

Scott, R. (1989), "Canberra Perspectives on the White Paper", in Bridge, C. (ed) *Higher Education in Australia After the White Paper: A Symposium*, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London.

Teather, D. (ed) (1999), 'Higher Education in a Post binary Era: National reforms and Institutional Responses', *Higher Education Policy Series 38*, Kogan M. and Kingsley J. (eds), London, 1999. See Ch.2, R. Scott, 'The Reform of Higher Education in Australia' and Ch.3, D. Aitkin, 'The University of Canberra'.

APPENDIX: THE SCOTT MEMORANDUM

My personal archive contains the following memorandum from me as CCAE Principal to the CCAE Council:

"In an interview with Minister Dawkins on Thursday January 16, he indicated that it was appropriate for me to communicate the following information to Council, which is consistent with the terms of the general commentary on the Task Force given in Mr Dawkin's (*sic*) speech

included in the Council papers.

Mr Dawkins raised the following points in discussion, concerning the consequences of the possible failure of the merger legislation:

1. That there can be no expectation that proposed allocations of recurrent funds necessary for new developments – the 'growth profile' – will remain in place.
2. The allocation of capital funds for an Engineering Building and DEET support for an ACT School of Engineering will also be 'back in the melting pot'.
3. If a merger does not occur, there is no prospect for the CCAE being transformed into a second federally funded university in the ACT."

Attached was a letter advising the Principal of a visit by a Task Force to advise the Minister on the current status of all amalgamations – a discussion to include applications for assistance with mergers from the 1% reserve fund. It included the following sentence: "You will note from the Minister's press release that assistance and support will only be provided where amalgamations have the support of the institutions concerned."

A Contrasting Courtship

The Monash Takeover of Chisholm

Paul Rodan

Paul Rodan compares the strikingly similar experiences of Monash and Chisholm in Melbourne at the same time.

Roger Scott's account of the abortive ANU/CCAЕ merger brought back memories of the Monash University/Chisholm Institute of Technology amalgamation, effected around the same time. I was much lower down the food chain than Scott, being a middle level administrator and an elected general staff member of the Chisholm Council, nominated by the then union, to the Merger Implementation Committee and subsequently appointed to several of its working parties.

The outstanding point of difference between the two mergers was that the Chisholm senior management was firmly behind the link with Monash, as were the bulk of the external members of the Council. At Monash, the senior management was supportive and the Vice-Chancellor, Mal Logan, seemed to have no problems locking his Council in. In an astute move, he offered the entire Chisholm Council full membership of a combined interim Monash governing body for twelve months. Monash Council membership was an obvious asset on a CV, and probably helped convince at least some of the external waverers to look past immediate staff concerns to the glorious future. Equally enticing to some senior staff was the prospect of acquiring the title 'Professor' in a 'real' university, a more certain status-symbol on the cocktail circuit than the same tag in what were to become known as 'Dawkins universities'.

Staff at both institutions were largely opposed, as measured by polling and anecdote, albeit for different reasons. Chisholm academic staff, aside from a few high flyers, saw an unequal contest for resources (including promotion) and were also mindful of Monash's reputation as a poor employer offering inferior terms and conditions, augmented by an autocratic decision-making culture. One colleague thought that Monash was 'run like a Prussian military academy', and later experience suggested that he might have been a bit tough on Prussia. Like ANU academic staff in Scott's narrative, vocal Monash opponents decried CAE academic inferiority and feared a 'corruption' of the gold standard.

General staff at Monash seemed the least likely to be affected while their Chisholm counterparts could see restricted career paths and de facto redundancies in the medium future. Chisholm had acquired a democratic culture, thanks to capable work by the unions and some inept local management. Monash's location at the other end of that spectrum was demonstrated when oft-made promises about a defiant mass protest at the Professorial Board dissolved into a vain stand by one lone dissident. A prominent dean, who had promised his constituents that he would vote against the merger, capitulated on the day, for which he was traduced as

the 'Quisling Dean' in an anonymous, but entertaining, news sheet. However, this pragmatism did him no harm, as he went on to serve as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and, briefly as an interregnum Vice-Chancellor.

The institutional commitment to the merger was bolstered by the close personal relationship between Logan and the Chisholm director, Geoff Vaughan, a stark contrast to the picture in the ACT drawn by Scott. It passed into merger mythology that Logan and Vaughan held weekly social sessions at which the bonds of love were tied ever tighter. Chisholm cynics used an earthier expression to describe this liaison, and felt vindicated when Vaughan, after only eighteen months in a 'dog's body' Deputy Vice-Chancellor role at post-merger Monash, evacuated his position for the greener grass of an appointment in the Canberra health bureaucracy.

Another contrast was Chisholm's political impotence compared with that of the CCAE. Whereas a range of political actors took an interest in events in the ACT, Chisholm's electoral significance seemed nil. The main Chisholm campus in Caulfield drew its staff from various parts of the metropolitan area, negating any local electoral relevance. The Frankston campus, while mainly employing locals and positioned in marginal seat territory (state and federal) could not generate the political punch it had in the early 1980s, when it turned a prospective Caulfield Institute of Technology (CIT) takeover into a more equal partnership.

It had been one thing for Frankston to resist CIT, but fighting Monash was another. A union colleague once remarked to me that Melbourne and Monash universities were more powerful than the elected government of Victoria. That view was vindicated, not that the state Labor government ever showed much interest in doing other than the bidding of its Commonwealth master. Union requests for the state to delay the merger legislation, pending resolution of outstanding matters of concern, notably in staff terms and conditions, fell on deaf ears. Not for the first time, this was a salutary lesson in the limitations on the so-called union/ALP special relationship. Indeed, from my vantage point, the state Liberal government of 1981/82 did more to protect Frankston staff in their merger than did the Labor government for Chisholm staff facing the Monash juggernaut in 1990. An obvious defect for those opposed to the Monash merger was the lack of a clear viable alternative. By contrast, Scott, while going through the ANU/CCAЕ merger motions, had a personal preference for stand-alone status, which could be depicted as the 'fall-back' position if, as he hoped, ANU pulled the plug. In pursuing this path, he had to call Dawkins' bluff on the threat to withhold university status from those without threshold enrolment numbers.

Anti-merger strategists at Chisholm were torn between the search for a partner and the risks of pursuing a stand-alone policy. Interestingly, Dawkins' strictures about minimum numbers were taken more seriously in suburban Melbourne than

they were a few kilometres from the federal parliament in Canberra. And, if stand-alone were not possible for Chisholm, how could a different merger partner be secured when the senior management and Council had already pledged their love to Monash? Potential partners' names were floated (Swinburne, parts of Victoria College?), by desperate union activists, but to no avail. As stand-alone and alternative partners to Monash were eliminated, these activists turned their attention to securing the best deal with the Monash devil.

Ultimately, Dawkins' threats about minimum numbers were as hollow in Melbourne as in the ACT, as evidenced by the survival of Swinburne to this day. This grated with Chisholm loyalists, who regarded their institution as at least as good and worthy of preservation as Swinburne, if not better. Certainly, Chisholm covered a wider range of disciplines than Swinburne and its old CIT component (pre-1982) had arguably enjoyed comparable reputation and status in Victoria and nationally. However, the bungling of its merger with Frankston had meant the loss of its brand name, and a disastrous appointment as foundation director ensured that it drifted for several years without much name recognition nor a distinctive profile in the post-secondary education jungle. By the time a more capable director, Vaughan, appeared on the scene, the merger was starting to work quite well, but Dawkins' more draconian mergers agenda now beckoned.

Chisholm's shedding of the old CIT TAFE section in 1982 possibly made smoother the eventual link with Monash since it is barely imaginable that Monash would have been interested in any absorption of a TAFE component. Swinburne, by contrast, probably bolstered its case to stand-alone by virtue of its dual-sector status, having retained its longstanding TAFE element. In a later twist, Monash lodged no objection when the state government sought to name a newly merged TAFE conglomerate 'Chisholm'. For many Chisholm loyalists, this was a betrayal of the spirit of the merger agreements, albeit an unsurprising one. More practically, those who secured Chisholm (Institute of Technology) qualifications between 1982 and 1990 will spend the rest of their lives occasionally having to clarify, for those unmindful of the minutiae of Victorian tertiary education history, that their credential is not a TAFE one ('not that there's anything wrong with that', to quote Jerry Seinfeld).

Whatever one's views on the merger, then and since, it is undeniable that the Chisholm decision-makers went down a path which ensured, predictably, that the institution is now but a footnote in history. The contrast with the CCAЕ, where its leader saw as his role the defence and preservation of his institution, and his staff, is both stark and instructive. ■

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