

In Celebration of the Student Experience: The Place of Mannix College — Past, Present and Future

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Professor McMullen's current research interest is Catholic higher education.

I AM HONOURED THIS EVENING to deliver the 2009 John Henry Newman Lecture in this the fortieth anniversary year of Mannix College. My associations with the College are multi-faceted — I was the first woman interviewed for the College before coming as a residential tutor in 1974, the year women were admitted. Following three and a half years as a tutor, I went to Germany for my post-doctoral work and was then invited to be the foundation lay Dean, a role I commenced in 1981. Since my move to Australian Catholic University in 1995, I have continued my involvement with the College through a period on the College Council and as a Fellow. Further, at the time of the College's twenty-fifth anniversary, I wrote a history of Mannix College, *Omnia Omnibus: All Things to All Collegians* — the insights from these experiences with the College as well as my wider higher education roles, my strong conviction of the importance of residences like Mannix College in contemporary universities, and my great affection for the College will, I trust, be the basis of a memorable 2009 Newman Lecture.

My address this evening will be in three parts — the first section will focus on the founding of Mannix College and its achievements over the past 40 years. I will then examine current Government reforms, which will see major restructuring of Australian higher education. Finally, I will consider the place of Mannix College in this new university environment.

Origins of University Colleges

Mannix College is part of a long tradition of residential living associated with universities.¹ University colleges have their origins in student houses of the twelfth and thirteenth century, when students at the embryonic European universities came together in shared, rented lodgings under a master who supervised their studies. A letter to their parents survives from two students living in such an early residence:

*This is to inform you that, by divine mercy, we are living in good health in the city of Orleans and are devoting ourselves wholly to study, mindful of the words of Cato, 'To know anything is praiseworthy'. We occupy a good dwelling [...] We have also good companions in the house with us, well advanced in their studies and of excellent habits — an advantage which we well appreciate.*²

I trust that the students of Mannix College continue to write home along similar lines.

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The early European centres of learning experienced rapid growth leading to an acute shortage of accommodation of the type mentioned, a situation exploited by landlords who charged exorbitant rents. On the other hand, the townspeople, like the neighbours of Mannix College, often resented students' high spirits and there was then no authority, like the guilds, to which students were answerable. This led to tensions between "town" and "gown", which were resolved in the establishment of colleges, where on a fee-paying basis students could reside and pursue their studies behind cloistered walls. Today this model of residence is perhaps best exemplified in the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford Universities but it has been adapted to many other locations, particularly in former British colonies.

¹ G L McMullen (1993) *Omnia Omnibus: All Things to All Collegians — The First Twenty-five Years of Mannix College*, Melbourne: Mannix College, p. vi; M Bandas, *Residential Colleges — Defining Residential Colleges and Related Terms, The Classic Residential College, Benefits of Residential Colleges*; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2367/Residential-Colleges.html>.

² C H Haskins (1975) *The Rise of the Universities*, fourteenth printing, London: Cornell University Press, pp. 80–81.

The Foundation of Mannix College

While it had been the intention of Monash University to have a less traditional form of student accommodation, namely its Halls of Residence, already in the planning stages for the University, the then Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix, approached the Chair of the interim Council of Monash University, Sir Robert Blackwood, seeking a site on campus for the establishment of a residential college by the Catholic Church. The University Council responded that it would welcome the establishment of the college but could not alienate land for this purpose. It suggested that the Church acquire land nearby and offered to affiliate the college with the University. The Church had three properties available close to the campus, including the chosen Wellington Road site, formerly a market garden, directly opposite the main entrance to Monash University. This site was appropriated for the college and in September 1960 the interim Council of the University agreed, in principle, to affiliation of the college.

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A key ally in Mannix's efforts to establish the college (and to promote higher education for Catholics) was Sir Michael Chamberlin, Deputy Chancellor of Monash University from 1961–1968 and a prominent Catholic layman. In June 1963 he was able to present plans for a college to the University for inspection. While these particular plans, which very much reflected the above-mentioned Oxbridge model, proved too ambitious and were not realised, in December of that year college affiliation was secured and this opened the way for an application to the Australian Universities Commission for funding. Further, it was agreed to name the new college in honour of the late Archbishop Mannix, which Monash University welcomed in line with its own policy of naming buildings after outstanding Australians. Mannix had died the previous month.

When the invitation to the Jesuits to conduct the college was declined, Mannix's successor, Archbishop Justin Simonds, a Dominican Tertiary, approached the Provincial of the Dominican Order, Fr Jerome O'Rorke OP. The Order agreed to make friars available both for the college and the Catholic chaplaincy at Monash University and Fr O'Rorke himself took a personal interest in designing a brief for the college, leading to a simpler and more functional complex than the original plan. Funding was eventually secured — with 50 percent provided by the Commonwealth Government and 25 percent by the Victorian Government, and 25 percent raised by the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The foundation stone was laid in May 1968 and stage one of the college was completed for Term 1, 1969. Stage one represented about three-quarters of the current complex, namely the so-called West Wing (later called Hoervers Wing), the southern half of the East Wing (later called Fitzgerald Wing) and the administration building. Fr Richard Hoervers OP and Rev Dr Laurence Fitzgerald OP were the founding Dean and Master of Mannix College, respectively. Due to financial constraints, the northern half of East Wing and the building now known as the Sir Michael Chamberlin Library were not added until some months later.

The first resident of the yet-to-be-completed college was Fr Fitzgerald who arrived on 2 February 1969. Shortly after, Fr Peter Knowles OP, the University Chaplain, who had resided in neighbouring Parker Street, also moved into residence. Mannix College was officially opened on 28 February by Archbishop James Knox, who had succeeded Archbishop Simonds.

A College named for Archbishop Mannix

The naming of the College after Archbishop Daniel Mannix was not only most appropriate because he was an eminent Australian; he had also strongly promoted the role of the Catholic Church in university colleges (and chaplaincy) during his 50 years in Melbourne — while Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy of Sydney had sought to establish a Catholic university,³ Mannix advanced these targeted roles of the Church in secular universities, namely residences and chaplaincies. He recognised “the culture and learning and other advantages” of a university education and the role of the Church in improving Catholic students’ access to higher education through the provision of residential colleges. Thus, in his first public statement following his arrival in 1913, he said:

*If Australia is to prosper, and to grow and develop along national and staple lines, if it is to use to lasting advantage its great natural wealth and resources, it must spare no effort to raise the standard and efficiency of the Universities and bring the advantages of higher education within the reach of all those who are fitted to profit by it [...] every inducement should be held out to Catholics to take their proper place in the Universities.*⁴

One of his first projects as Coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne was to raise funds to build Newman College at the University of Melbourne. Fifty years later he had a similar vision for the new Monash University — B A Santamaria, in delivering an address at Mannix College to mark the 25 years of Monash University, recounted that, in his hundredth year, “Mannix was in a hurry about the College at Monash”.⁵ While he did not live to see it realised, I think that he would be proud of what has been accomplished in relation to Mannix College and I hope that my address this evening will contribute to recording that achievement. The College adopted Mannix’s motto, “Omnia Omnibus” — “All Things to All People” — when I wrote the 25-year history, I adapted that to “All Things to All Collegians”.⁶

³ T P Boland, “Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography — Online Edition*; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140312b.htm>.

⁴ *The Advocate*, 29 March 1913.

⁵ B A Santamaria (1986), “Daniel Mannix—A Man for All Seasons”, occasional lecture delivered at Mannix College on 5 August to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Monash University.

⁶ G L McMullen (1993) *Omnia Omnibus: All Things to All Collegians — The First Twenty-five Years of Mannix College*.

The Dominican Presence

Contemporaneously with their founding of the new college at Monash University, the Dominican Order in Australia also founded John XXIII College at the Australian National University and St Albert's College at the University of New England and committed Dominicans to chaplaincy at the respective universities. In the intervening years and in aggregate the Order has made a major and commendable contribution to university Catholic life and this evening I also seek to pay tribute to the vision of the Dominican Order and its generous contribution to this apostolate.

The Order of Preachers, which was founded by St Dominic in the early years of the thirteenth century, has been associated with universities since their European origins. St Dominic made study integral to the life of the friars and early Dominicans established houses adjacent to the first European universities. The first university in our region, the University of Santo Tomas, is a Dominican foundation of 1611.

Four Dominicans served as Master of Mannix College in the period from 1969-2003 and eight as College Dean from the founding until 1981. University Chaplains and other members of the Order have also resided at the College and it is pleasing to see the links with the Dominican Order retained through the presence in the College of the current University Chaplain, Fr Laurie Foote OP. The Dominican contribution represents a rich legacy to Mannix College and the concept of this being a residential learning community, to which I will return, reflects that inheritance.

Forty Years of Contribution to the Life of Monash University

While its original concept of residences was less traditional, over four decades I think that Monash University has come to value the contribution of Mannix College to the life of the Clayton campus. Together with the Halls of Residence and flats provided by the University, Mannix College adds to the richness of living on campus and does that in a unique way, complementing both academically and socially University life. In this section of the address, I will seek to capture something of that contribution, including retrospective aspects.

The uniqueness of Mannix College at Monash University lies in the holistic approach that it offers to campus life, offering a residential option that seeks to foster the intellectual, professional, spiritual and wider personal growth of students during their studies and promoting options for both individual and community development.

Whilst Mannix College adopted some of the customs of established university colleges, such as a tutorial system, formal dinner and senior and junior common rooms, it broke with other traditions. Thus, for example, it avoided a caste system with respect to freshers and later-year students, facilitated by the provision of uniform undergraduate rooms, and it established a dining room with small non-institutional tables.

The social life of a college like this one is generally full and varied and Mannix College is no exception here. However, from the very beginning major annual events were also introduced into the calendar and quickly became College traditions — Orientation, the College Ball, the Graduation and Valette Dinners, Open Day, the Mannix College Students Society (MCSS) Annual Dinner and so on.

Sport has always been integral to the life of the College, with competitions between the wings of the College, women's and men's teams, and with the Halls of Residence and Newman College, in particular.

Apart from the Mannix College Students Society or MCSS, which was formally established in 1971 following the renaming of the Junior Common Room Association, a range of other interest groups and clubs have enriched the life of the College — perhaps the most enduring, pleasingly, has been the College conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society. More recently, the Mannix Environmental Protection Agency has been formed indicating students' social awareness. Plays, the spectrum of musical events, lecture series, college publications and a range of other cultural activities have contributed to the wider development of residents, which the College seeks to promote. As one of the founders of the annual John Henry Newman Lecture, I am particularly pleased to be delivering the address in this historic year.

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From the beginning Mannix College employed University-approved tutors, whose roles encompassed both the academic and pastoral support of students and necessarily, as required, disciplinary duties. Their role is critical to the College being a residential learning community and the College's emphasis on forming mentoring relationships between post-graduate and undergraduate students. Over the years Senior Students and now Resident Advisers have shared in this role and facilitating students' transition to higher education and college life and creating "intentional environments that promote learning and academic success".⁷

One aspect of the College's history, which deserves highlighting, was admitting women in 1974. The men of 1969 had tried to advance this cause when on the last day of Term 1, the College awoke to a large banner above the front door with "*CO-EDUCATION FORMANNIX COLLEGE*".

⁷ Mannix College website; accessed on 28 May 2009 at <http://www.mannix.monash.edu.au/prospective-residents/ilc.html>.

However, it was not until 1973 that the College Council addressed this issue and unanimously endorsed co-residence — by then it was clear that there was no intention to establish women's college. The transition to women was smooth and I, for one with a vested interest, would argue greatly enhanced the College. The next three years the College Council approved the “co-residential status” on an annual basis and then from 1977 “for an indefinite period”, in which we still operate.⁸ Thus, July 1974 saw the one and only Mannix College Old Boys Dinner and MOCA, the Mannix Old Collegians Association, established some years later has sought to encompass all of the alumni.

Over the years the College has regularly been refurbished and upgraded, for example allowing students access to the Monash University information technology network. A key area of development was the gardens to which both Fr Peter Knowles OP and Rev Dr Denis Minns OP devoted great energies. The library named in recognition of Sir Michael Chamberlin's founding role in the College has always been integral to the academic and wider intellectual life of the community. While there were grander plans for a library and chapel, the library's expansion into the former games room in 1980, its current location, has allowed a central and well-resourced facility to be available to collegians and the wider University community.

The College has seen years of low occupancy (but fortunately not in recent years) and periods of financial hardship, staffing issues including the need for the Dominican Order to withdraw from 2003, and other challenges but its value to the life of the University and as a work of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has never seriously been in doubt. There have on occasions been tensions. Thus, in Lent 1972 a series of letters between the Monash Association of Students and the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr Louis Matheson, dealt with a concern that the College

⁸ Minutes of the Mannix College Council Meeting of 8 October 1976.

served “fish and only fish” for “breakfast, lunch and dinner for a period of six weeks per year and on other religious days”. Dr Matheson was able to advise that Lenten requirements were not that rigorous and he further expressed the opinion that “from a nutritional point of view I think we should all be eating more fish and less meat”⁹

It is the students and tutors, the Masters and Deans, now the College Principal and Dean, and all the other staff, who have made Mannix College a very special community. In looking back at our years in the College, the friendships formed and experiences remembered, it is 4,000 – 5,000 collegians and hundreds of staff who have served the College so professionally, who represent the essence of Mannix College and continue their association as its alumni. Let me illustrate what I mean with an incident from 1973 recounted by the then Bursar, Leo de Jarlais — one morning Leo espied Jim Finn, a blind student, pushing Denis Cheesman, a student in a wheelchair, to Denis’ car. Jim then assisted Denis into the car, folded the wheelchair into the boot and climbed into the car beside his friend. That exemplifies the spirit of the College.

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The Commonwealth Government’s View of Higher Education

I would now like to turn to the wider university scene and you will be aware that Australian higher education is undergoing major reform at this time. I will examine the nature of university education from a variety of standpoints, firstly from the perspective of the Commonwealth Government in light of its recently-completed review of higher education in Australia, and secondly from other conceptualisations of higher education and specifically the thought of Wilhelm von Humboldt, whose Berlin-inspired university is now in its 200th year, and of the Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman, after whom this lecture is named.

⁹ G L McMullen (1993) *Omnia Omnibus: All Things to All Collegians—The First Twenty-five Years of Mannix College*, p. 25.

This analysis will form the basis for painting a scenario for Mannix College's future — its place in the reformed higher education sector.

Within four months of taking office the Rudd Government announced a major review of higher education in Australia. Ms Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Employment, Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion in an address on 13 March 2008 to the *Australian Financial Review* Higher Education Conference announced its terms of reference and highlighted what she termed the major themes of the review, namely:

- Greater diversity amongst “high performing, globally-focused” higher education institutions;
- Their enhanced contribution to national productivity and labour market participation;
- Efficient and effective investment in the sector;
- Wider access to higher education together with improved student support programs;
- The highest standards for Australian higher education teaching and research;
- Improved articulation between the higher education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors; and
- Links to parallel Government initiatives addressing national innovation and skills requirements.¹⁰

In June 2008 the Commonwealth Government released a discussion paper outlining the specific questions to guide this review of higher education and set out in detail what could be discerned as the new Government's basic thinking about future higher education provision for Australia.¹¹ Such a discussion paper is revealing in relation to the

¹⁰ J Gillard (2008) “A Higher Education Revolution: Creating a Productive, Prosperous, Modern Australia”, *Australian Financial Review* Higher Education Conference, Jamison; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/Gillard/Releases/>; K Carr (2008) Address to the Universities Australia Plenary Meeting of 12 March 2008; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://minister.innovation.gov.au/Carr/Pages/universitiesaustraliaplenarymeeting.aspx>.

¹¹ Australian Government (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Discussion Paper*, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; accessed on 22 May 2009 at <http://www.dest.gov.au/HEreview>.

Government's intentions for universities. I wish tonight to spend a little time capturing the essence of the paper as it informed the vision and principles for higher education set out in the *Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report* (the so-called Bradley report) presented to the Government in mid-December 2008.¹²

The Government's discussion paper starts by setting out its view of the place of higher education in contemporary Australia. Its main points are the following:

- Australia needs to make the most of its “human capital” by encouraging the upgrading of skills and knowledge and by providing educational and training opportunities for individuals from wide-ranging backgrounds;
- “In the face of rapid global change” — importantly, in June 2008 few foresaw the catastrophic nature of the economic changes that would unfold in October last — higher education, with its functions of teaching and research, will make the difference between “adjusting to the forces which press upon us or establishing a new economic, social and environmental order”;
- Higher education is the arena where “the most highly skilled members of the workforce are educated” and where “the intellectual base for new knowledge intensive industries is formed”;
- Higher education “can enhance social inclusion [...] reduce social and economic disadvantage [...] create a nation confident and engaged both with its geographic communities and the wide community of nations [...] and act] as a cornerstone of the institutional framework of society”;
- Finally, the discussion paper notes that higher education can in its traditional role “transform the lives of individuals [...] communities and the nation by engendering the love of learning for its own sake and the passion for intellectual discovery”.¹³

¹²D Bradley (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report*, Canberra: DEEWR, Section 1.2, pp. 4–8; accessed on 22 May 2009 at www.deewr.gov.au/he_review_finalreport.

¹³ Australian Government (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Discussion Paper*, p. 1.

The Government then lists “the functions of higher education in modern Australia”, which, if performed effectively, are manifest in specified characteristics of higher education. Thus, the Government sees higher education as having four essential functions:

- “Developing high level knowledge and skills” for personal development and development of a workforce appropriate to Australian needs;
- “Generating new knowledge and developing new applications of knowledge” through research, research training and knowledge exchange with industry and society;
- “Developing and maintaining a civil and sustainable society” through addressing cultural and social structures, capacity building in national and global contexts, and development and maintenance of civil and sustainable regions and communities;
- “Building the national economy and regional economies within Australia as a major knowledge-based industry in its own right”.¹⁴

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If functioning effectively then, from the Government’s perspective, Australia’s higher education institutions should be marked by the following characteristics:

- Meeting labour market and industry skills needs;
- Providing opportunities for capable students’ participation and ensuring stimulating and rewarding higher education experiences for them;
- Effective connections with other education and training sectors;
- An international orientation;
- Demonstrable contributions to national research and innovation, national and regional economies and the development of social and cultural structures;
- Efficient and effective resourcing and governance.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

This analysis identifies two foci of the functions and characteristics of higher education as set out in the Government's paper, namely the ways in which universities can best fulfil an immediate economic function and a vision of universities geared to achieve socially- and economically-relevant national objectives — social inclusion, regional economic growth, cultural development, the development of a civil society and so on.

The Government established a four-person committee, chaired by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Australia, to undertake its 9-month review of higher education. The committee invited submissions, consulted widely and commissioned research to inform the review. The *Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report*, the so-called Bradley review, which included 46 specific recommendations, was delivered in mid-December 2008.¹⁶ In large part the Australian Government adopted its directions for the Australian higher education sector and the 2009 Federal budget paper, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, elaborated on funding or otherwise advancing some 40 of Bradley's recommendations.¹⁷ Key strategies endorsed included:

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- Substantial growth in higher education with at least 40 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds having a bachelor degree or higher by 2025;
- Increased opportunities for university studies through the introduction of learning entitlements, which are without time or dollar limits, allowing eligible students to attend the university of their choice;
- Improved participation in higher education with 20 percent of undergraduate enrolments in 2020 being students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and, in particular, improved access and outcomes for Indigenous Australians;

¹⁶D Bradley (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report*.

¹⁷ Australian Government (2009) *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

- Significant reforms to student income and scholarship schemes aimed at removing financial barriers to higher education participation;
- Addressing higher education provision in rural, regional and outer-metropolitan Australia;
- Increased funding for research-related infrastructure and to support research training;
- Increased accountability addressed through the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency or TEQSA in 2010. TEQSA will develop and implement a national accreditation, quality assurance and regulatory framework, initially confined to higher education but later intended also for the VET sector. In particular, national academic standards are proposed for higher education;
- Staged improvement of higher education funding, including by means of a 10 percent-discounted indexation formula;
- Rewarding institutions for meeting negotiated performance targets, including equity outcomes. Such targets would be set through compacts agreed between the university and the Commonwealth Government;
- Provision of funding for capital works and structural adjustments linked to the reform agenda;
- Initiatives to encourage students to undertake part of their studies off-shore and to grow enrolments in teacher education and nursing courses;
- Higher education providers setting their own entry standards and determining the number of students enrolled and the course disciplines in which they enrol (and I will particularly return to the entry standards issue in considering the roles of contemporary colleges in subsequent remarks).¹⁸

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 57–65.

These reforms will lead to a higher education sector that is more student-focused and demand-driven, with quality teaching and learning and research and scholarship paramount and strategically framed within local, national and international contexts.

Many of the reforms are to be phased in over the next several years and, in particular, urgent funding needs of the university sector are delayed.

Other Views of Higher Education

Before considering the relevance of the higher education reforms for Mannix College and other university residences, I would like to consider other and arguably wider views of higher education. Elsewhere nations are facing similar questions about their higher education institutions. Thus, in September 2008 the League of European Research Universities¹⁹ published a paper released by Geoffrey Boulton, Vice-Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and Sir Colin Lucas, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, entitled *What are Universities for?*²⁰ In the paper's introduction, the authors, drawing upon both John Henry Cardinal Newman and Wilhelm von Humboldt, set down as fundamental to their subsequent discussion their "idea of a university". How did Newman, the great English academic and churchman, whom this evening's lecture honours, define the university? In his famous discourse titled *The Idea of a University*, he states:

*A University is a place [...] whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge [...] It is the place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate [...] It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected [...] and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge.*²¹

¹⁹The League of European Research Universities was founded in 2002 and is "an association of research-intensive universities sharing the values of high-quality teaching in an environment of internationally competitive research". Its 20 members include Cambridge, Edinburgh, Freiburg, Karolinska-Stockholm, Milan, Oxford and Zurich universities; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://www.leru.org/>.

²⁰G Boulton and C Lucas (2008) *What are universities for?*, Leuven: League of European Research Universities; accessed on 26 May 2009 at <http://www.leru.org/>.

Germany is credited with developing the concept of the research-focused modern university and here Wilhelm von Humboldt, the Prussian educational reformer, played a major role. In 1810, he wrote a memorandum that led to the establishment of the University of Berlin, which is currently celebrating its 200th year. He envisaged a university based upon the following three principles:

- The unity of research and teaching;
- Freedom of teaching; and
- Academic self-governance.²²

At its best, the western comprehensive university is the fusion of these two conceptions of the university. But, as the authors of the League of European Research Universities' paper argue:

*... the space of university endeavour is essentially one where discoveries cannot be determined in advance and where the consequences of the encounter between minds and between a mind, a problem and evidence [...] are profoundly and marvellously unpredictable. They are the very conditions of creativity.*²³

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Universities have become crucial national assets. As I highlighted above, the Australian Government sees universities as encompassing all of the following:

- Sources of new knowledge and innovation;
- Providers of skilled personnel for the workforce and of qualifications with international currency;
- Attractors of investment into regional Australia;
- Agents of social justice and social inclusion; and
- Contributors to social and cultural development.

²¹J H Newman (1872) "What is a University?", *Historical Sketches*, Vol. 3, *The Rise and Progress of Universities* in The National Institute for Newman Studies (2007) *Newman Reader—Works of John Henry Newman*; accessed on 12 June 2009 at <http://www.newmanreader.org/index.html>.

²²W von Humboldt (1810) "Über die innere und äussere Organisation der höheren wissenschaftlichen Anstalten in Berlin" in A Leitzmann et al. (Eds) (1903–1936), *Wilhelm von Humboldts Gesammelte Schriften*, Band X, Berlin; cited in G Boulton and C Lucas (2008) *What are universities for?*, Section 2.

²³Boulton and Lucas (2008) *What are universities for?*, Section 8.

Boulton and Lucas note that many governments see universities in a similar way to the Australian Government. Thus, consider the following statements:

- The function of universities is to provide direct input-output benefits for national economic prosperity;
- University applied research affects economic prosperity via scientific and technical innovation spreading from universities into the economy;
- “There is a high correlation between prosperity, social contentment and university [scientific and technological] research”; and
- “Research should only be supported if it is in the immediate national interest” and produces useful knowledge.²⁴

On the other hand, quoting Drew Faust in her inaugural address as President of Harvard in October 2007, the authors of the League of European Research Universities’ paper stress that “A university is not about results in the next quarter; it is not even about who a student has become by graduation. It is about learning that molds a lifetime, learning that transmits the heritage of millennia; learning that shapes the future.”²⁵

Such a view is in stark contrast to the prevailing view that universities should predominantly concern themselves with immediate demands. Boulton and Lucas concur, emphasising that:

*... it is not only important that universities address and train for current needs, but equally important that they develop the thinking and the mental and conceptual skills and habits that equip their graduates to adapt to change and even steer it if circumstances permit.*²⁶

Fifty years ago in a landmark study of the preparation of medical students to become doctors, Robert Merton and his colleagues at Columbia

²⁴*Ibid.*, Section 16.

²⁵D G Faust (2007) Installation Address: “Unleashing our Most Ambitious Imaginings” (12 October); accessed on 8 June 2009 at http://www.president.harvard.edu/speeches/faust/071012_installation.php.

²⁶Boulton and Lucas (2008) *What are universities for?*, Section 25.

University conceptualised such professional preparation as “training for uncertainty” as students “engaged in learning the professional role of the physician by so combining its component knowledge and skills, attitudes, and values, as to be motivated and able to perform this role in a professionally and socially acceptable fashion”.²⁷

Boulton and Lucas argue convincingly that the fundamental contribution of universities to society is to produce “useful knowledge” but that such knowledge may not be immediately useful “for the technologies and skills believed to be crucial for economic success”. Knowledge may be conceptualised as “*applied and not yet applied*”.²⁸

How have the very best universities gone about educating their students? They have been concerned about two related elements:

- What students are learning; and
- How students are learning — a complex process rather than the simple transfer of information to students.

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The best universities serve to make their students think critically. How? Boulton and Lucas propose as follows:

*They do so by feeding and training their instinct to understand and to seek meaning [... they] are taught to question interpretations that are given to them, to reduce the chaos of information to the order of an analytical argument. They are taught to seek out what is relevant to the resolution of a problem; they learn progressively to identify problems for themselves and to resolve them by rational argument supported by evidence; and they learn not to be dismayed by complexity but to be capable and daring in unravelling it. They learn [...] to distinguish between the true and the merely seemingly true.*²⁹

²⁷ R K Merton, G G Reader and P L Kendall (Eds) (1957) *The Student-Physician: Introductory Studies in the Sociology of Medical Education*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and therein R K Merton, “Some Preliminaries to a Sociology of Medical Education”, p. 41, and R C Fox, “Training for Uncertainty”, p. 207.

²⁸ Boulton and Lucas (2008) *What are universities for?*, Section 27–28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Section 30.

In Discourse 7 of *The Idea of a University* Newman expresses his view of what a university education ought to accomplish for an individual in the following way:

*... a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste [...] at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age [...] It is the education which gives [a person] a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches [the individual ...] to disentangle a skein of thought [...] and to discard what is irrelevant.*³⁰

Newman's thoughts of 1852, in the 2008 context of the League of European Research Universities, capture the essence of a university education.

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As I have observed earlier in these remarks a dominant theme in the Commonwealth Government's review of higher education, the Bradley review, has been to stress the role of the university in meeting immediate labour market and industry needs. The Commonwealth has especially stressed the role of universities in filling shortages in professional occupations, noting that Australia has experienced what it calls "persistent shortages" in a range of professional areas over the past decade, including nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, occupational therapy, accounting, some engineering specialisations and, I would add, medicine. The Commonwealth quotes an OECD report which identifies such shortages as the main factor in hampering economic growth in many countries.³¹

³⁰J H Newman (1852) "Discourse VII: Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Professional Skill" in I T Ker (Ed.) (1976) *The Idea of a University: Defined and Illustrated* (edited with introduction and notes), Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 154.

³¹Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008) *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society, OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education: Synthesis Report*, Vol. 3, p. 16; accessed on 8 June 2009 at <http://oecd-conference-teks.iscte.pt/documents.html>; quoted in Australian Government (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Discussion Paper*, p. 20.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics in its *Australian Labour Market Statistics Bulletin* notes that there are approximately 2.15 million persons in occupations in Australia that the Bureau classifies as professions.³² This represents 20.2 percent of Australia's current workforce, whereas in the 1971 census of the Australian population professionals were identified as 10.2 percent of the Australian workforce. The steady shift towards knowledge-intensive employment will inevitably be accompanied by the need for more professionals within the workforce.

As it is largely universities which prepare recruits to enter these professions, the Commonwealth sees universities somewhat as being the "servants" of these professional areas. We, in universities, ought to think carefully before we embrace a view of tertiary education too narrowly-based upon its utility and keep in the forefront of our minds the principles of Newman and their 2008 expression by the League of European Research Universities. Importantly, a university residential college can play a role in realising the wider goals of a university education and this will be one area of focus in the final section of my lecture this evening.

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³² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2008) *Australian Labour Market Statistics Bulletin*, Canberra: ABS, Catalogue No. 6105.0; accessed on 8 June 2009 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/>.

The Place of University Colleges in the Reformed Higher Education Sector

As I indicated above, university colleges are clearly of historical significance and the role of Archbishop Mannix in the establishment of both Newman and Mannix Colleges is indicative of their importance in facilitating higher education for Catholics during the twentieth century — are university colleges relevant in the new millennium? I will argue strongly that they are and, in fact, that the current Commonwealth Government higher education reforms will give them new relevance in Australian universities.

Let me now consider the major higher education reforms in turn and perhaps envisage the College's next ten years, as it moves from 40 to 50 years as an affiliated college of Monash University. The introduction of learning entitlements allowing eligible students to attend the university of their choice will see growth of some universities and potentially declining student numbers at others and there are consequential impacts of either scenario on student accommodation.

In relation to a sector that is both more student-focused and demand-driven, these have always been characteristics of residences and it will be strategic for Monash University to maintain a variety of housing options on campus and the collegiate environment of Mannix College can continue to enrich campus accommodation available at the University.

Similarly, a residential college can augment a university's commitment to quality teaching and learning (and achieving the proposed national academic standards). Thus, the tutorial system operated by Mannix College remains valid in this regard and its importance may be increased in relation to two other reform agenda items, namely:

- Substantial growth such that the number of 25- to 34-year-olds with a bachelor degree or higher will grow from 32 percent now to 40 percent by 2025; and
- Improved participation in higher education with 20 percent of undergraduate enrolments in 2020 being students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and, in particular, improved access and outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

In support of these latter objectives, significant reforms to student income and scholarship schemes are intended to remove financial barriers to higher education participation (although there may be some unintended aberrations in the proposed package). At the same time institutions which achieve negotiated performance targets will be rewarded and, importantly, have designated funding to provide the extra support that students from disadvantaged backgrounds often require to succeed at university.

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If the pool of those attending university is to widen by some 25 percent, some students will be potentially less well-prepared to undertake higher education studies due to having a lower ENTER score or having previously studied in the VET sector with its different learning environment. Such students might especially benefit from the support of the College and, in particular, its supplementary tutorial program. Further, the Government's increased funding to support research training may widen the pool of potential College tutors — on the other hand, research students undertaking College or other tutorial roles gain valuable teaching experience, which is seen as increasingly important in preparing for an academic career.

The majority of Mannix College's residents come from outside the Melbourne metropolitan area — thus, in relation to the Government's

target of increasing higher education participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is pertinent to highlight the situation of regional Australians, who are seriously under-represented in higher education compared to their numbers in the population.³³ Further, in regional Australia, i.e. outside our capital cities, there have been worsening rates of participation in higher education over the past five years among those who complete secondary schooling and who are qualified to go on to university. This contributes to our nation facing a shortage of highly trained persons that our nation and especially our regional economy need and, at the personal level, this means that these young people are cutting themselves off, or being cut off, from life chances. It is anticipated that this cohort will increase as the reform package is phased in and these regional students would particularly benefit from the supportive learning environment of the College.

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Despite improvements to student income support proposed in the 2009 Federal Budget, additional accommodation scholarships at Mannix College might need to be considered to allow disadvantaged regional students to live in college. There continue to be concerns that family assets may severely limit these students' access to income support.

A further equity group, which should be of particular relevance to a Catholic residential collage, is Indigenous Australians — their representation in the population of 2.2 percent would suggest that proportionally Mannix College might have 5–6 Indigenous Australians in residence each year and offer them targeted support as a particular mission-focused initiative of the College.

A recent study undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) compared the engagement with their studies of students in residence and those not living on campus. It noted that “for

³³D Bradley (2008) *Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report*, see Table 4, P. 28 and Figure 5, P. 31.

students, residential life is often seen as a formative part of the overall university experience”. Significantly, the study concluded that:

- *Students living in residence are equally, and in many instances, more engaged than others, particularly in terms of participation in active learning and enriching experiences, their interactions with staff, and their perceptions of support;*
- *Differences between residential and non-residential students’ engagement grew between first- and later-year cohorts, suggesting that the effects of college accumulate over time; [and]*
- *Residential students’ learning, development and satisfaction is greater than for those who lived off campus.*³⁴

The research provides evidence that colleges can play a role in realising the increased higher education participation and success rates that the Bradley review envisages. Importantly, the study found a positive impact of colleges in Australian higher education.

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Internationalisation of higher education is a growing focus and residential colleges will need to accommodate residents who choose, and are given financial support, to complete one or two semesters of their degree overseas. Such opportunities will provide personal enrichment to these students and better prepare them for the world of work in the twenty-first century. The College will be further internationalised as they return to complete their studies at Monash University or have their places taken by international students on exchange here.

³⁴ACER (2009) “Engaging College Communities: The Impact of Residential Colleges in Australian Higher Education”, *Research Briefing—Australasian Survey of Student Engagement*, Vol. 4, June.

In a 2004 Vatican document addressing, in particular, the place of international students in our universities, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto stated:

*We must move towards intercultural coexistence among students, creating the atmosphere of a second family within their residences, if that is where they live. There, they must find true friendship (not limited to people of their own nationality) and the participation of everyone [...] creating true and just integration.*³⁵

At its best collegiate life is a rich experience immersing students in a residential learning community that offers them academic, cultural and wider personal growth. As a Catholic residence, Mannix College also adds a further spiritual dimension. The Bradley review and the resulting Government reforms have a strong focus on the quality of the student experience — residences like Mannix College augment that experience and offer learning opportunities beyond the student’s individual course of studies. They will contribute to the diversity of the student experience in this new era for Australian universities. In Mannix College the Archdiocese of Melbourne continues a valued and contemporary apostolate within higher education.

I congratulate the Archdiocese and all the members of the College, past and present, on achieving the vision of Archbishop Mannix. Mannix College adopted his personal motto, “Omnia Omnibus” and in the diversity and richness of its community life over 40 years has striven to be “All Things to All Collegians”.

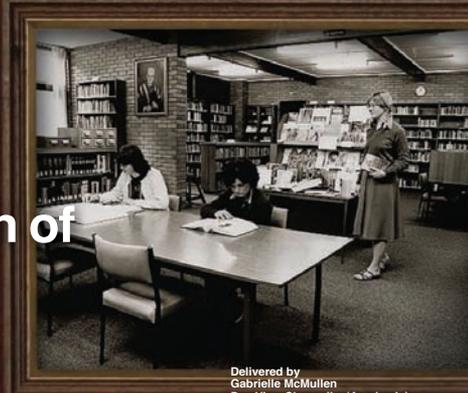
³⁵ A Marchetto (2004) *Pastoral Care of Human Mobility in the Universities of Europe*, Rome: Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People; accessed on 27 May 2009 at <http://www.vatican.va/>.

The Newman Lecture, the annual public lecture given at Mannix College, is named after Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890), Catholic theologian and educationalist.

The Newman Lecture series began in 1981. Newman Lecturers have included Sir Edward Dunlop, Robyn Williams, Senator Michael Tate, Professor Max Charlesworth, Dr Veronica Brady and also Bishop Eric D’Arcy, who delivered the inaugural Lecture.

This edition of the 2009 Newman Lecture was produced in 2009 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Mannix College.

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In Celebration of the Student Experience: The Place of Mannix College – Past, Present and Future

The Newman Public Lecture
26 August 2009 9:00pm

Delivered by
Gabrielle McMullen
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Australian Catholic University

Venue
Mannix College
Corner Wellington Road
and Parker Street, Clayton

Free Admission
Light Refreshments will be
served after the lecture

Bookings Essential
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