

Australian Higher Education Since 1945*

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Australian higher education has expanded greatly since 1945. There were six universities at that date, with an enrollment of some 20,000 full time equivalent students. Today there are fifteen universities, with plans under way for two more, and with yet another in Papua-New Guinea; total enrollment is about 117,000 students. In addition to the expansion of the universities, yet another type of institution of higher learning has recently emerged: the College of Advanced Education. These institutions have been established on the nuclei of existing colleges of education and technical schools; their role in Australian higher education is yet to be made clear.

The growth of higher education has been possible because of the financial support from the Federal government, as posed to the pre-war dependence on state financial support alone. The agency guiding the allocation of support from federal sources is the Australian Universities Commission, established on the recommendations of the Murray Committee of 1958. The influence of the Commission in this advisory capacity seems to some to threaten the autonomy of the Australian universities.

History as a discipline seems as popular as ever among undergraduates. Graduate work has developed substantially in the years since the war, but the major portion of such study is carried on in one school, the Australian National University in Canberra.

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