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## **An analysis of earlier reports into Senior assessment and tertiary entrance procedures in Queensland**

David Kelly  
January 2014

This paper is an analysis of selected major reports into Senior assessment and tertiary entrance procedures in Queensland; in particular:

- *Public Examinations for Queensland Secondary School Students* (1970, ‘the Radford Report’)
- *A Review of School-based Assessment in Queensland Secondary Schools* (1978, ‘the ROSBA Report’)
- *Tertiary Entrance in Queensland: A Review* (1987, ‘the Pitman Report’)
- *The Review of Tertiary Entrance in Queensland 1990* (1990, ‘the Viviani Report’).

These reports mark stages in a long history. The first of them, the Radford Report, is almost 45 years old; the most recent, the Viviani Report, is almost 25 years old. The Radford Report was as close in time to World War II as we, in turn, are to the Viviani Report.

This paper is not a recounting of that long history but an analysis of some reports that responded to and helped form the history.

Why do such an analysis? Previous reports, after all, have had their day. Their recommendations have been implemented, rejected, adapted, superseded. The situation they sought to improve has passed. Their predictions have been verified, averted, perhaps discredited. Their missed opportunities cannot be reclaimed. Written indeed in the hope of being superseded by policies and practices, they have proved subject to the common fate of ‘grey literature’ and have largely disappeared from publicly accessible sources.

The current report of course will stand or fall according to its connections with today’s realities, not according to its place in a lineage of previous reports. Nevertheless, an analysis of reports has more than historical interest. Like Buckminster Fuller’s knot, which slides along a series of spliced ropes (the ‘same’ knot manifested successively in materially ‘different’ ropes), themes, patterns and positions recur in different reports, written by different authors for different times, using different material. Examining the ‘knots’ in previous reports can suggest crucial questions about the current report that its readers, and indeed its writers, can ask of it. Of the many such knots that could be examined, three have been selected here, to incorporate considerations of:

- the interrelationship of the reports (‘How did each report relate to its predecessors?’)
- the relationship of the reports to their time (‘How did each report characterise the existing situation?’)

- the values that drive the reports ('What values were embedded in each report?').

### **How did each report relate to its predecessors?**

From the viewpoint of the current report, the Radford Report can be regarded as an originator. It is true that the report includes a magisterial account of the previous century's initiatives, concerns and responses (more or less incremental) in relation to examinations in Queensland. That narrative, however, was one that the Radford Report itself brought to a close: it is a survey of how the system got to where it then was ('Practices arose in response to a particular need, and were continued as traditions after the need disappeared.' p. 7), followed immediately by a striking out in a new direction. The narrative becomes a new story. Subsequent reports have not struck out in wholly new directions in this way, but have rather adjusted existing directions and sought to alter practices, in response to needs, before they ossified into traditions. Whatever their individual characteristics, later reports can be seen as contributions to the narrative that was set in train by Radford; that is, as attempts to make the system of school-based assessment, and its application to tertiary entrance procedures, as effective, fair and useful as it could be within the (then) current or predicted social and educational situation.

The ROSBA Report is the second major report considered in this analysis, but it is in fact a review and an evaluative synthesis of two intervening reports, which had addressed the consequences of the adoption of the Radford recommendations:

- *Schools under Radford*, by K. Fairbairn et al.
- *Some Consequences of the Radford Scheme for Schools, Teachers and Students in Queensland*, by W. J. Campbell et al.

Although its temporal relation to Radford is close (only eight years later), its substantive, intellectual relation is already indirect. The Radford Report had been a single enterprise; the early years of implementation of the Radford system had given birth to different studies; the ROSBA Report sought to draw the various strands of investigation and recommendation together into another single report, on which government and the Board could base decisions. Whether or not the joint responsibility behind the ROSBA Report provided a reassuring, shared-experience element to some who still regarded the Radford implementations as an aberration, the ROSBA Report nevertheless has a 'meta-report' status in the history of Queensland senior education reports.

About the same number of years separated the Pitman Report from the ROSBA Report as had separated ROSBA from the Radford Report. The relationship between the two pairs of reports, however, is markedly different. If Radford represents the birth of a new system and ROSBA the expert, professional advice on its uncertain, exploratory early stages of development, the subject of the Pitman Report is already unmistakably mature and established (although still interested in exploration). Radford and ROSBA together could be dramatised as 'The Queensland System: The Early Years'; Pitman, however,

would require a new series. The lines of development – the links between the series – are clear. Many of the complex technical understandings of the Pitman Report may be regarded as developments from two simply expressed recommendations of ROSBA, related to the Tertiary Entrance Score:

P27: For the purpose of determining order of merit for entry to Tertiary Institutions, the Tertiary Entrance Score should be retained, though the Board should continue its research into the efficacy of the Tertiary Entrance Score as a method of ranking students.

P28: In calculating the Tertiary Entrance Score use should be made of ASAT, or of a comparable test, as at present. However the Board should continue its research into the use and efficacy of such a moderating instrument.

However, while the ROSBA Report was an experienced consideration of the implementation of the Radford Report, the tone and content of the Pitman Report suggest something more than a consideration of the ROSBA Report. It is a document from within a system that has developed its own momentum, conducted its own research, and developed its own recommendations.

Three years after the Pitman Report, the Viviani Report was published. In the meantime, the abolition of the Tertiary Entrance Score had been announced (which was in keeping with the recommendations of the Pitman Report) but its replacement had not been decided. Viviani's recommendation for a three-part replacement (comprising an Overall Position, Field Positions and an individual result in a new Core Skills Test) drew heavily on the Pitman Report, but in important ways, the Viviani Report differed from its immediate predecessor. Its viewpoint was more external to the system: it described the tertiary entrance procedures as 'a fragile system that has lost public confidence', and diagnosed the problem, in part, as the system's having 'clung to the TE score, instituted in 1974, long after its usefulness had declined'. The Viviani Report's position of external critic, so different from the Pitman Report's, can be seen as creating a space in which Pitman's analyses and recommendations could be reconsidered and evaluated.

In summary, the four reports under consideration seem to fall into two pairs: first, the initial impetus of the Radford Report followed by the guiding influence of the ROSBA Report; and second, the in-depth, internal analysis of the Pitman Report, followed by the external evaluation of the Viviani Report. The first pair are part of one phase of the Queensland initiative of school-based assessment, involving the TE Score; the second recognisably belong to the start of the next phase, involving OPs. Those four reports were written within a 20-year period, with no more than eight years between any two of them; the current report represents a view from 24 years later.

**How did each report characterise the existing situation?**

Reports such the four under consideration (as well as the current one) inevitably describe an existing imperfect situation, envisage a significantly less imperfect situation, and propose pathways to get from one to the other. Examining the ways that previous imperfect situations have been described may help put the current report's description of the current situation into perspective: a deepening perspective of successive attempts to renew the Queensland system to make it – for a time, and then for another time – as little imperfect as possible.

The Radford Report confronted a system that had, in effect, followed a single line of development for over a century, although in the decade immediately preceding the report the line had fallen under the influence of new forces as a wider range of students completed Senior. This system was strongly influenced by the universities through their control of the culminating assessment of the Senior Examination, which could act like a magnet drawing the iron filings of secondary education into a university-oriented pattern. Radford traced this influence from an earlier time, when it could be justified, to the 1960s, and described the then current situation:

The Senior Examination is being taken by more and more students who have in mind full-time study other than at universities, employment which will require part-time study of a specialised nature or employment where a good general education associated with initiative will bring rewards in responsibility and income.

For a significant proportion of these students, the examination is considered to be too difficult. (p. 17)

In addition to emphasising the inappropriateness of such an academic examination at a time when 'fewer than half of those sitting for Senior [went] on to the University in the following year' (p. 16), Radford pointed out the inappropriate consequences of the examination on the Senior curriculum (such as a focus on reproduction of others' ideas, 'evanescent forms of knowledge', and passive absorption of information – p. 56), and on pedagogy (such as 'cramming, reluctance to experiment, [and] teaching towards the examination' – p. 60).

In the light of later developments (evident already in ROSBA and a strong feature of both Pitman and Viviani), it is worth pointing out that in Radford, while the inappropriateness of the Senior curriculum and examinations for non-university-bound students was emphasised, the issue of fierce competition for limited tertiary places was not presented as a major problem facing students or the system.

In considering how the ROSBA Report in turn characterised the situation in 1978, it is necessary to consider the consequences that Radford had predicted for the new system. The ROSBA Report in effect drew on its two source reports to observe the current situation through the lens of Radford's expectations; it did not take a wholly fresh view. What it saw is presented in largely negative terms. The ROSBA Report synthesised criticisms of the Radford Scheme endorsed in its source reports to obtain a list of 28

substantial criticisms, reproduced in full here to provide a starting point in post-Radford evaluations:

1. The liberalizing elements in the Radford proposals have been withstood and frustrated.
2. Schools have become more difficult to administer.
3. There has been no improvement in the openness of school climates.
4. There has been a significant increase in workloads which, in turn, has had unintended effects.
5. Curriculum change has essentially remained system-boxed with very little influence from community bodies and other groups.
6. The operational syllabus in schools seems largely determined by the expectations of moderators and by the sanctions of moderators meetings.
7. Evaluation is seen as acting as a control over curriculum evaluation.
8. Many teachers feel incompetent to exercise the freedom of syllabus development and believe they do not receive sufficient consultative support. They also believe that such support is missing when new courses are introduced.
9. Individual difference in students are not really accommodated.
10. Schools offer a limited range of Board Subjects thus limiting student choice.
11. Board Subjects currently available are academically oriented.
12. The frequency of developing Board Subjects has been disappointing.
13. Tests and examinations remain the imperative of school life.
14. Assessment is almost exclusively concerned with the recall of academic knowledge.
15. Low priority has been given as feedback to amend teaching strategies and to diagnose student weaknesses.
16. Testing and ranking of students have increased in frequency and are having a detrimental effect on students, teachers and school administrators.
17. There has been an erosion of student-teacher relationships.
18. Continuous assessment together with relativistic ratings have generated anxiety and hostility in students.
19. The demands of school assessment programs have decreased student involvement in extra-curricular activities.
20. The promise of freedom in evaluation practices remains largely unfulfilled.
21. Students believe the distribution of ratings to their school as pre-determined and this has led to a decline in teacher-student relationships.
22. The time constraints of moderation meetings lead to
  - (i) moderators making superficial, subjective judgments,
  - (ii) teachers being overwhelmed by administrivia,
  - (iii) a reduction in time available for teaching,
  - (iv) emphasis being placed only on assessable aspects of the curriculum,
  - (v) decline in teacher-student relationships over assessment.
23. Atypically bright students in small groups are disadvantaged.
24. The Radford Scheme has generated stress and frustration.
25. Science students are less prepared in the development of their cognitive abilities.
26. Students report senior school life to be dull.

- 27. A marks 'fetish' has developed leading to unhealthy competition.
- 28. There is a lack of trust and a build up of animosity between students. (p. 5–7)

On the other hand, the ROSBA Report noted that the Campbell Report had identified some positive achievements in some areas of predicted improvement:

- New subjects have been introduced, and on a large scale within some schools.
- Greater coherence has occurred among objectives, curricula, and evaluation.
- Teachers are more involved in co-operative activities within their schools.
- The evidence suggests an increase in both quality and variety of instructional policies, course preparation, lesson preparation, and classroom teaching.
- Teachers are experiencing challenge, stimulation, a sense of mastery, and a sense of professional growth.
- [Higher achievements both cognitive and affective domains:] On balance this expectation has been fulfilled; any drop in mastery of facts and principles is more than offset by increased competence in higher-level cognitive processes; distinct gains have also been made in social competencies and affective development.

Despite these positive elements, the range and severity of the criticisms are notable. The ROSBA Report maintained that some of them related to 'teething problems' (p. 3) that had been overcome subsequent to the two source reports, that is, between 1975 and 1978.

A further feature of the ROSBA analysis of problems, beyond the above syntheses of criticisms contained in its source reports, is a consideration of the rapidly changing social context for Queensland education, including the link between serious unemployment and increased school retention, and the apparently more complex moral climate in which students in the late 1970s lived.

There is an inherent difference between Radford's adumbration of an entrenched system's shortcomings and ROSBA's more urgent exposing of a new system's failures. The Pitman Report, in turn, presents another approach. Taking as its starting point the position that there is 'widespread doubt in the community about the efficacy and equity of tertiary entrance selection procedures' (p. 8), the Pitman Working Party invited submissions expressing those doubts. The issues raised in the report are initially those that were raised in the submissions, which the Working Party categorised as follows.

- The Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test \ ASAT)
- Closing date for QTAC preferences relative to Issue of TE Scores
- Tertiary prerequisites
- Alleged manipulation of data by schools
- Delayed selection
- Year 13
- Other criteria for selection
- The lack of tertiary places – unmet demand
- External examinations (alone or in combination with internal assessments)

- The ‘notional’ TE score (NTE) and first-year places offered to applicants not from the previous Year 12 cohort
- Community education and the need for public relations; lack of understanding of and/or confidence in the current system
- Access to tertiary places for minority/disadvantaged groups
- The self-perpetuating status of certain courses, particularly those with high TE Score cut-offs
- Effects of tertiary selection on the secondary curriculum
- University quotas in relation to planning for future needs

The report details the often contradictory nature of the concerns expressed on each of these topics. In some instances, especially those that relate to the nature and consequences of Board procedures, it seeks to demonstrate that an expressed concern is unfounded, but the fact that the concern exists is taken as an important part of the current situation.

It can be seen that these concerns cover a wide range of topics, and are certainly not limited to the context of secondary schooling. The Pitman Working Party’s brief was specifically ‘to review all aspects of entrance to tertiary institutions in Queensland’ (p. 9), and both the secondary and tertiary sides of that line of transition are given due weight; indeed the notion of tertiary entrance as crossing a line between secondary and tertiary education is itself dismissed, in the light of the 50 per cent of tertiary entrants each year who were not members of the previous year’s Year 12 cohort.

While the Pitman Report sought out a wide range of concerns about the current system and acknowledged that real problems underlay most of these concerns, its account of the problems was essentially different from ROSBA’s account nine years earlier. ROSBA had described an emerging system beset with problems: the continuation of the system itself was at issue. The problems featured in the Pitman Report were not teething problems. Nor for that matter were they the problems of a system as deeply entrenched as that analysed by Radford. They were, however, the problems of an established system that had had time to experience and reflect.

The Viviani Report, only three years after the Pitman Report, essentially dealt with the same problems in the same social and educational situation; but where the Pitman Report had analysed a range of public concerns, dismissed some, considered and advocated possible solutions to others, and acknowledged that some were part of the human condition, the Viviani Report’s approach to the current situation appeared more urgent. The system was described as ‘a fragile system that has lost public confidence’; the public’s concern was ‘verging on widespread antipathy’ (p. 93); the TE Score was something that had been ‘clung to ... long after its usefulness had declined’. The teething problems of ROSBA, which had become the mature complications of Pitman, had in turn begun to be seen as signs of aging decline in Viviani. To some extent, perhaps, this was a feature of the brief: the abolition of the TE Score had been announced, and a new system was required.

The major problems with the TE Score identified in the Viviani Report related to:

- public confidence (including a perception of its inscrutable complexity)
- comparability (involving levels of achievement, Special Subject Assessments [SSAs], and the ASAT Test)
- the belief that the TE Score contained a Maths/Science bias
- the inappropriate uses to which TE Scores were being put.

The Viviani Report, however, like the Pitman Report, focused not only on problems with the TE Score but on problems with governance of the entire system of tertiary selection. In this area, too, Viviani found evidence of near-terminal failure: the ‘process of consultation, negotiation and co-operation between schools and universities on tertiary entrance has effectively broken down ... there has been a serious decline in public confidence in tertiary entrance methods.’ (p. 3) Like the ROSBA and Pitman Reports before it, the Viviani Report noted the social changes that underlay these problems: notably, the larger and more heterogeneous student population, the more widespread expectation of a tertiary education, an expansion of universities (to four public universities at that time), the offering of higher-level qualifications by TAFE and private colleges, and the demand for further education by people already in the workforce.

### **What values were embedded in each report?**

As has been noted, a feature of all four reports’ delineation of the problems they are seeking to deal with is the placing of educational problems within a social context. Educational constructs such as external examinations, TE Scores and Overall Positions can be seen to have a certain internal coherence of their own, but they are never entirely closed systems. Furthermore, since education deals with personal development, any report that evaluates current educational systems and proposes new ones will have, explicitly or implicitly, its own vision of what being a person means. It will of necessity be a document that is rich in values. Sometimes these values might be more apparent in retrospect than at the time.

The Radford Report was commissioned by the Bjelke-Petersen government in July 1969, a month before the Woodstock Festival. The ‘progressive’ nature of its recommendations, accepted by a government not usually characterised as ‘progressive’ in that sense, has often been remarked upon. In ways perhaps more apparent in hindsight, the report (although impeccably sober in tone) has something in common with the discourse associated with Woodstock’s ‘Aquarian Exposition’. It is instructive to consider the value-rich terms in which the effects of both examinations and school assessment are described in the report.

In the crucial chapter, ‘An Examination of Examinations’, arguments for and against examinations and school assessment are presented. The arguments in favour of examinations are expressed in terms of objectivity, independence, incentive, sustained application, the discipline of a specific deadline, tangible goals, and being made to work

at something ‘which, though important, may be uninteresting’. (p. 54–55) The arguments in favour of school assessment, on the other hand, are expressed in terms of personal responsibility, flexibility, variation, enrichment, remediation, ceasing to guard privilege, individual needs, potential, collective judgment, consensus, capacity to change, a greater range, multiple features of a student’s ability, practical and group work, interest, enthusiasm, and creative and imaginative flair. (p. 60–61)

The arguments against examinations emphasise (in the student’s case) reproducing others’ ideas, ‘evanescent’ forms of knowledge, intellectual passivity, failing to form an independent judgment, ‘the clever use of slender achievement rather than the recognition of the need to improve understanding and judgment’. Disadvantages for teachers and schools are presented in terms of limited freedom, constraints, restrictions, barriers. Criticisms of examinations in general refer to ‘the rules of the game’ and resistance to change. Arguments against school assessment (all rejected in the report) include the teacher becoming an evaluator not a guide, teachers awarding marks unfairly, students being frustrated by constant failure, and grades not being equivalent across institutions.

While objectivity, discipline and application are acknowledged, the competing values of freedom, flexibility, creativity, change and multiplicity are ultimately decisive. Constraint and prescription, on the other hand, are regarded as undesirable. Faith in people’s ability and desire to do the right thing is also evident in the justifications given for advocating a system of school-based assessment:

- We ourselves can see no reason for doubting the ability of teachers in secondary schools to form sound judgments on their students’ achievements. We consider that schools should be able to make assessments at least as reliable as present scores on Senior Examination papers, and more valid because they can take account of more performances than a single written examination. (p. 76)
- We believe that the wisdom and professional judgment of the principal and staff will prevent bias affecting school assessments. (p. 65)

The Radford Report’s confident faith in freedom can be seen as a sign of its times. Even when limitations are being placed on freedom – ‘We are not proposing to give uninhibited freedom to schools to do what they want’ (p. 80) – the choice of words is redolent of the late 1960s.

While the 1960s were experienced and are remembered as a time of social turmoil, economically they were more stable than the 1970s; unemployment in particular became a serious issue for young people in the 1970s, resulting in many students staying at school until Year 12 who might otherwise have left earlier. Radford had confidently mapped the destinations of most Year 10 leavers: ‘Most of the students who leave school on completing Grade 10 take employment either immediately or later as clerks, typists, cadets, apprentices, trainee nurses or shop assistants, or enter post-Junior vocational courses in Technical Colleges and in the Armed Services.’ (p. 64) By the time of the ROSBA Report (only eight years later), these traditional pathways were not so open.

The social changes of the 1970s are reflected in the ROSBA Report in various ways. It is probably in the nature of things that a review of recent reforms will appear less confident, more restrained than the document that proposed the reforms. It has been seen already how many criticisms of the enacted Radford Scheme the ROSBA Report had to document and examine. Nevertheless, the difference between the Radford and ROSBA Reports is not just that between aspirations and reality. The nature of the society itself within which education is to take place is seen to have changed. To problems associated with unemployment-driven school retention, the report argues, 'must be added the implications for our schools of the significant change in the cultural mix of the student body, the growing awareness of sexism in secondary school opportunities and the pressures exerted from time to time to include specific studies – such as driver training, consumerism, human relations, sex education, and vocational training – as obliged studies within the curriculum.' (p. 19) While Radford had certainly been driven partly by the need to bring Senior education closer to students' real needs (which were more various than a need to gain entry to a university), this note sounded in the ROSBA Report is new: freedom and potential now appear more circumscribed by social realities – not just the realities of implementation but the new realities of a more complex (and apparently, to young people, more inhospitable) society.

The ROSBA Report diagnosed recent issues in Australian society that education should have a role in improving:

The most salient characteristics of contemporary Australian society are its increasing multicultural composition, its dynamism and its pluralistic ideologies – so much so that through traditional observation it is difficult to discern overt consensus in our basic value system. If any quality has clearly emerged it would seem to be a tolerance of deviation from our traditional moral values and from our democratic orientation. It is the view of the Committee that many of the models of conduct, of standards and values presented to young people by contemporary society are cause for serious concern. They legitimately present alternative behaviour and value patterns (with which the youth of today are surrounded), but they do not offer guiding criteria against which youth may evaluate the efficacy of those alternatives. The inevitable consequence of this is the development of widespread personal insecurity and anxiety in young people. (Incidentally these phenomena are reported observations by critics of the Radford Scheme who may, in fact, be found to be attributing the cause of the behaviours observed to the wrong source.) (p. 18)

Furthermore, the ROSBA Report put forward values to be encouraged through a new 'core curriculum', in which the less than total freedom available within a society was to be made explicit:

We believe that secondary school students should know the basic beliefs and ideas held to be valuable in our society and which give it a sense of community. Against these mores each student should develop his/her individuality in such a way as to meet with the approval of his or her fellow citizens. Yet to allow them to follow

their own interests and to solve their own problems in the name of relevancy is to court disaster, to encourage them to think only about social problems and understand social trends, however important these may be, will not suffice for the education of tomorrow. We believe that, at the secondary school level, the challenge to our youth to think about the future and the kind of society it is possible to build within the bounds of social trends, should be provided within a framework of the traditional values and democratic ideals upon which our heritage has been built. We also believe that the core experiences advocated are essential for the maintenance of a healthy society and lead to individual student achievement on the dimensions listed in paragraph 3.04 [i.e. the general aims of education]. (p. 19–20)

Together with this espousal of a post-1960s acceptance of personal limitations and social responsibilities, and a sense of the need to conserve valued features of Australian society against internal threats, the ROSBA Report sounds a new note with regard to the role of teachers and schools that also seems to belong to its time. Where Radford acknowledged the need for public confidence in school results and asserted the ability of teachers to provide results that deserved this confidence, the ROSBA Report explicitly introduced a theme that would be further developed through the Pitman and Viviani reports – accountability.

There is little doubt that secondary education is moving through a period of accountability in which the efficacy of programs of study, of teaching procedures and student achievement are much in question. We believe that parents and students have a right to know what competences are intended to be developed in the student through a particular instructional program. They also have the right to know how effective a particular program has been. (p. 29)

This theme of accountability, first introduced in the context of curriculum development, also drives the report's advocacy of competency-based assessment (where the awarded results can be held up as having an inherent, not just a relative, meaning) and of the moderation of students' results (through which the awarded results can acquire greater credibility).

The Pitman Report belongs to another decade, the 1980s, and had a narrower brief: specifically, tertiary entrance. The values to be encouraged in students by a curriculum were not part of this brief. However, other features of the ROSBA Report were followed through and developed to a marked extent. The changing patterns of school completion and tertiary entrance, and the pressures they exerted on existing procedures, were, inevitably, major themes. An important post-ROSBA element in the situation was the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, formally established in 1980, which then, as now, processed applications for tertiary entrance and made offers to applicants on behalf of tertiary institutions. While much of the Pitman Report consists of discussions of procedures associated with the TE Score and with possible replacements for it, a parallel concern was the larger process of tertiary selection, in which the TE Score played a part for only some applicants. The diversification of pathways that had occurred between Radford and ROSBA had continued, with a complicating influence on procedures that essentially are comparisons of applicants: 'The more different the paths, the harder the

comparisons. The more there are varied methods for applicants with similar backgrounds, the greater the possibility of anomalies.’ (p. 128).

Within the discussions of the TE Score and of the larger processes for tertiary selection, the value of accountability, first emphasised in the ROSBA Report, was given still greater prominence. From the start of the report, where public statements of concern are investigated and responded to, the importance of public accountability – of processes being justified and explained, and concerns about those processes being answered – is a recurrent theme. From one viewpoint this may appear paradoxical: the level of technical detail provided in the report does not at first glance suggest openness to the public. The source of the apparent paradox is explained within the report itself:

The various parts of a tertiary entrance system interrelate in complex and sometimes surprising ways. Apparently simple solutions are neither simple nor, indeed, are they solutions: their ramifications are complex and their effects are not those desired by their proponents. The Working Party has found that to give expression to principles that are simple to state – fairness, comparability and so on – it is necessary to devise procedures whose details may appear complicated. A principle may be simple but the mechanism complicated. It seems that those who demand that the system be both simple and fair will have to be disappointed: it can be one or the other but not both. (p. 96)

The apparent paradox in values is this: while the principle of accountability is crucial, the principle of fairness is absolute and may lead the system into complex areas which the light of everyday accountability may struggle to reach.

An apparent paradox similar in some ways to the apparent accountability/accessibility paradox – and like that, resolvable – can be found in the matter of responsiveness to public concerns. On the one hand, the report is based on the reality of public concerns; that is the point from which it starts. On the other hand, public concerns can sometimes be dealt with summarily:

It seems that most people know that ASAT ‘matters’ but do not know what it is used for nor why. Partial knowledge breeds suspicion and concern. There are allegations that are simply untrue and others that are unprovable. There is the irony that that a policy adopted to provide a measure of fairness should be seen as an attempt to conceal. There are dark hints that the use of ASAT is maintained for nefarious purposes.

This report cannot address all the misconceptions which exist and which formed part of submissions, but a discussion of some of them is instructive. People’s perceptions form a real and significant part of the system, even where those perceptions are neither soundly based nor those hoped for by the designers of the system. (p. 15)

Just as fairness might take a system to a point where its fairness cannot be easily explained, so scrupulous responsiveness to public concerns might lead to publicly unpalatable explanations.

If the ruling value of the Radford Report is freedom, and that of the ROSBA Report accountability, the ruling value of the Pitman Report – the one that the report itself calls on as its fundamental support – is fairness.

The complexities of the Pitman Report underlie, and are in no way rejected by, the Viviani Report of three years later. The greatest difference between the two reports is not where they end up (the recommendations) but where they begin. Where Pitman started from the position that public concerns could often be answered, and should be, even if some of the answers were unlikely to be universally accepted, Viviani starts from the position that public concerns are so great that it is too late to answer them: the system had already lost the confidence of the public, and needed to be changed. Indeed this position was inherent in the terms of reference, ‘To recommend an alternative system...’ (p. iv) Moreover, in comparison with the very broad terms of reference of the Pitman Working Party (‘To review all aspects of entrance to tertiary institutions in Queensland’), Viviani’s terms of reference indicated not only that an alternative system was to be recommended but also some of the characteristics of the desired system. The second of four terms of reference was as follows:

To recommend an alternative system which would –

- a. be fair, equitable and easily understood by students, parents and teachers;
- b. aim to provide a tertiary entrance profile which includes as separate components school based assessments of achievements as recorded on the Senior Certificate and independent measures of aptitude for tertiary entrance;
- c. aim to use measures which depend, and are seen to depend, on each individual student’s own performance;
- d. avoid using a single score as an indication of a student’s aptitude to undertake tertiary studies;
- e. avoid the necessity to rescale school assessments using procedures reliant on group performance;
- f. reduce the pressures imposed by Tertiary Entrance Score requirements on the curriculum in the senior secondary school, and on the subject choices of individual students; and
- g. be accessed by those students completing Year 12 who wish to compete for tertiary entrance. (p. iv)

If some of these terms of reference appear to derive from recommendations made by the Pitman Report, the insistence on the new system being ‘fair, equitable and easily understood’ would appear to be a reaction against the Pitman position that fairness and simplicity are incompatible. In any case, whether or not the proposed alternative system was indeed significantly more easily understood than its predecessor, the Viviani Report itself makes a virtue of directness. This is apparent in the style of the report: where the

Pitman Report would sometimes pursue an analysis or an argument throughout a lengthy paragraph, the Viviani Report favoured short, assertive paragraphs. The tone produced is one of decisive intervention; for example:

Returning to the broader question of comparability of assessment for university entrance, it is apparent that statistical moderation (scaling) creates as well as solves problems, and it is, on balance, a second best solution. There is no first best solution. The other alternatives which are used to achieve comparability, accreditation of assessment processes and moderation of assessment processes and outcomes cannot, **by themselves**, achieve sufficient comparability for university entrance purposes.

We need to use all three processes – accreditation, moderation and statistical scaling – **in combination**. But we need to move over time to place less weight on scaling, and more weight on moderation in comparability of assessment.

This was at the core of the Radford and ROSBA reforms, and as we are now midway through the ROSBA process, we should move to strengthen comparability through a review and reform of the moderation process.

7.20 If we can do this successfully over time, then we can have more confidence in the comparability of assessment **within** subjects. **This would allow us to remove one scaling step**, and to use levels of achievement (VHAs etc.) as one factor in university entrance. We would still need to scale student achievement **across** subjects so as to achieve equivalence, but we would have made progress in assessment in schools, and got rid of the need to rescale assessments. (p. 52)

The guiding value of the Viviani Report is one that assumes and builds on the values of freedom, accountability and fairness that guided its predecessors. Viviani's guiding value can be characterised as functionality, or acceptability.

## **Conclusion**

A study of these reports is something different from a study of developments in education in Queensland since 1970, not only because the reality of a complex system over time cannot be captured in the pages of a few official, guiding documents, but also for the mundane reason that some of their recommendations were not implemented and so remained on their pages, forever outside of the actual system. The reports are a map not only of some of the paths that brought us to where we are but also of a number of roads not taken.

The value of revisiting these reports at this stage is less historical than suggestive of the present, as it poses the questions, 'How does the present report relate to the sequence? How does it relate to the current situation in Queensland? What are the values that drive it?'

## **Appendix**

### **Selected recommendations of the Radford and ROSBA Reports, and the terms of Reference and Recommendations of the Pitman and Viviani Reports**

#### **The Radford Report**

##### **Selected Recommendations of the Radford Report (directly relevant to the interface of Senior assessment and university entrance)**

###### RECOMMENDATION 17

That the present Senior Examination be replaced, for the purpose of awarding a Senior Certificate, by school assessment, and that the Certificate be awarded on the basis of school assessment.

###### RECOMMENDATION 18

That for correspondence and part-time students the Board provide an external examination.

###### RECOMMENDATION 19 [same as RECOMMENDATION 36]

That in situations where an order of merit needs to be prepared, it be based on a combination of scaled school assessments and special examinations not based on prescribed syllabuses.

###### RECOMMENDATION 37

That the school assessments be based on four subjects for each of which the work covered will be equivalent to that of four semesters in the subject.

###### RECOMMENDATION 38

That a government scholarship be awarded only if the Principal of a school certifies that the student has also studied at least six other semester units, at least two of the units being taken in Grade 12.

## **The ROSBA Report**

### **Selected Recommendations of the ROSBA Report (directly relevant to the interface of Senior assessment and university entrance)**

#### RECOMMENDATION P27

For the purpose of determining order of merit for entry to Tertiary Institutions, the Tertiary Entrance Score should be retained, though the Board should continue its research into the efficacy of the Tertiary Entrance Score as a method of ranking students.

#### RECOMMENDATION P28

In calculating the Tertiary Entrance Score use should be made of ASAT, or of a comparable test, as at present. However the Board should continue its research into the use and efficacy of such a moderating instrument.

#### RECOMMENDATION P29

Among the exit assessments to be used in calculating the Tertiary Entrance Score, provision should be made for including, by choice, exit assessments totalling two semester units of certified School Subjects. Before acting on this recommendation the Board should discuss it with the tertiary institutions.

## **The Pitman Report**

### **Terms of Reference for the Pitman Report**

To review all aspects of entrance to tertiary institutions in Queensland.

### **Recommendations of the Pitman Report**

#### **PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

That eligible students receive an Achievement Position Profile comprising

- i. a single general-purpose indicator, to be known as an Overall Achievement Position, which compares eligible students' overall achievements in senior secondary school studies;

and

- ii. four special-purpose indicators, to be known as Specific Achievement Positions, which compare the achievements of students with the same Overall Achievement Position.

##### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

That Achievement Position Profiles be devised in a way which will minimise 'backwash' effects on the secondary curriculum; allow curriculum flexibility; yield comparability; and not confer significant automatic advantage or disadvantage on the basis of school attended or subjects studied.

##### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

That only results in subjects for which there are thorough and comparable accreditation and certification procedures be used in compiling Achievement Position Profiles. Such subjects are currently known as 'Board subjects'.

##### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

That eligibility for, and determination of, an Achievement Position Profile be based on the Board subjects a school student studies in Year 12.

##### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

That the minimum number of Board subjects required for a student to be eligible for an Achievement Position Profile be three, each studied for four semesters.

#### RECOMMENDATION 6

That there be such restrictions on the possible combinations of subjects on which a student can be eligible for an Achievement Position Profile as will achieve sufficient comparability of the various combinations.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7

That the computational method used to derive Achievement Position Profiles take account both of the number of subjects a student has taken and of the student's achievements in those subjects.

#### RECOMMENDATION 8

That Achievement Position Profiles be devised and produced by an authority with responsibility for accreditation and certification in the field of senior secondary studies, having regard both to their likely uses and to the likely effects on senior secondary curricula.

#### RECOMMENDATION 9

That the authority responsible for producing Achievement Position Profiles for Year 12 students be responsible also for devising comparable indicators for those who have results in the Queensland Senior external examinations; and that the same authority report on the comparability of Overall Achievement Positions in different years.

#### RECOMMENDATION 10

That tertiary institutions adopt the principles of a staged, or step-wise, approach to selection whereby:

- at the early stages broad, general, distinctions are made;
- at the later stages narrower, more specific, distinctions are needed;
- the process halts when the requisite number of decisions has been made.

#### RECOMMENDATION 11

That the coordination of procedures for admission to tertiary institutions through a body such as the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) be continued.

#### RECOMMENDATION 12

That, after the release of their Achievement Position Profiles and before the first round of offers is made, Year 12 students be given an opportunity to change the course preferences they have stated on their applications.

#### RECOMMENDATION 13

That tertiary institutions extend the use of sub-quotas either to provide or where appropriate, to limit places which may be offered to Form B applicants.

#### RECOMMENDATION 14

That each Queensland tertiary institution treat as a matter of high priority the introduction of delayed selection for courses to which entry is very competitive.

#### RECOMMENDATION 15

That each tertiary institution which currently prescribes four or five specific Board subjects as prerequisites for any course reduce the number of such prerequisites.

#### RECOMMENDATION 16

That clear and explicit accountability responsibilities be accepted by secondary schools, by the authority which determines Achievement Position Profiles, and by tertiary institutions.

#### RECOMMENDATION 17

That the various authorities responsible for the conduct of secondary and tertiary education in Queensland determine, in consultation, whether the period between the end of the Senior school year and the commencement of the academic year in tertiary institutions should be extended.

### **OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### KEY

For  
OPERATIONAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Refer to  
PRINCIPAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS

18-42

1-9

43-44

9

45-48

12

49-51

16

#### RECOMMENDATION 18

That each of the first three Specific Achievement Positions be based on a modified average of each student's achievements calculated after each result in each subject has been weighted according to the extent to which emphasis in the assessment of that subject is usually placed on written English expression, symbolic data manipulation and praxis (practical activities) respectively.

#### RECOMMENDATION 19

That the fourth Specific Achievement Position be based on a student's individual score on the common test used for scaling purposes (currently ASAT).

#### RECOMMENDATION 20

That the following principles guide the design and review of the procedures used to assign Achievement Position Profiles:

- since what is produced is a position and not a score it is to be reported as such;
- the position is not to be reported with an apparent precision that is not reasonably sustainable, and hence can only be given in terms of bands. The size of the bandwidths will reflect the imprecision of the methods that generated the data;
- there need to be enough bands to render the information of use to selectors.

#### RECOMMENDATION 21

That the same number of students receive each Overall Achievement Position.

#### RECOMMENDATION 22

That the maximum number of bands be:

- for the Overall Achievement Position – twenty, from 1st Band (highest) to 20th Band (lowest);
- for the first three Specific Achievement Positions – ten, from 1st sub-band to 10th sub-band;
- for the fourth Specific Achievement Position – five, from 1st sub-band to 5th sub-band.

#### RECOMMENDATION 23

That the actual number of bands and sub-bands be reviewed periodically.

#### RECOMMENDATION 24

That the basic unit of credit be regarded as a result in a two-year course.

#### RECOMMENDATION 25

That a student's result in a subject studied in Year 12, but for fewer than four semesters in all, make a pro-rata contribution to the student's overall result.

#### RECOMMENDATION 26

That a 'list system' as a basis for specifying restrictions on the mix of subjects not be adopted.

#### RECOMMENDATION 27

That there be devised an effective and flexible mechanism for specifying restrictions on the mix of subjects on which a student may be eligible for an Achievement Position Profile. This mechanism is to maximise comparability of Achievement Position Profiles and prevent automatic disadvantage on the basis of the choice of certain combinations of subjects.

#### RECOMMENDATION 28

That each Board subject be placed on a rating scale on each of three dimensions which show how significantly results in each subject are usually affected by assessment in the following types of activities:

- dimension A -written English expression;
- dimension B - symbolic data manipulation;
- dimension C- praxis (practical activities).

#### RECOMMENDATION 29

That a select committee of persons (appointed by the authority) who have expertise and experience in a range of subjects at Queensland Senior level make initial placements and subsequent revisions, using techniques such as:

- a delphi process involving senior teachers, subject advisory committees, and other expert groups;
- the analysis of samples drawn from accreditation and certification procedures;

and that when the placements are made the approach be strictly descriptive of syllabus expectations as given meaning by common assessment practice in the subject.

#### RECOMMENDATION 30

That a student's combination of subjects have its eligibility determined by comparing the combination's average on each dimension (as defined in Recommendation 28) with prespecified limits; and further, that should a student's actual combination of subjects fall outside the prespecified limits, but a sub-set of this combination would satisfy the requirements of minimum number and composition, then that student's Achievement Position Profile be based on the maximum eligible sub-set.

#### RECOMMENDATION 31

That administrative support devices be developed for students to ascertain whether particular combinations of subjects would make them eligible for an Achievement Position Profile.

#### RECOMMENDATION 32

That students whose sets of subjects make them eligible for Achievement Position Profiles take any scaling test that may be required.

#### RECOMMENDATION 33

That schools assign Subject Achievement Indicators to eligible students for each subject studied in Year 12.

#### RECOMMENDATION 34

That a Subject Achievement Indicator be an integer from 1 to 99 which shows how a student's achievement in that subject compares (in terms of rank order and appropriate intervals) with the achievements of all other eligible students in the group studying that subject in Year 12 at the school.

#### RECOMMENDATION 35

That the authority responsible for producing Achievement Position Profiles provide clear guidelines on the assigning of Subject Achievement Indicators.

#### RECOMMENDATION 36

That scaling on the basis of ASAT continue until such time as there is either a better scaling test or a better alternative procedure.

#### RECOMMENDATION 37

That, meanwhile, the face validity of ASAT be improved by the inclusion of a component which tests written expression.

#### RECOMMENDATION 38

That there be procedures to identify and remedy significant anomalies arising from the use of a scaling test.

#### RECOMMENDATION 39

That a student's Composite Achievement Indicator, which gives a position within a school group, be based on a formula which takes account both of average achievement and of number of subjects studied.

#### RECOMMENDATION 40

That the particular weightings and co-efficients used in the formula be set after further discussion in the education community and be reviewed periodically.

#### RECOMMENDATION 41

That the indicators required in the derivation of the first three of the Specific Achievement Positions use a formula similar to that in Recommendation 39 for combining rescaled and weighted Subject Achievement Indicators.

#### RECOMMENDATION 42

That the statistics required for rescaling be based on the appropriate sub-test of ASAT; in particular, that the scaling statistics required in the determination of the first three Specific Achievement Positions be based on students' scores on ASAT-V (including the written test), ASAT-Q, and ASAT total, respectively.

#### RECOMMENDATION 43

That pending the development of more sophisticated methods, students who sit for the external Senior examinations and who request an indicator comparable with the Achievement Position Profile (External Indicator) be required to take such common tests as are necessary to establish a fair basis for scaling.

#### RECOMMENDATION 44

That as an initial approach, in any given year, students who have completed such externally assessed subjects as may be required to be eligible receive an External Indicator determined on the following basis:

- that the authority which conducts the examinations in each subject be responsible for the determination of Subject Achievement Indicators for the group of students taking the subject that year;

- that rescaling be based on statistics determined from scores on the scaling test, using year to year comparisons of common tests where necessary;
- that Composite Achievement Indicators be determined using a similar approach to that used for students in full-time schooling;
- that the final External Indicators be allocated in such a way that they are comparable with those for students in full-time schooling; i.e. that similar achievements in the same subjects yield similar Overall Achievement Positions;
- that procedures be established to achieve comparability of levels of achievement in externally and internally assessed subjects.

#### RECOMMENDATION 45

That QTAC administrative arrangements be revised to provide students with a period of about two weeks between the release of Achievement Position Profiles and the last date for receipt of changes of preferences at QTAC.

#### RECOMMENDATION 46

That Achievement Position Profiles be published in the daily newspapers in a form which neither identifies students by name nor permits the ready identification of a school group or regional group.

#### RECOMMENDATION 47

That tertiary institutions consider giving preference to students on the basis of domicile in Queensland.

#### RECOMMENDATION 48

That QTAC publish, at the time Achievement Position Profiles become available as a preliminary guide only, data on each course which is subject to a quota. This data could include the following: the size of the quota, the number of applicants who have nominated a given course as first preference at the time of publication, and the estimated lowest Overall Achievement Position for entry should no students change their initial preferences.

#### RECOMMENDATION 49

That it be a condition of a school's participation that it accept responsibility for providing students with effective access to information about the school's decisions concerning the determination of Subject Achievement Indicators.

#### RECOMMENDATION 50

That the authority responsible for determining Achievement Position Profiles:

- provide in-service education to schools on the competencies required of them in the provision of data on students' relative achievements;
- monitor data provided by schools to detect and attempt to remedy anomalies;
- check malpractice through the surveillance of data;
- provide information to successive cohorts of students and parents;
- respond to students' queries concerning the meaning of their Achievement Position Profiles;
- research and review the implementation of the principles of the system, seeking evidence of intended and unintended outcomes.

#### RECOMMENDATION 51

That tertiary institutions be responsible for:

- clear and full statements of admission and selection policies;
- the explication of the adoption of a particular set of selection criteria;
- explanations to students affected by the operation of these procedures;
- research into, and review of, the effectiveness of their selection procedures.

#### RECOMMENDATION 52

That selection procedures be designed in such a way that the harder a decision is to make the more factors are taken into consideration.

## **The Viviani Report**

### **Terms of Reference for the Viviani Report**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A TERTIARY ENTRANCE REVIEW**

1. To review the present system for the compilation of Tertiary Entrance Scores in Queensland.
2. To recommend an alternative system which would –
  - a. be fair, equitable and easily understood by students, parents and teachers;
  - b. aim to provide a tertiary entrance profile which includes as separate components school based assessments of achievements as recorded on the Senior Certificate and independent measures of aptitude for tertiary entrance;
  - c. aim to use measures which depend, and are seen to depend, on each individual student's own performance;
  - d. avoid using a single score as an indication of a student's aptitude to undertake tertiary studies;
  - e. avoid the necessity to rescale school assessments using procedures reliant on group performance;
  - f. reduce the pressures imposed by Tertiary Entrance Score requirements on the curriculum in the senior secondary school, and on the subject choices of individual students; and
  - g. be accessed by those students completing Year 12 who wish to compete for tertiary entrance.
3. To consult with Tertiary institutions concerning the ways in which the alternative system would be used.
4. To recommend arrangements through which the alternative system could be administered and operated.

The Reviewer should aim to present a report and recommendations no later than 30 June 1990.

## **Recommendations of the Viviani Report**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1. DECISION-MAKING ON TERTIARY ENTRANCE: THE QUEENSLAND TERTIARY ENTRANCE PROCEDURES AUTHORITY (TEPA)**

The government should move immediately to set up a statutory body whose chief responsibility would be to advise the Minister for Education on tertiary entrance procedures in Queensland.

This body, to be called the Queensland Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority (TEPA), should have two main tasks:

1. to provide the information needed for university selection and admission to every eligible student seeking entry to tertiary education. This information, on overall achievement and other specific measures of achievement, will be supplied to students and to TEPA by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. This information, to be issued on a separate Tertiary Entrance Statement, together with that available on the Senior Certificate, will form a Student Profile;
2. to monitor, review and advise the Minister for Education on modifications to tertiary entry procedures in response to ongoing changes in schools and tertiary education.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: THE STRUCTURE OF THE QUEENSLAND TERTIARY ENTRANCE PROCEDURES AUTHORITY (TEPA)**

The Minister for Education should appoint representatives to TEPA as follows:

An Independent Chair

The Executive Committee

- 3 university representatives
- 3 representatives from the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies
- 1 representative from the TAFE sector
- 2 Ministerial nominees, one of whom would represent the community interest.

These nine representatives and the independent chair will form TEPA.

The Minister should also appoint a TEPA REFERENCE COMMITTEE whose function will be to advise on, and react to proposals on tertiary entrance procedures recommended by the Executive Committee. The TEPA Reference Committee should be broadly representative of schools from the three sectors (State, Catholic and Independent), tertiary institutions, teachers' unions, parent groups, practising teachers, students and employers.

The TEPA Reference Committee should be chaired by the Independent chair of the TEPA Executive Committee, thus forming one direct channel from the Reference Committee to the Executive Committee.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: SHORTAGE OF UNIVERSITY PLACES**

1. The Minister for Education should press the Federal Government for an immediate and substantial increase in university places for Queensland, in order to redress the past and current pattern of its disadvantage relative to other states.
2. TEPA should monitor the supply and demand for university places in Queensland through information supplied by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) and the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). TEPA should report annually to the Minister for Education and recommend appropriate action at the federal level and the award of state government funded places where these are necessary.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4: SECOND GOES AND 'THE OTHER 50 PERCENT'**

1. Year 12 students, parents and teachers should be made fully aware, through better linkage between universities and schools, that the 'second go' route to preferred courses is widely available. • Year 12 students should be encouraged by parents, teachers and guidance officers to use this route, since career decisions made at the end of first year university are likely to be better informed than those made at 17 years of age in Year 12, without benefit of post-school experience.
2. Universities should review the methods by which they compare entrants from Year 12 with those entering first year by other routes and make certain these are equitable, publicly known and accountable. TEPA should be provided with information on this process so as to enable the monitoring of the situation of Year 12s in university entry.
3. The use of sub-quotas by universities for non-Year 12 entrants should be expanded and the conditions for entry to these should be publicly known.
4. Qualified TAFE college graduates seeking entry to university courses should not be disadvantaged vis-à-vis entrants by other routes. This will require Queensland universities and the TAFE sector to tackle in a coherent way the problem of course accreditation and credit transfer between institutions, through consultation and negotiation. Information on the process of credit transfer across institutions should be reported to TEPA since this will be a growing part of tertiary entrance.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5: STUDENTS APPLYING FOR UNIVERSITY IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD, 1990 AND 1991.**

1. In 1990 and 1991, before the introduction of a new tertiary entrance system in 1992, students seeking to enter courses of high demand should be ranked on the TE score as at present, since that is the basis on which they chose their subjects.
2. As the use of Rescaled Aggregate scores, (RAGs) is the basis for inappropriate discrimination among essentially equivalent student applicants, these scores should not be made available to universities in 1990 and 1991.
3. Universities should identify a group of students either side of the cut-off point for entry to specific courses and consider their performance in more detail so as to admit all those whose performance is judged as equivalent.
4. Universities should inform TEPA of their intentions in this regard.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

1. The role of school-based assessment, as it relates to tertiary entrance should be retained, although it requires reform in several aspects.
2. The setting of particular prerequisites for some specific courses of study (e.g. Medicine, Engineering) is crucial to progress in some areas of professional training. Though these can have both positive and negative effects on schools (the 'backwash' effect) and should be reviewed by universities, they cannot be changed quickly and should remain more or less the same for the transition period of this review.
3. A single Senior Certificate should continue to be produced by the Board, as this prevents public confusion. The additional information required for tertiary entrance will be issued on a separate Tertiary Entrance Statement by TEPA, as occurs at present with TE scores (which are currently issued by the Board).

### **RECOMMENDATION 7: UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL LINKAGES**

1. University-school linkages should be strengthened, so that students choosing courses are better informed of the opportunities available and universities provide better information on courses and entry requirements. Other higher education institutions, such as TAFE colleges, also need to strengthen their linkages with schools.
2. The Department of Education and education authorities from the non-state sectors should review the human and financial resources assigned to career education in

schools with a view to their expansion. As this will be crucial in the implementation of a new tertiary entrance system, this review will need to be undertaken immediately.

3. Universities need to review their liaison and extension services to schools in order to upgrade these, both for the transition to a new tertiary entrance system and for the longer run.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8: THE ADOPTION OF THE THREE-PART METHOD FOR TERTIARY ENTRANCE**

1. The government should adopt the Three-Part Method of Tertiary Entrance as follows:
  - a. A measure of overall student achievement at school, expressed as a position in a rank order (the Overall Position or OP).
  - b. A measure of student skills in specific fields of study at school also expressed as a position in a rank order (the Field Position or FP).
  - c. The student's individual results in a new Core Skills Test (CS Test) which is taken by all Year 12 students, and is stated on the Senior Certificate.
2. TEPA, after consultation on the technical aspects of this method, should request the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, to make available the information on Over- all Positions (OPs), Field Positions (FPs) and the in- dividual results in the Core Skills Test (CS Test) to students and to TEPA. This information, together with the levels of achievement on the Senior Certificate forms the Student Profile. This information can then be used by universities in 1992 and thereafter for selection purposes.
3. TEPA should monitor and review the use of OPs, FPs, and the CS Test by universities and others. Where problems arise it should seek timely solutions, informing the TEPA Reference Committee and the Minister of this process.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

An appeals process should be set up jointly by universities with an observer representative from TEPA. The Appeals Committee should decide the specific grounds on which appeals can be made, investigate complaints, act on these, in- forming the complainant of the outcome, and reporting this to TEPA.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

The new system of tertiary entrance proposed above will suffer the same lack of confidence as the TE score system unless the comparability of assessment problem is tackled directly by the following measures:

1. TEPA should institute immediately major independent research into the comparability of assessment in Years 11 and 12 in schools. This research should provide an answer to the question of how comparable assessment outcomes are across schools, and should provide a benchmark for future research and policy action by TEPA. In addition, the Board should be funded to carry out research on assessment practices now and for the future.
2. The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies should set up immediately a committee to review assessment in upper secondary schools. This committee should report to the Minister on reform of the assessment and moderation processes in Years 11 and 12 as soon as possible recommending reforms, particularly directed to reducing the quantity and raising the quality and comparability of assessment. This committee should have system wide representation along with a university participant from TEPA, keeping TEPA informed on its recommendations for action to the Minister.