lack of champions for the CSFP is likely to have enabled rather than precipitated the absorption of the CSFP programs into other more generic and differently branded Australian government schemes. While there is evidence that some consideration was given to an alumni program, none was ever established. The overall political significance of the Commonwealth of Nations for Australia receded over this fifty year period and this is reflected in changes to the scheme culminating in its ultimate absorption within the framework established in 1996/98. In this, the 50th year of CSFP, it is timely to raise the issue of “Commonwealth education”, its relevance to Australia as a founding member, and its likely future significance.

Over the past half century, the Australian university system has grown and strengthened enormously. The doctoral program was introduced into Australian universities only in the late 1940s, so CSFP awards for Australian postgraduate students fulfilled an important role from the start in offering studies in areas where research was not strong at the time in Australia. The vast majority of Australian CSFP awardees returned to Australia with many pursuing or resuming careers here. An unintended but valuable outcome of CSFP for Australian recipients has been the opportunity for the kind of educational experience they could not otherwise have afforded.

Changes in modes of travel since the 1950s – the growth and greater accessibility of air travel, reduced telephone costs, development of teleconferencing, virtually instant networking through the internet – have all brought international contact much more easily to Australians, reducing the impact of the “tyranny of distance”. Consequently, the significance of both fellowships and scholarships as means of strengthening academic life within Commonwealth countries must be assessed in this new context. Nevertheless, technological advance is not a substitute for rich personal contacts and periods of time directly engaging with different cultural and intellectual environments.

As a dimension of the development of higher education in Australia, scholarships and fellowships have not been extensively studied, including CSFP whose Australian beneficiaries have mainly been or become academics. Consequently, policy changes have not on the whole taken account of well-researched, system-wide benefits.

Scholarships have been challenged on grounds of opportunity costs (by the Simon Report, for example) and this is a criticism which merits attention, with a reiteration of the benefits claimed for CSFP. Wider communications and the enrichment of experience can be achieved in various ways, notably through communication and information technologies (open and distance learning) and if not a substitute for time spent in another country have a place in the further development of support for international education. In the numerous transformations of Aus-

tralian aid and scholarship programs since the 1980s administrative, geo-political and economic factors have tended to dominate with insufficient attention to the important social and cultural dimensions of scholarship schemes or to the continuing value of the Commonwealth connection.

Over the life of the CSFP the Australian federal public service has undergone continuing change – notably frequent restructuring both within the education and the aid portfolios, with consequent instability and loss of corporate memory. The direction has been away from service provision, leading in many instances to outsourcing; amore policy focused role has emerged. There have been moves toward greater efficiency in administration, leading to frequent program reshaping; and, importantly for the CSFP, a move to rebrand activities in such a way as to more clearly identify the Australian (rather than, for example, a specific multilateral) interest in a given program. It appears that the decision to cease offering Colombo Plan scholarships was taken similarly by rolling those funds into new scholarship schemes which were identifiably Australian.

Significant changes have taken place in international education, since the 1980s. Jones noted that “foreign affairs interests have frequently recognised the diplomatic returns from the training in Australia of large numbers of students from overseas and have helped ensure the continued significance of this aspect of the aid program” (1986, p.14). While scholarships have remained a continuing feature of Australian government policy, since the mid 1980s they have become overshadowed by private overseas students featuring as a major service export industry.

Important changes in Australia’s foreign policy focus over the past fifty years have seen a decline in the significance of the Commonwealth as an entity for Australia, a greater focus in the aid portfolio on the Asian and Pacific region (and for various reasons a number of middle income Commonwealth countries within these regions have tended to lose out) with recently some refocusing also on the Middle East and Africa. Links between Australia and the developed countries of the Commonwealth have also declined, with, for Australia, the importance of the American alliance and its links to Japan, and importantly the increasing European orientation of the UK over this period. While continuing to engage with multilateral organisations, Australia has given more emphasis to the OECD and the Asian Development Bank than to the Commonwealth. Although the Australian government still participates in a number of Commonwealth programs, it is selective, and CSFP is no longer among them.

When the Australian government withdrew its funding for CSFP as a separate activity in the late 1990s, it appears to have met no resistance from within Australia. Subsequent engagement by a small number of Australian universities in offering CSFP scholarships was short-lived.

The relatively modest number of CSFP scholarships offered over the past 50 years by Australia have been highly valued by individual recipients. There are reasons to believe they strengthened both Australian and developing country academic institutions, along with the qualifications of professionals working in non-academic spheres, the lack of research evidence notwithstanding. While one should not expect that all programs established by governments continue unchanged, it might reasonably be hoped that successful elements of programs be built on, and that an effort be made to retain and crystallise corporate memory. The rebranding and refocusing of Australian overseas scholarships over the past two decades does not appear to have diminished the global number of Australian scholarship places funded, yet it has resulted in some small, if significant, losses through terminating its participation in CSFP. First, is the loss of engagement in a practical multilateral activity where, by virtue of its nature, rather than having direct control over bilateral programs Australians become engaged in shaping cross-cultural activities integrating a wide range of perspectives, needs and interests. Second, is the effective loss for Australia of advanced scholarship and fellowship interchange between a set of developed countries with strong historical and language affinities, offering engagement to a category of individuals who on past record have subsequently become significant leaders in their home communities. Third, has been a loss of attention to advanced scholarship and fellowship interchange between Australia and those Commonwealth countries in its region which have been developing well economically in past decades – countries again with strong historical and language affinities with Australia. These losses reflect, on the one hand, the declining significance of the Commonwealth in Australia’s foreign policy objectives and, on the other, have been part of a slow but inexorable attrition of Australia’s commitment to the Commonwealth ideal.

Since the losses that have occurred in the policy and structural changes have been more consequential than intentional, a question arises over the way policies are being framed; the actors involved and the contextual issues being addressed. In the shifting sands between government departments, agencies, programmes and lobby groups, the ideas – and ideals – of international education and of Commonwealth collaboration have been overlaid by strategic regional interests, trade, aid ‘realpolitik’ heavily tintured with economic and political self interest. All

such considerations inevitably come into play, but their dominance in recent decades calls for a reaffirmation of Australia's wider educational interests and values. CSFP has served them well.

APPENDIX 1 – Sources and acknowledgments

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of people concerned with the plan, in both Australia and Britain, and with its alumni. I am very appreciative of the time and thought they gave to the project. (Full list omitted from this version.)

References

- Auletta, A. (2001) in Sauer, G. (ed) (2001) *The Colombo Plan for cooperative economic development in South and South East Asia 1951-2001. The Malaysian-Australian Perspective. A Commemorative Volume to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Colombo Plan.* Adelaide. Australia Malaysia Cultural Foundation. pp.7-11.
- Australian Government (2006) *Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability. A White Paper on the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program.* Canberra. AusAID.
- Back, K., Davis, D. and Olsen, A. (1996) *Internationalisation and Higher Education: Goals and Strategies.* Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs 96/ 15. Canberra. Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Bochner, S. and Wicks, P. (eds) (1972) *Overseas Students in Australia.* Sydney. New South Wales University Press.
- Bowen, N. (1972) *Australian Foreign Aid. Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs The Hon. Nigel Bowen, QC, MP* Canberra. AGPS.
- Cleverley, J. and Jones, P. W. (1976) *Australia and International Education. Some Critical Issues.* Australian Education Review no.7. Hawthorn. ACER.
- Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (2003) *Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1960 – 2002.* London. Association of Commonwealth Universities.
- Commonwealth Scholarship Commission *Annual Report* series, 1960-61 until 2006. (See Appendix 1 for publication details)
- Department of Education, Employment and Training (1992) *Annual Report 1991-92.* Canberra. DEET.
- Development Training Branch, Australian Development Assistance Bureau (1981) *Conference on Educational Difficulties of Overseas Students: A Forum to Explore Possible Governmental and Institutional Solutions.* Record and agenda papers of conference held in Canberra 11-12 December 1980. Canberra. Development Training Branch, ADAB.
- Downer, A. (1996) *Education and Training in Australia's Aid Program. Policy Statement announced by The Hon. Alexander Downer MP, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.* Canberra. AusAID.
- Eldridge, Philip, Forbes, Dean and Porter, Doug (eds) (1986) *Australian Overseas Aid: Future Directions.* Sydney, Croom Helm.
- Goldring, J. (1984) *Mutual Advantage. Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy.* Canberra. AGPS.
- Gounder, Rukmani (1995) *Overseas Aid Motivations. The Economics of Australia's Bilateral Aid.* Aldershot. Avebury.
- Grigg, L. (1996) *The Internationalisation of Australian Higher Education: An Evaluation of the Contribution of the Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships Scheme.* Canberra. AGPS.
- Harries, O. (1979) *Australia and the Third World. Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World.* Canberra. AGPS.
- Harman, G. (2005) "Internationalization of Australian Higher Education: A Critical Review of Literature and Research" in Ninnes, P. and Hellsten, M. (eds) *Internationalizing Higher Education. Critical Explorations of Pedagogy and Policy.* Hong Kong. Comparative Education Research Centre. The University of Hong Kong. Springer. Pp.119-140.
- Harris, G.T. and Jarrett, F.G.(1990) *Educating Overseas Students in Australia: Who Benefits?* Sydney. Allen & Unwin.
- International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (1992) *Student Mobility in the Commonwealth. Workshop on Academic Interchange and Institution Building. National University of Singapore, 7-10 April 1992.* London. Higher Education Unit, Education Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat. Mimeo.
- Jackson, R.G. (1984) *Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program. (Jackson Report)* Canberra. AGPS.
- Jarrett, Frank (1994) *The Evolution of Australia's Aid Program.* Canberra. Australian Development Studies Network, National Centre for Development Studies. The Australian National University.

- Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (1989) *A Review of the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and Australia's Overseas Aid Program*. Canberra. AGPS.
- Jones, P. W. (1986) *Australia's International Relations in Education*. Australian Education Review No. 23. Hawthorn. ACER.
- Kerin, J. (1992) *Changing Aid for a Changing World. Key issues for Australia's aid program in the 1990s. Ministerial Policy Paper and Third Annual Report to Parliament on Australia's Overseas Development Cooperation Program. The Hon. John Kerin, Minister for Trade and Overseas Development*. Canberra. AGPS.
- Lowe, D and Oakman, D (eds) (2004) *Australia and the Colombo Plan 1949-1957. Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*. Canberra. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Marshall, A.C. (1993) *Aid to Trade to Internationalisation: The Development of an Export Industry in Australian Higher Education, 1984-1992*. M.Ed.(Hons) thesis. Murdoch University. Unpubl.
- Rao, G. Lakshmana (1976) *Overseas Students in Australia. Some Major Findings from a Nation-wide Survey*. Canberra. Education Research Unit, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.
- Sauer, G. (ed) (2001) *The Colombo Plan for cooperative economic development in South and South East Asia 1951-2001. The Malaysian-Australian Perspective. A Commemorative Volume to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Colombo Plan*. Adelaide. Australia Malaysia Cultural Foundation.
- Simons, H.P. (1997) *One Clear Objective – poverty reduction through sustainable development. Report of the Committee to Review The Australian Overseas Program*. Canberra. AusAID.
- Williams, B. (ed) (1989) *Overseas Students in Australia – Policy and Practice*. Canberra. IDP.
- Williams, P. (2003) "From Oxford to Halifax: Forty Years of Commonwealth Co-operation in Education" pp. 3 – 40 in L. Bown (ed) *Education in the Commonwealth: The First Forty Years – From Oxford to Halifax and Beyond*. London. Commonwealth Secretariat.

APPENDIX 2 - Changing context of Australia's participation in the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

Period	CSFP	Contextual developments
1950s	1959 CSFP program established	1950 Colombo Plan established – focus by Commonwealth on South & Southeast Asian development
1960-4	1960 First scholarships offered; administered through Commonwealth Office of Education, North Sydney; state education departments involved in selection decisions; goal 100 scholarships 1960-1 – Undergraduate scholarships tenable at universities, technical, agricultural or teachers colleges, but only when local facilities unavailable. 1962/3 – Senior Visitor's Awards become Australian Visiting Fellowships New award of Visiting Professorship established.	
1965-9	1968-9 – Making some of awards available to smaller countries	1966 -Commonwealth Office of Education merged into newly established Commonwealth Department of Education and Science (DES) in Canberra
1970-4	1973/4 – introduced child and marriage allowances within CSFP 1974 – 50 new awards to be made available under CSFP 1974 – administrative split between Education Dept (for developed countries) and ADAA to administer CSFP for developing countries	1972 – DES to Department of Education 1973 – university funding becomes federal govt responsibility; university fees abolished 1974 – creation of Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA)
1975-9	1977/78 – no longer offers a set number of awards or scholarships to each country, but rather an allocation of training months. ADAB increasing emphasis to development of short group courses, with emphasis on training at the undergraduate level.	1977 – ADAA to Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB) 1979 – Harries Report (Australia and the Third World) - Overseas Student Charge introduced
1980-4		1983 – Department of Education merged to Department of Education and Youth Affairs (DEYA) 1984 – Jackson Report (overseas aid) 1984 – Goldring Report (private overseas students)
1985-9	1986/7 – CSFP Visiting Professorships discontinued	1985 – DEYA to Department of Education 1986 – Australian universities able to charge overseas students full fees 1987 – ADAB to Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) 1988 – Department of Education merged to Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) – phasing out subsidised overseas students announced; EMSS announced 1989 – IDP selected to provide Australian Education Centres

		<p>1989 – <i>Research for Australia: Higher Education's Contribution</i> (DEET Minister)</p> <p>1989 – Unified National System established in higher education; number of Australian universities grew</p>
1990-4	<p>1991 – DEET contracts IDP via Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) to administer CSFP for developed countries & nominate Australians for overseas CSFP awards</p>	<p>1990 – DEET establishes Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarship Scheme (OPRS) established</p> <p>- no further subsidised overseas students</p>
1995-9	<p>1996-7 – Review of appropriateness of awards (Review of DEETYA International Services and Australian International Education Foundation)</p> <p>1996+_ - AusAID rolls all scholarships into single program (Australian Development Scholarship scheme), so loss of specific CSFP for developing countries</p> <p>1997 – IDP given responsibility for package overseas awards including CSFP – UK</p> <p>1998 – last CSFP awards by Australian government for developed countries; single new awards program established – International Postgraduate Research Scholarships Scheme (subsequently to morph into Endeavour program)</p>	<p>1995 – AIDAB to Australian International Aid Agency (AusAID)</p> <p>- evaluation of OPRS</p> <p>1996 – DEET to Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA)</p> <p>– AusAID rebrands all scholarships to Australian Development Scholarships</p> <p>1997 – Simons Report</p> <p>1998 – DEETYA to Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA)</p> <p>– DEETYA establishes International Postgraduate Research Scholarship scheme</p> <p>1999-2000 – 'Dept has been making the transition from a service delivery organisation to one whose core business is policy advising and making arrangements for others to supply services or deliver programmes' DETYA annual report 1995</p>
2000-4	<p>2000 – AVCC/IDP approached Australian universities to offer individual CSFP awards</p> <p>2001, 2003, 2004 - 8 Australian universities make total 10 CSFP awards</p>	<p>2001 – DEETYA to Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)</p> <p>-DEST international scholarships rebranded to Endeavour Scholarships</p>
2005-9	<p>2008 – last CSFP government awards made by UK to Australians</p>	<p>2006 – Further rebranding, with Australian Scholarships established which group: Australian Leadership Awards and Australian Development Scholarship program both under AusAID; and Endeavour Programme under DEST.</p> <p>2008 – DEST to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)</p>

APPENDIX 3 - Questionnaires

Questions asked of Commonwealth awardees from Australia who studied overseas:

1. Please indicate: the year of your award; where you studied; the qualification you achieved.
2. In what ways has the award affected your career (short, medium, long term)? your personal life?
3. Have you maintained research or other links with your overseas university/ How important have these been for you?
4. Did you find any difficulties re-integrating into the work/ research/ social environment on your return to Australia?
5. How satisfactory did you find the selection process and award follow up?
6. Do you feel a link or identification with the wider community of the Commonwealth of nations through this award?
7. Do you have any general comments about the overall significance and value of the CSFP award scheme?
8. Australia's government policy towards to support of the CSFP has fluctuated over the years and during the past decade support has declined. Do you have any views about this including possible explanations for it?
9. Kindly attach a brief outline of your career.

Questions asked of Commonwealth awardees who studied in Australia:

1. Please indicate: the year of your award; where you studied; your field of study and qualification achieved consequent on the period of award.
2. How did you know about the award and come to apply for it?
3. In what ways has the award affected your career (short, medium, long term)? your personal life?
4. Have you maintained research or other links with your Australian university/ How important have these been for you?
5. How satisfactory did you find the selection process, and support while you were in Australia?
6. What, if any, difficulties did you have integrating into the research/ social environment during your studies in Australia?
7. What, if any, difficulties did you have re-integrating into the work/ research/ social environment on your return home from Australia?
8. Please place your achievement within your family context – are you the first in your family to study at tertiary level? To do postgraduate study? To live overseas? What has been the main occupation of both your parents?
9. In what ways, if any, have you felt a link or identification with the wider community of the Commonwealth of nations through this award?
10. What is your assessment of the overall significance and value of the CSFP as an award

scheme? How does it compare with other award schemes available to students in your country with which you may be familiar?

11.

11. You may be aware that Australian government policy towards support of the CSFP has fluctuated over the years, and during the past decade and a half support has declined. Do you have any views about this including possible explanations for it? If you are of the view that CSFP should be extended (more awards, better supported), what arguments would you put forward in its favour?

12.

12. Kindly attach a brief outline of your career.