

‘Such Friends’: why Australian university collegiate residences still matter

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It is just over a year since the Second *Collegiate Way International* conference, incorporating the biennial conference of University Colleges Australia (UCA)², was held at the Australian National University in Canberra.³ The Conference brought together over one hundred representatives from collegiate universities and residences across the globe, including from universities and residential colleges such as Yale and Rice Universities in the United States; Trent University in Canada; Durham and Cambridge Universities in the UK; the University of the Free State, South Africa; Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore; University of Macau; University of Otago, New Zealand; and a range of Australian universities. The first *CWI* Conference was held at Durham University UK in November 2014, and it is expected that the third Conference will take place at Rice University, Texas USA, in February 2019.

Between 1999 and 2014 the number of students accommodated by Australian universities in colleges, halls of residence and 100 plus bed commercial accommodation rose from around 39,600 to 74,500.⁴ In proportion to the growth in total university student population, this was a relatively small increase (around 5.2% to 5.3%), but as demand for university places has grown so has the demand and need for student accommodation, especially for international students whose numbers increased in the universities in that same period from approximately 15% of the total university population to 25%. Australia is now the third most popular destination for international students studying abroad, and international education is Australia’s largest service export.

It is a vastly changed and changing scene from when Australia’s first universities and residential colleges were established in the mid to later 1800s. With the burgeoning blend of

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² UCA is formerly the Association of Heads of Australian University Colleges and Halls Inc. (AHAUCHI)

³ The second Collegiate Way International Conference was held at University House, The Australian National University, 13-17 November 2016

⁴ *National Census of University Student Accommodation Providers 2014* (Tertiary Balance) p.12 <https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/national-census-of-university-student-accommodation-providers-2014-media-release/> 1999 was the last census of this kind, conducted by the Association of Heads of Australian University Colleges & Halls (now University Colleges Australia)

options to meet the demand and expectations of students, as well as the various pressures of provision and funding in Australian higher education, what place should collegiate/‘collegiate-style’ residences play in the future mix of student accommodation? Traditional residential colleges in Australia have been commended and condemned, with highly publicised controversies in recent decades tending to affirm a public ‘persona’ of places of privilege, harassment and harm. With some reason. There are numerous examples of media reports about behaviour in colleges, such as an ABC ‘Hack – Triple J’ report in June 2017 headed ‘*Toxic, misogynistic: How do you take the bro culture out of college?*’⁵ An Australian Research Council (Linkage) Project Report on ‘Alcohol Use and Harm Minimisation among Australian University Students’ found that for some college students “excess was not limited to drinking but to overall revelry, evidenced by expressions such as ‘*work hard, play hard*’ and ‘*get loose, get loose, get loose*’ to describe the general atmosphere of the college.”⁶

While recognising, acknowledging and remedying any behaviour that is harmful and demeaning are critical to residential and wider university life, there is, however, much that also demonstrates and affirms the broader, deeper and more lasting value of the collegiate residential experience. A ‘Sydney Morning Herald’ article last year, headed ‘*Suburban students pack their bags for uni colleges*’, noted a Melbourne metropolitan student who wanted to move out of home and be independent, and to “*go for the whole university experience*” by living in one of the Melbourne University colleges. A Monash student commented on the “*almost infinite supply of friends*” and the positive impact on his academic performance by living in a residential Hall.⁷

With over one hundred and sixty years of collegiate residential life in or associated with Australian universities, and with all the changes and challenges related to higher education and the student experience now and in the future, why should university collegiate residences still matter?

A year in perspective:

Over the past year in Australia, St Andrew’s College at Sydney University has marked the 150th anniversary of its Act of Incorporation; St Leo’s College at the University of Queensland has celebrated the centenary of its foundation, and Wesley College at Sydney University the centenary of its opening; and 2017 has marked the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation and affiliation with the Australian National University of John XXIII College. It is one hundred and

⁵<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/how-do-you-take-the-bro-culture-out-of-college/8598576>

⁶ <https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ARC-REPORT-DECEMBER-2014.pdf>
p.12

⁷ <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/city-students-take-to-universities-colleges-and-halls-of-residence-20160311-gngele.html>

sixty years since Australia's second university residential college, St John's College at the University of Sydney, was incorporated by Act of the New South Wales Parliament.⁸

Faith-based affiliated residential colleges, established in Australia's first six universities, represented some eighty-seven percent of student accommodation just prior to World War II. In 2014, what are referred to as 'Church owned or affiliated' residences represented the reverse – some 13% of university residential places.⁹ While the number of such affiliated colleges remains much the same¹⁰, and their alumni and broader stakeholder connections signal a much larger community and sphere of influence than just the number of current residents, this percentage would now be even less with the ever-increasing demand for student accommodation, especially from international students. There is growing involvement of commercial investment in what is seen as the *"new property asset class"* of student accommodation. Over the past year *"the key focus for the major developers ... has been the continued acquisition of sites and the construction and delivery of new purpose-built student accommodation."*¹¹ When universities in Australia began to build and manage their own colleges and halls after World War II, they were mainly operated on the 'traditional' lines of the affiliated residences, most with 'Masters', 'Wardens' or 'Principals', and with dining halls for daily meals and for more formal collegial gatherings and special events. With increasing funding pressures, many of these and newer university owned and managed residences have now come under more centralised administration, with a number operated in partnership with commercial providers. In 2014, the percentage of accommodation offered in partnered university owned and commercially managed residences, and in on and off campus commercial residences, totalled 42%.¹²

While universities are increasingly seeing merit in developing more 'alive' campus communities, especially through more on-campus accommodation – 'sticky campuses' – there is no doubt that the international student 'market' is a key if not the main driver of most commercial involvement in purpose built student accommodation. Critical tensions lie, however, in the provision of quality facilities and the provision of quality community and support. There is, as I have noted in a previous paper, the real and reputational risk of *"repositories of crowded loneliness"* and disconnection.¹³

⁸ St Paul's College, University of Sydney, is the oldest residential college – 161 years since its foundation in 1856.

⁹ *National Census op.cit.*

¹⁰ St Mark's (Anglican) College at James Cook University QLD closed in July 2017

¹¹ Carolyn Cummins *Student accommodation is the new property asset class*, Sydney Morning Herald 27 September 2017 <http://www.smh.com.au/business/property/student-accommodation-is-the-new-property-asset-class-20170926-gyoyvn.html>

¹² *National Census 2014* p.12

¹³ Ian Walker *From Colleges to Commercial Investment: challenge, change and compromise in the provision of Australian university residence 1856-2016* pp. 12 & 13 <https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/From-Colleges-to-Commercial-Investment-002.pdf>

Changing the Course:

A significant matter over the past year has been the release in August of the Australian Human Rights Commission *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities 2017*. Commissioned by Universities Australia (UA), the Report presents findings and recommendations from a survey taken across all Australian university campuses. The Report notes that *“while the style and mode of social and academic life vary considerably within and between universities, residential colleges play a significant role in shaping the university experience, as well as attitudes and behaviours, of the students who reside there.”*¹⁴ With results indicating that residential colleges¹⁵ have a *“relatively high prevalence of sexual assault in particular, but also sexual harassment”*, the Report notes a number of particular issues of concern, including hazing practices and other college ‘traditions’, excessive alcohol consumption, failure in responding appropriately to incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment, inadequate staff training, and the impact of particular communal facilities in providing opportunity for sexual assault and sexual harassment to occur. The Report recommended that *“residential colleges and university residences should commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings”*.¹⁶

In welcoming the release of the Report and affirming commitment and support for further measures to ensure that all university students, including students in residence, *“enjoy an environment which is safe, secure and free from any and all forms of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual violence”*, University Colleges Australia acknowledged that *“over the histories of university residential colleges and halls, students have been let down at times when they have most felt the need for help”* and apologised *“for any suffering caused to those survivors of sexual violence.”*¹⁷ Appropriate focus was given to the Report at the UCA Forum held in Brisbane at the end of September 2017, with the establishment of a *Change the Course Leadership Advisory Group* on contributing factors, response good practices, and resources in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment in university student residential settings. The Working Party will liaise closely with the UCA Working Party on Alcohol Harm Minimisation set up in response to an Australian Research Council (Linkage) Project on Alcohol Use and Harm Minimisation among Australian University Students.¹⁸ In her Report to the Annual General Meeting at the Forum, UCA President and Master of St. Mark’s College, Adelaide, Ms Rose Alwyn, noted that the outcomes and recommendations of the Australian Human Rights Commission Report, and that of the UNSW Centre for Human Rights, *“provide*

¹⁴ <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual> p.234

¹⁵ ‘Colleges’ is used to cover the range of university residence, though there is a separate reference to “commercial providers of university student accommodation, who also have a similar duty of care to students” p.235

¹⁶ Recommendation 9, p.237

¹⁷ UCA Statement in response to the *Change the Course* Report <https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/UCA-Statement-on-AHRC-Report-Changing-the-Course.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ARC-REPORT-DECEMBER-2014.pdf>

us with an opportunity to reframe our thinking not just about sexual assault and sexual harassment, but on a range of issues that affect the wellbeing of our students, and our role as educators of young people in their adult formative years.”¹⁹

A Culture of Care:

In relation to the findings of the AHRC survey, much has been said about the nature of college ‘culture’. In many ways, the “course needs to be changed”! In the overall context of the past year and before, the culture of collegiate residence must embrace celebration, challenge and change – with appropriate contrition. What are the values inherent in the cultures of our residences and does every resident have a sense of belonging and inclusion? To what degree is academic work encouraged, and does the culture of the residence promote a safe reporting environment, free of the “fear of losing social capital”?²⁰

Fundamentally, university collegiate residences are scholarly places of community, connection and care. Tim Burt and Martin Evans would also advance the ‘Cs’ of citizenship and character: *“might we dare to suggest that colleges build character even more than intellect?”*²¹

In her chapter ‘The College System as a Culture of Care’²², Paula Hutchinson, notes that *“one of the most meaningful advantages of the (residential) college system is the way in which students, faculty, staff and administration exemplify a true community of scholars. And it is a community, in all that the word implies: professors with students, and students with fellow students, learning from each other by interacting in so many different contexts.”* In terms of community and care, she goes on to quote Canadian philosopher, theologian and humanitarian, Jean Vanier: *“One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn’t as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people ... and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.”*

A mark of a true university collegiate residence must be a culture of care.

“Wholly unnatural establishments”:

Opposition to university residential colleges in Australia has been expressed from the time that Australia’s first university, Sydney University, was proposed. This was largely based upon their denominational foundations and concern about sectarian influence in deliberately established secular universities, as well as the view that the college model was very much that of Oxford and Cambridge and thus elitist and exclusive. Furthermore, very English! As Professor Glyn Davis has noted, the ideas and proposals for a university in Sydney, led by

¹⁹ Rose Alwyn https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/UCA-AGM-Presidents-Report.pdf?mc_cid=d83652ddda&mc_eid=57653a1538

²⁰ Elizabeth Broderick, former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner – meeting with Vice-Chancellor and Heads/Deputies of residences at ANU, 28 October 2017

²¹ H. M. Evans & T. P. Burt (Eds.) *The Collegiate Way: University Education in a Collegiate Context*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam 2016, Chapter 7, pp. 80 & 81

²² Paula K. Hutchinson (Rice University, Texas USA) *Ibid.* Chapter 9, p.109

William Charles Wentworth, were drawn from new secular and more professionally focused university establishments in London, Scotland (Edinburgh was non-residential), and Ireland, rather than from unreformed Oxford and Cambridge.²³

One of the first three professors at Sydney University, John Smith, told a Select Committee on the Sydney University in 1859 that *“sectarian education should not be given in the great educational institutions supported by the Government”* and that the existence of sectarian colleges *“withdraws public sympathy and support in a great degree from the University itself.”*²⁴ William Sharp Macleay noted that *“at a time when the two great Universities in England are every day becoming more liberal, and sinking those bitter sectarian animosities which have so longed prevailed, we are, by the establishment of these Colleges, doing what we can to revive them.”*²⁵

In his Sesquicentenary Lecture for St Andrew’s College, Sydney University, the Master of Ormond College, Melbourne University, and Vice-Chancellor-elect of the University of Tasmania, Dr Rufus Black, noted historian Don Chamber’s observation that *“for Scots the concept of a University college was not only English and therefore alien, but savoured of an Oxbridge aristocratic decadence which conflicted with Presbyterian educational austerity.”*²⁶ Professor Black records a letter written to Melbourne newspapers in 1870 by Presbyterian Minister George Mackie opposing residential colleges: *“Multitudes of young men have had to date their ruin from these residential establishments. They have learned a smattering of a few things, and an immense amount of snobbery and profanity. Such establishments are wholly unnatural ...”*²⁷

In the establishment of the University of Queensland, a former Queensland Secretary for Public Instruction and a member of the University’s first Senate, Andrew Barlow, opposed setting up colleges on university land which he believed would make *“a people’s University ... a shabby copy of the University of Oxford.”* He noted that the *“University of Queensland is in my opinion not an Institution for the study of cricket, golf, or other athletic sports, and I have opposed the outcry for further ground in the removal of the University in order that they may get affiliated Colleges and cultivate the worst form of sectarianism.”*²⁸ Half a century later, with universities beginning to respond to the post World War II demand for university places and for accommodation, Sir Philip Baxter, first Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales, noted that *“it would be inappropriate to require all students in need of residence to be housed in the more regimented and costly ‘Southern Hemisphere’ copies of the old Oxford and*

²³ Professor Glyn Davis is Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne. Reference in the 2013 ‘Newman Lecture’, Mannix College, Monash University, and recently published by Melbourne University Press *‘The Australian Idea of a University’* November 2017.

²⁴ *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Sydney University*, Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Sydney, 12th October 1859, p.80

²⁵ *Ibid* p.70

²⁶ Rufus Black *The Role of the College in the 21st Century University* http://www.standrewscollege.edu.au/the-sesquicentenary-lecture/?mc_cid=585b92c8ba&mc_eid=1261fc5551 p.1 Professor Black is also currently the Deputy Chancellor of Victoria University, Melbourne.

²⁷ *Ibid* p.2

²⁸ E. Clarke *Correspondence related to conflict between Governor MacGregor and A. Barlow MLC, concerning matriculation standards at the University of Queensland, 1910-11*

Cambridge tradition."²⁹ He nevertheless wrote that "we look forward to a balanced development of colleges in this University, including those operated by outside organisations, presumably in the main religious organisations ..."³⁰ Baxter's advice was sought by other Vice-Chancellors about how to respond to requests by churches to establish denominational residential colleges in association with universities established after World War II, with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England, Robert Madgwick, writing to Baxter that "there is a good deal of opposition here to affiliated colleges and it would help me considerably if I could be sure of my ground when I have to steer a legal document through the Council. I am not particularly animated about the affiliated colleges myself but there seems little point in opposing the inevitable."³¹ With concern that funding under the Australian Universities Commission, following the Murray Report (1958), would be diverted from the further construction of university owned Halls to the establishment of denominational colleges at the Australian National University, the staff of the Research School of Social Sciences and Pacific Studies sought guarantees about the conditions under which religious bodies would be granted affiliation in the setting up of residential colleges.³²

Collegiate life as the university ideal:

While denominational residential colleges had been seen as a threat to the secular and anti-sectarian nature of Australian universities, overall the concerns proved to be unfounded, albeit some post-World War II instances related to accusations of the imposition of religious tests and of restrictions on academic freedom. In the first half of the twentieth century it was noted that, for example, "the four original Melbourne colleges still carried significant weight in University affairs, though not as great as at the turn of the century, when the University itself was weaker... The existence and standing of the colleges reinforced the common notion of collegiate life as the university ideal ..."³³ The University of Adelaide, Australia's third³⁴, had been deliberately established on only some five acres of parkland on North Terrace, with no land for residential colleges. While the University was strongly supported by Adelaide's first Anglican Bishop, Augustus Short, who became its Chancellor and first recipient of a degree of

²⁹ P. Baxter *Report of Proceedings of the Conference of Australian Universities 1964*, The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 1964, p.63. A graduate of the University of Birmingham, Baxter was the University's first Professor of Chemical Engineering and became the second 'Director' of the University prior to the position being re-named Vice-Chancellor. Somewhat ironically, the Master of the University's first own secular residential college, Basser College, was a Presbyterian Minister Rev'd Dr Malcolm Mackay (later Minister for the Navy in the McMahon Government), and the first Master of The Kensington Colleges was Methodist Minister, the Rev'd Dr George Wheen. Albeit secular, the Colleges were very much in the 'traditional' mould.

³⁰ J. P. Baxter to Senator John Gorton (Minister for Education), Australian Archives, AA 1969/212 (16) , 13 October 1964

³¹ R. B. Madgwick to Sir Philip Baxter, 3 November 1965, UNSW Archives.

³² Noel Butlin Archives ANU, Committee on the Affiliation of Residential Colleges or Halls, 26 September 1963, p.2. A number of issues arose during the post WWII period of the 'second wave' of Australian universities with the setting up of both university owned and managed residences and the establishment of faith-based colleges and halls, including controversies around e.g. perceived imposition of religious tests at Warrane College UNSW and Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University.

³³ John Poynter and Carolyn Rasmussen *A Place Apart – The University of Melbourne: Decades of Challenge* Melbourne University Press, Carlton South VIC, 1996, pp 41 & 42

³⁴ Established in 1874

the University, a residential college was not established till some fifty years later, on land adjacent to St Peter's Cathedral. The founding Master of St Mark's College, Archibald Grenfell Price, expressed something of the purpose of a denominational residential college in a College Service sermon: *"The question of synthesis and analysis lies behind a main purpose of the College. The University, in spite of its name, 'universal', tends to force you into analysis. The College tries to train you in seeing other professions and other points of view, and above all, that religion is the synthesis of life ... One hopes that we shall all learn two great things in the years at University – what an infinitesimal amount the cleverest people know, and the humility of great intellects."*³⁵ A founder and first Chancellor of the University of Western Australia³⁶, Sir John Winthrop Hackett, believed that *"universities must fail to fulfil their 'perfect mission' unless they combined 'in the largest and most pregnant sense ... the triple alliance of lecture room, the examination hall and the college'."*³⁷ Former Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of New England and Queensland, Governor-General of Australia and Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, the late Sir Zelman Cowen, who was a non-resident scholar of Ormond College, University of Melbourne, commented on the then Master, David Picken, that *"if I were to build a monument to any man who exercised an influence on me at that time it would be to Picken."*³⁸ The 1958 Murray Report, commissioned by the Menzies government, noted that *"the College experiment in the universities has been an invaluable one and we wish that more students had the opportunity of receiving these benefits."*³⁹ The Report referred to the *"importance of residence if university life is to attain full richness"* and that *"practically all the colleges have abandoned any traces of sectarianism and students of all religions and even agnostics are welcomed in all the denominational colleges."*⁴⁰

Prime Minister Robert Menzies clearly supported and promoted the Report's comments in relation to residential (denominational) colleges which, at the time, still represented the majority of student residences in Australian universities. He commented that *"affiliated colleges are traditionally a part of the Australian university system and that over the years they have made an outstanding contribution to values and leadership in this country."*⁴¹ His Minister for Education (and later Prime Minister), Senator John Gorton, further noted the wider impact of alumni and other college connections, with the *"advantages for the universities in the community links which affiliated colleges provide and in the relief they*

³⁵ Colin Kerr *Archie: The biography of Sir Archibald Grenfell Price* Macmillan Co., South Melbourne 1983, p.71. Sir Archibald Grenfell Price (geographer, historian and educationist) was Master from 1925 to 1957, and, among other things, became a member of the Federal Parliament (Boothby 1941-43) and Chair of the Council of the National Library of Australia.

³⁶ Established in 1911

³⁷ Fred Alexander *Campus at Crawley: A narrative and critical appreciation of the first fifty years of the University of Western Australia* F.W.Cheshire, Melbourne 1963, p.505. Hackett had been Deputy Warden to Alexander Leeper at Trinity College, Melbourne.

³⁸ Interview with the Rt. Hon. Sir Zelman Cowen AC, Melbourne VIC, 16 March 2000

³⁹ *Report of the Committee on Australian Universities*, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1958, p.55. Nearly one hundred years earlier, Professor John Woolley, one of the first three professors of the University of Sydney, commented to a Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the University that the "experiment" of uniting the general secular teaching of a University with independent (denominational) Colleges was a "very difficult one".

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.54

⁴¹ Robert G. Menzies to Sir Leslie Martin, Australian Archives *op. cit.* 16 October 1963

would receive in the burden of managing large residential facilities.”⁴² Historian and urban theorist, the late Professor Hugh Stretton, commented that he thought “*Menzies served the universities very well ... I knew numbers of people ... who were rescued in valuable ways by college life from dismal family situations or from dreary boarding houses ...*”⁴³ Colleges would still attest today of those ‘rescued’ from such situations and lodgings.

Not only desirable, but necessary:

In 1939, enrolments in Australia’s six universities totalled approximately 14,000 students; with post War demand, including international students under the Colombo Plan, numbers had increased to some 69,000 students in 1963 and to 148,000 by 1975. Australia’s six universities increased to nineteen, with fifty-nine new colleges, halls and houses established, of which thirty-one were owned and managed by universities.⁴⁴

The Australian Universities Commission, set up following the Murray Report to assess and oversee the allocation of Commonwealth grants to universities, including for capital works in relation to student accommodation, noted in its first report that colleges and halls of residence “*play a vital role in the general education of a student and the development of his personality ... residence in college or hall promotes the cross-fertilisation of ideas between students in different faculties and with different outlooks ... The meeting between mature and immature minds, between those searching for standards of values and those who have found them, is encouraged by such contact ... residential colleges and halls of residence are not only desirable but necessary ...*”⁴⁵ This view very much echoed that expressed by John Henry Cardinal Newman who saw the University as “*a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge.*”⁴⁶

The Commission’s third report commented that “*affiliated colleges and halls of residence offer students unique opportunities for study, discussion and thought not to be found in other lodgings or indeed in some homes.*”⁴⁷ There continued to be a view in government and senior administrative circles that the affiliated faith-based colleges had long-standing social and educational advantages over the newly established secular halls of residence - a view no doubt fostered by the fact that there were few alternatives prior to the 1950s. Sir Lenox Hewitt, who chaired the Australian Universities Commission 1967-1968, recalled that “*the denominational colleges, of course, had the advantage still of further financial support from their own believers and adherents, and they were therefore able to create a style of accommodation that from memory I think is superior to that of the halls of residence.*” With a

⁴² *Ibid.* Draft submission, August 1964

⁴³ Hugh Stretton to Ian Walker, 25 July 2000. Sir Robert Menzies supported Stretton’s Rhodes Scholarship application: “(He is) of rare intelligence, with marked capacity for acquiring knowledge in an orderly way.” Awarded AC in 2004, he was voted one of Australia’s ten most influential public intellectuals in 2006.

⁴⁴ This number includes International Houses which had some joint arrangements, particularly with Rotary International, but were mostly operated along ‘traditional’ college lines.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Australian Universities Commission on Australian Universities 1958-1963* The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, October 1963, pp. 63-64

⁴⁶ John Henry Cardinal Newman *Historical Sketches Vol.III*, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1887, p.16

⁴⁷ *Third Report of the Australian Universities Commission, Australian Universities 1964-1966*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, August 1966, p.158

somewhat wry tone, he noted “*I think one of the halls of residence in what became the National University was ‘Toad Hall’, as I recall it. Whereas the affiliated denominational colleges, of course, were far more ... they were of a better, more comfortable standard, putting it briefly.*”⁴⁸

The fifth report of the Commission, however, reflected a stronger move towards non-collegiate (affiliated and university managed) residence in groups of flats and houses, with greater recognition of a need, based upon concerns about cost and desire for more independent living, for different types of accommodation.⁴⁹ It was a time of change and challenge in meeting the various new demands in the provision of university education and residence, as it continues to be now.

Concerns about cost and variety of choice, together with the ever-increasing growth of student numbers and demand for accommodation, saw the end of the largesse for the capital works ‘boom’ of the 1960s and 70s. Following the University of Wollongong in 1975, with the impact of such things as the OPEC oil crisis and a downturn in growth, the next new university established was Curtin in 1986, with very few residential ‘colleges’ built or established after the opening of Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University in 1973.⁵⁰

‘A Climate of Fear’:

The 1980s and the 1990s heralded a significant change in the organisation, focus and development of Australian higher education, with the Federal Government’s Dawkins reforms of 1988 that brought about the merger of Australian universities with Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs).⁵¹ With the establishment of Curtin University in 1986, the number of Australian universities increased from nineteen to thirty-two by 1991.⁵² Cuts and competitive funding, together with enterprise bargaining in universities, gave rise to serious concerns about the nature and purpose of university education, teaching and research. The period also saw, under the Howard government, a major shift to a more full fee-paying rather than aid-based international student program with, from 1998, a strong marketing campaign to

⁴⁸ Interview with Sir Lenox Hewitt at New College UNSW, 30 December 1999. Sir Lenox became Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department under John Gorton, and later Chairman of QANTAS. He celebrated his 100th birthday in May 2017. Sir Lenox married Hope Tillyard, daughter of Dr Robin Tillyard, first Head of the CSIRO. The ANU top undergraduate Prize, The Tillyard Prize, was given in honour of Robin & Patricia Tillyard. Hope was a member of the Board of Garran Hall. My interview with Sir Lenox was at a time when I was hardly (if at all) aware of Toad Hall ANU, let alone later of becoming its Head!

⁴⁹ *Fifth report of the Australian Universities Commission* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, May 1975, p.323

⁵⁰ For example – Richard Johnson College, University of Wollongong (1993-2012); St Martin’s College and St Francis College, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.

⁵¹ John Dawkins was Minister for Employment, Education & Training (1987-1991) in the Hawke Labor Government, and later Treasurer under Paul Keating; the reforms are sometimes referred to as the Dawkins ‘Revolution’

⁵² Stuart McIntyre, André Brett and Gwilym Croucher reflect on this significant change in their book *No End of a Lesson: Australia’s Unified National System of Higher Education* Penguin Books, October 2017. Professor McIntyre reflects on the loss of identity and lack of diversity (in specialisation, focus and character) in our universities.

overseas students, especially in Asia. The number of international students enrolled in Australian universities grew from around 30,000 in 1991 to more than 330,000 in 2016.

In his chapter *'A climate of fear': from collegiality to corporatisation*⁵³, the late historian of Australian education, Professor Bob Bessant, noted that, under the Dawkins reforms *"the general characteristics CAEs brought into the university system became dominant ... by the late 1990s ... (and) with this there had been pressure on universities to corporatise their management and culture ... top-down corporate management practices challenged institutional autonomy, academic freedom and collegiality."*⁵⁴ Dawkins abolished the successor to the Australian Universities Commission, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission - a move seen by its former Chair and ANU Vice-Chancellor (1982-1987), the late Professor Peter Karmel, as removing an essential protective buffer against political interference by government in the affairs of the universities.⁵⁵ In 1990, reflective of Bob Bessant's point about increasing "top-down corporate management", retiring Sydney University Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Ward, reflected on the rapidly developing changes in Australian universities and the nature and role of the Vice-Chancellor: *"... the office of Vice-Chancellor ... has changed fundamentally ... I refer not only to the University's immense growth in numbers of students that has unfortunately been matched only meagrely in numbers of staff, but also the changed role of the Vice-Chancellor both within the university and outside"*.⁵⁶

In 1990, with an increasing sense of the impact of challenge and change in the university sector on the place and role of university colleges and halls, the retiring Master of Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University, Dr Paul Barnett⁵⁷, commented on what he saw as a movement in the wider university sphere away from government-supported colleges towards university housing for its students: *" ... despite the trend, I think there is a case for accommodating about 200 students in a collegiate environment. It provides academic and social advantages. Students often need personal and emotional support. We assume that all is well with students. They have the bloom of youth, fitness, self-sufficiency ... but behind the outward appearances, students are often in great need ... a college of 200 students is a manageable social unit, where difficulties can be identified and help can be given. There are people with good connections with the staff available for counselling."*⁵⁸

Part of the business of learning:

With change foreseen over the coming decades in the development of Australian universities and of their colleges and halls, Dr Davis McCaughey, then retiring Master of Ormond College, University of Melbourne, and a founder of La Trobe University and later Governor of Victoria (1986-1992), was invited to address the Association of Heads (AHAUCHI, later UCA)

⁵³ <https://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/dissent/documents/sau/sau04.pdf>

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 1 & 11

⁵⁵ Hannah Forsyth *A History of the Modern Australian University* NewSouth Publishing, UNSW Sydney, Australia, 2014, p.119

⁵⁶ *Ibid* p.122. Professor Ward, his wife and daughter, were killed in a tragic train accident north of Sydney just some 3 months after his retirement.

⁵⁷ Dr Barnett had been appointed Bishop of North Sydney in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney

⁵⁸ Macquarie University News, June 1990, p.16

conference in 1979 on the topic of 'The Place of the University Collegiate Residence and its Role in Society 1980-2000'. He noted that *"it is difficult to see that the College has a function greatly different from the University of which it is a part ... it is the function of the College as far as possible to reflect the true and full life of the University."* In a rather prophetic way, as universities and residences confronted their reason for being as well as what would sustain their roles, Davis McCaughey saw both the imperative to adapt to the changing needs of society while at the same time preserving the intellectual pursuits of learning and the interplay of teacher and student, "master and pupil". So, (residential) colleges *"are part of the academic enterprise which is the University ... they have a part in the business of learning."* To be the best possible university residence *"... it will take responsibility to provide conditions in which some senior members of the University can pursue the academic life, and it will take responsibility to help its student members to fulfil their academic ambitions and the ambitions which the University has for them. The view taken sometimes of a College as simply an aspect of student housing neglects both these points."*⁵⁹ Fundamental to the university enterprise and to its business, including the 'business' of residence, is the collegial pursuit of learning.

In their book *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Simon Marginson and Mark Considine note the *"entrepreneurial spirit"* that began *"sweeping the cloisters"* at the turn of the century: *"we live in an age of business and it is plain to everyone that the money-changers have long since mortgaged the temple."*⁶⁰ They go on to describe the emergence of the 'Enterprise University' as marked by such things as *"university missions and governing bodies start to take on a distinctly corporate character ... marketing mediates much of the relationship with the world outside, and performance targets are superimposed on scholarly honorifics; ... the education of international students ... driven by a frankly commercial and entrepreneurial spirit, now a key (though by no means always dominant) element of the enterprise culture."*⁶¹ A later Master of Ormond College (1994-2008), Professor Hugh Collins, noted in his AHAUCHI Presidential Address in 2004: *"Fully grasped, the pressures to redefine our Colleges and Halls of Residence as solely accommodation services rather than as educational communities are a microcosm of the larger forces seeking to turn our public universities into corporatized, commercially-driven enterprises. Hence the importance of our resistance to such pressures, since our resistance will not be unimportant to the larger struggle in defence of academic freedom in Australia."*⁶²

⁵⁹ J. Davis McCaughey, Conference of Heads of Colleges & Halls Association, University of Queensland, August 1979. Dr McCaughey was part of a move to establish a 'college system' at La Trobe in which all staff and students (resident and non-resident) were part of one of the residential college communities; at a time of student disaffection with more traditional arrangements as well as a desire to establish a Union as the centre of student life, and with staff opposition, the scheme was abandoned. Dr McCaughey reflected his disappointment with this in my meeting with him in Melbourne, 9 July 1998

⁶⁰ Simon Marginson & Mark Considine *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 2000, p.2. Simon Marginson was then Professor in Higher Education at Monash University, and Mark Considine was an Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Melbourne.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.4

⁶² New Zealand Association of Tertiary Education Accommodation Professionals (NZTEAP) Conference in association with AHAUCHI (now UCA), University of Otago, Dunedin NZ, 2004.

The “pressures” of re-definition are very real, inescapable and increasing. Corporatised and centralised administration in our universities, with top-down hierarchies and a plethora of visions and missions, committees and KPIs, albeit with some rhetoric nod to collegiality, are part and parcel of our universities today. A reality viewed by some as ‘Whackademia’.⁶³ Perhaps indicative of how the form of “resistance to such pressures” should be interpreted and take place are words by another former President of AHAUCHI, Dr Edwina Ridgway, in an address to the following year’s Conference at the University of Sydney: “*Our original ‘blue print’ of what is a College and what services do we provide as a standard has long since blown out the door. We have changed to meet the needs of our ‘clients’ and to some extent their parents also. Whether we like it or not we have had to become more commercial entities for survival yet I am sure that most, if not all of us, work extensively to ensure that we provide all the value added experiences for our residents.*”⁶⁴ As we need to do, Edwina Ridgway acknowledged that the changed and changing nature of our universities over recent decades and into the twenty-first century, with a much more commercial focus on the provision and management of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), requires not only a re-affirmation of the value that collegiate residence adds to the university student experience and, indeed, to the university itself, but also some re-thinking about how the value of the collegiate residential experience can be demonstrated and promoted not just within existing collegiate residences but also to and within other university managed, university partnered and even sole commercial residential operations.

Why do university collegiate residences still matter?

First and foremost a provider of education:

The ‘Savills World Student Housing Report 2017-2018’ notes that students want more communal spaces and “*on-site social spaces, gyms and entertainment spaces*” in their accommodation. Study spaces away from the bedroom, being on or closer to campus, and higher quality amenities are also noted.⁶⁵ These, of course, very much relate to the location, nature and quality of the residential building, though they reflect in part the desire of students to be able to come together especially for social and recreational purposes. While students will be attracted by new accommodation and are perhaps not as willing now to pay for much more dated facilities, a student panel conducted at the 2016 Collegiate Way International Conference in Canberra on ‘What makes a good college?’ focused more on the nature and quality of community than on the building and its amenities, with things such as academic support, pastoral care, student leadership opportunities, positive traditions, being known by the staff/administration and staff-student interaction listed as important.

In noting qualities of “*the great universities of the world*”, Dr Don Markwell has commented that their students generally “*come together in a residential college community*” with the

⁶³ Richard Gil *Whackademia: An insider’s account of the troubled university* NewSouth Publishing, UNSW Sydney 2012. ‘The Conversation’ published an article in February 2016 by Dr Inger Mewburn (ANU) titled: ‘What’s up with universities – Whackademia or just grumpy old academics?’!

⁶⁴ Edwina Ridgway OAM, Paper delivered at AHAUCHI Conference, University of Sydney, 28 September 2005. Edwina Ridgway has just retired as Head of Duval College, UNE, after 44 years of headship of UNE Colleges.

⁶⁵ http://www.savills.com.au/blog/article/157022/australia-articles/what-students-want.aspx?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=whatstudentswant21nov

benefits and advantages of “*individual mentoring or advising from senior academics ... a sense of engagement in a rich intellectual and public debate outside the classroom, strong attention to student welfare and pastoral care, and concern for the development of character and values ... helped by the strong sense of cohort – of belonging ...*”⁶⁶ He has further noted that “*when I speak of a university residential college, I mean to speak, not of a building or set of buildings, but of a community – a group of people, not merely a physical facility. Quite simply, for me a residential college is a residential academic community, ideally a community bringing together students of diverse backgrounds and disciplines in close contact both with each other and with more senior scholars and teachers, also of diverse disciplines, and others who work to ensure that the college is a rich learning environment for its students. In many instances, a residential college will embrace in its community students as well as faculty and staff who are not actually resident in the College ... if it is genuinely a college and not simply a boarding house, (it) should be regarded as first and foremost a provider of education ... rather than as simply a provider of accommodation.*”⁶⁷

In the Australian context, ‘college’ is much more than a student boarding house, hostel, dorm or, indeed, ‘accommodation’ – purpose built or otherwise. Collegiate residence represents more than meeting a demand for ‘beds’, as much as such demand can be a reality. They are places of real belonging; communities of connection, commitment and care that support intellectual and social development.⁶⁸ Scholarly communities, where “*students’ sense of belonging and of community is in stark contrast with the lack of attachment to, or even alienation from, large and impersonal institutions*”.⁶⁹ Collegiate residence complements and contributes back to the university and beyond; it is essentially an educational and relational experience more than a commercial transaction; and more than transaction, it is not only transitional in its nurture and leading, and transnational in its diversity and life-long networks, but also transformational in its enhancement of the best possible university experience.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Professor Don Markwell *Issues in global higher education* Speech at a seminar on ‘The Future of Universities’, St John’s College, University of Queensland, 19 August 2006. Don Markwell was then Warden of Trinity College, Melbourne; later DVC (Education) UWA and Warden of Rhodes House, Oxford; he is Head-elect of St Paul’s College, University of Sydney.

⁶⁷ Dr Donald Markwell *The value of university residential colleges* The Ashley Lecture 2010

http://www.menziesrc.org/images/About_Us/Selected-Speeches/The_value_of_university_residential_colleges_-_Trent_February_2010_final.pdf ; also in Donald

Markwell *Instincts to Lead: on leadership, peace and education* Connor Court Publishing, Ballarat VIC, 2013 pp 314-335

⁶⁸ Jennifer Gross, in Fiona Crowe (President) *Recognition and Support for Residential Colleges in the Australian Higher Education Sector* Association of Heads of Australian University Colleges and Halls Incorporated (AHAUCHI), December 2008

⁶⁹ Damian Powell *A Case for the Value of Residence in Australian University Education* Trinity Papers Number 1, Trinity College, University of Melbourne https://universitycollegesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Powell_Trinity-Paper.pdf

⁷⁰ Dr Rufus Black *op.cit.* speaks of this in his Sesquicentenary Lecture for St Andrew’s College, Sydney University

Loneliness and Belonging:

Hamish Coates, Paula Kelly and Ryan Naylor in their report *New Perspectives on the Student Experience*⁷¹ emphasise the importance to student success of connection and belonging, which *“signals the absence of alienation whereby people feel detached or even lonely in a crowd.”* Personal and social loneliness has been noted as a particular issue for international students, though the need to belong, to engage and to be known is common across the range of students coming from the familiarity of family and friends to live as a domestic or international student at or close to the unfamiliar and challenging environment of a university. This can be marked by *“a profound sense of loss and isolation, as well as anxiety, confusion, and disappointed expectations.”*⁷²

In his speech to the 2017 Conference of the Council of International Students Australia (CISA), the Federal Minister for Education, Mr Simon Birmingham, said that *“we need to focus on those issues that you, your peers, have raised as the types of things that as a nation we could be doing better ... better engagement with the Australian community ... access to quality accommodation and student support ... finding safe and affordable accommodation and having a genuine international study experience through getting to know both Australian students and students from other countries who choose to come here.”* These words reflected concern for the importance of community connection and personal wellbeing, with the Minister hoping that international students will *“become Australian ambassadors abroad”*, and acknowledging *“the old saying that someone who has a good experience will tell their friends, but someone who has a bad experience will tell everybody.”*⁷³ International students living in poor quality dwellings with little or no support will certainly not create *“Australian ambassadors abroad”*; nor will international students living in crowded isolation in well-managed high quality purpose built buildings, but without the leadership and care that promotes intellectual, cross-cultural and social engagement, friendship, and a full sense of belonging.

At the 2016 Collegiate Way International Conference Dinner in Canberra, the Chancellor of the Australian National University and former Australian Foreign Minister, Professor the Hon Gareth Evans, noted the particular role that good university residential colleges can play, and *“do instinctively”*, in *“inculcating the kinds of values, and encouraging experiences, which encourage civility in discourse, participation in direct and representative governing and policymaking processes, and developing a sense of membership of a larger community.”* He emphasised the importance to focus on *global citizenship*, and, *“very much within the remit of university (residential) colleges to try to deliver”*, to *“ensure that domestic students share their study and social time with the international students living among them”*, and in so doing *“make lasting, wonderful and productive friendships, and be better equipped, emotionally as*

⁷¹http://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1862228/New-Perspectives-on-the-Student-Experience_240316_updated.pdf

⁷²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249632072_Loneliness_and_International_Students_An_Australian_Study

⁷³<https://www.senatorbirmingham.com.au/speech-to-council-of-international-students-australia-conference/>

*well as intellectually, to live in the world of the 21st century.*⁷⁴ With particular reference to students from China, UNSW Chancellor David Gonski and Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Jacobs, have written that most Chinese students *“return to China to pursue their careers with an understanding of Australian culture and society, along with a fondness for the university they attended in our country ... We should emphasise the duty of care Australian universities have for every one of their students, including international students ... (we are) committed to providing them with a safe, high-quality and fulfilling experience ... and to facilitate their positive interactions with students from Australia and elsewhere.”*⁷⁵ “Good” universities and “good” residential colleges will continue to nurture such “fondness” as places of global engagement, learning and friendship; diverse, scholarly communities with inspirational leadership over and above efficient management – collegiate communities that are very much home as well as hall. There are both reputational and funding risks for universities if this is not the case.

Home and lifelong friends:

I made visits to universities and colleges in the United States, England and Singapore in 2004 and 2007⁷⁶, including each time to Princeton University. My meeting at Princeton in 2004 with the Dean of the College, Professor Nancy Malkiel⁷⁷, and visits to the then five colleges that had been formed in the early 1980s from the old dormitories and dining halls. The Colleges – Butler, Forbes, Mathey, Rockefeller, and Wilson – catered for all freshmen and sophomore undergraduates (the first two years), with academic leadership and a strong focus on pastoral care. When I returned in October 2007, a new College had just opened – Whitman College (named after its donor, former eBay CEO Meg Whitman) – as a four year college, along with Butler and Mathey. Each four year college was paired with one of the other colleges whose residents could then choose to move into a four year residential program. Further, all undergraduate students who did not live in a College were linked to a College for non-departmental academic advising and pastoral support. All first year Princeton students take part in the ‘Freshmen Seminars’ program conducted in the Colleges - a range of special interest small group seminars led by faculty members and counting as regular courses in the undergraduate program. The ‘fold’ of scholarly collegiate community was reinforced as a mark of Princeton life.

In 2016, a Task Force was established to review the residential colleges system, with the University committed to providing a *“vibrant residential experience that advances learning,*

⁷⁴ Dinner address by Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC QC to Collegiate Way International/ University Colleges Australia Conference, Old Parliament House, Canberra, 16 November 2016

⁷⁵ David Gonski and Ian Jacobs *Educational Ties Building Bridges to Asia’s 21st-Century Superpowers* ‘The Australian’, Friday, December 1, 2017, p.14

⁷⁶ From 14-18 October 2007, I attended the ACUHO-I Living –Learning Programs Conference, St Louis, Missouri. It was noted at one of the sessions that “monster-sized” residences were “stupid” for developing communities and encouraging peer support and academic/faculty interaction.

⁷⁷ Nancy Weiss Malkiel is an Emeritus Professor of History at Princeton and was Dean of the (Undergraduate) College from 1987 to 2011; from 1982 to 1986 she was Master of Dean Mathey College. Professor Malkiel was generous with her time on both my visits and was clearly a driving force in developing the collegiate life of the Colleges. Her most recent publication *“Keep the Damned Women Out”: The Struggle for Coeducation* traces decisions for coeducation in elite USA and UK institutions 1969-1974.

enables interaction and meaningful engagement, and support both personal and community development." The Task Force aimed to ensure that *"the residential colleges truly feel like home to our students"* where the students would feel *"welcome and accepted"* and *"learn from their diverse experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds, and challenge and inspire one another."* A key emphasis was on developing a sense of community and a sense of belonging, with the residential college providing as best as possible a *"sense of home"*. Among strong strategic priorities, the Task Force recommended that the size of colleges be capped at approximately 500 students in residence; that all students *"have the option to reside in their originally assigned college throughout their undergraduate experience"* (i.e. all colleges be 4 year colleges with junior and senior residents) and that the *"colleges are students' homes from the moment they come to campus"*; and that, as far as possible, each college should have a Head's Residence in or in close proximity to the College, allowing for the appropriate further collegial engagement of Fellows, faculty and students.⁷⁸

With a new campus development at the National University of Singapore, known as *UTown*, Tembusu College opened in 2011 as part of a cluster of residential, research and recreational facilities. Albeit with some five hundred students residing in tower block accommodation, the College provides a full range of academic and support services that include Resident and Non-Resident Academic Fellows, Master's and Fellows' Teas, student leadership programs, and the integration of a two-year University five-module program conducted in the College taken by first and second year residents as part of their degree requirements. As well as a 'Master' of the College⁷⁹, a 'Rector' is appointed to be a link with the wider Singapore community. The current Rector, Professor Tommy Koh⁸⁰, initiated and moderates a twice Semester 'Tembusu Forum', with topics on a range of local and global issues such as 'Are Human Rights Truly Universal', 'Has Singapore become a Market Society', and 'The Rise of Populism'. A key mark of the Tembusu and UTown collegiate system is the development of a deep sense of belonging, with Tembusu promoting its community as not just a home, but a "home of possibilities".⁸¹

These international collegiate developments are just two examples that affirm the value to students, as well as to the whole university, of residences that promote the fullest possible sense of belonging, 'family' and home through the living and learning engagement of faculty, staff and students, and through their provision of academic and personal support and care. Of course, there are cost and funding implications in these and other collegiate ventures, with philanthropy, government support and commercial investment playing their part. However, the provision of accommodation with little commitment to and investment in appropriate staffing, academic and personal support and care, and opportunity for intellectual, social and

⁷⁸ <http://www.princeton.edu/strategicplan/files/Task-Force-Report-on-the-Residential-College-Model.pdf>

⁷⁹ Currently Associate Professor Greg Clancey

⁸⁰ Singapore Ambassador-at-Large and former Ambassador to the United Nations

⁸¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8MSkhUMGSjLRmVMdXYzTkpnQ1E/view> In 2012 I initiated an exchange between Tembusu College and Ursula Hall at ANU that saw Ursula Community Coordinator and resident representatives take part in the Tembusu orientation program in 2013/14, and Tembusu Fellows attend mid-year inter-Hall and Ursula Hall Senior Resident training at ANU in 2014.

cultural engagement can be of more significant risk and of greater cost, especially to the overall student experience and to the university's reputation.

At the opening of the Donaldson Building at St John's College, University of Queensland, the then Commonwealth Minister for Education and now Foreign Minister, the Honourable Julie Bishop, noted that colleges *"bring great benefits to their universities, providing much of their colour and cultural engagement ... (they provide) the college's students with the opportunity to make lifelong friends and to develop a crucial set of mentors who will be able to guide them through life."* In opening the new building, the then Governor of Queensland and former Principal of the Women's College, Sydney University, Ms (now Dame) Quentin Bryce, referred to the words of Archbishop St. Clair Donaldson in his support for the foundation of St John's College: *"The residential life adds immeasurably to the value of a university education. The intensity of intellectual stimulation, the social and cultural enrichment, the deep sense of belonging, and the formation of lifelong friendships, are an irreplaceable experience."*⁸²

Creative Collegiality:

In the more than ten years since the opening of the Donaldson Building, commercial partnerships with universities and separate commercial investment and development in Australian student accommodation have grown significantly. Particularly in the major capital cities, such as Melbourne and Sydney, continuing strong growth is expected, with the total number of purpose built 100 plus bed places nationally likely to exceed one hundred thousand by 2020.⁸³ The proportion of independent affiliated and university managed collegiate residences is getting smaller in relation to the overall provision of student accommodation in what is increasingly being referred to as the student accommodation 'industry'.⁸⁴ There is, however, growing concern and acknowledgement that the developers and operators of new student residences will need to increase their focus on matters of *"engagement with the host university, social infrastructure, pastoral and academic support, and other value added services."*⁸⁵

The challenges faced in affirming the value of collegiate residence – of demonstrating that Australian collegiate residences still matter – relate very much to the wider challenges and changes in attitude to and function of the universities themselves. Professor Glyn Davis, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, has described the *"rising tide of hostility towards universities"* as rather analogous to the attack on and dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII: *"Like the Tudor monasteries, today's universities pledge allegiance to more than local concerns. They speak to a global scholarly audience with values that frustrate government – all those papers in obscure academic journals; all that intellectual property*

⁸²http://stjohnscollegefoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/The_Johnian_Vol_10_Number_2_2006-8.pdf

Dame Quentin Bryce was later Governor-General of Australia, 2008-2014

⁸³ *National Census 2014* p.12

⁸⁴ Symbolic of the growing dominance of commercial partnerships that are essentially unfamiliar with collegiate residences as places of education and part of the university sector.

⁸⁵ *National Census 2014* p.58

locked up in institutions that could instead be providing quick economic returns to the taxpayer.”⁸⁶ So we see, of course, current attacks on the universities as being out of touch or not sufficiently focused on attrition rates and vocational outcomes in their courses – such as comments by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, that “it’s clear some of our universities need to take a close look at their efforts and do more to support the students they enrol with significant taxpayer subsidies.”⁸⁷ Cost imperatives; the digital age of more and more on-line programs; commercial research and courses for employability. As Professor Davis noted, the age of steam and rail changed the economy and character of the university towns, “if you stand in the way, like the dons of Oxford, the future just runs you over.”⁸⁸ Despite popular sentiment, however, Professor Davis argues that students have stayed, with the universities inventively adapting to change without necessarily sacrificing their true worth and value of offering more than qualifications.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he argues, what is necessary is a greater demonstration of engagement through “creative meaningful links between a university and its many constituencies, and communicating the fact that this is what we do.”⁹⁰ We need to move away from an “insularity, so easily read as arrogance” and a focus “on a closed, interior existence.”⁹¹ A message that is very applicable to our collegiate residences, albeit that such positive engagement can so easily be obscured in the maelstrom of media focus on negative issues that need to be addressed. Residential colleges and halls will need to think and re-imagine creatively, just as Glyn Davis has done, and does in his latest publication ‘The Australian Idea of a University’.⁹²

The Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University, Nobel Laureate Professor Brian Schmidt, has also commented on the need for greater collaboration and collegiality within and across universities, and to “meaningful engagement” with alumni and other friends of the University. With particular reference to ANU, he notes that it “needs to work as a giant family. Collegiality, which was at the heart of ANU when it was formed, we need to make sure we don’t lose that.”⁹³ We indeed need to make sure that collegiality is a hallmark of university residential life and that we do not lose in our residences what truly makes a sense of family and belonging, and the best possible building of continuing alumni engagement.

Forming the whole person:

In his address to mark the sesquicentenary of St Andrew’s College at Sydney University, Dr Rufus Black, reflected on those “creative meaningful links” and engagement, and spoke of colleges as “intentional academic communities ... place based institutions (that) believe that

⁸⁶ Professor Glyn Davis AC *An irredeemable time? The rising tide of hostility towards universities* UPP Foundation, London, 19 October 2017, p.5 <http://upp-foundation.org/professor-glyn-davis-full-speech-irredeemable-time-rising-tide-hostility-toward-universities/>

⁸⁷ ‘The Canberra Times’, Wednesday November 29 2017, p.10

⁸⁸ Glyn Davis *op.cit.* p.8

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p.10

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p.9

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p.11

⁹² *Op. cit.* refer to page 6 of this paper.

⁹³ <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/anu-reveals-new-strategic-direction-in-major-announcement-20170209-gu8y0f.html>

*coming together in a physical place is essential to creating the depth of relationships and trust that constitutes a college community.*⁹⁴ Residential colleges offer more than a “*transactional bargain*” and more than just “*engagement*”, but the opportunity for students to “*become skilful in ideas-centred interpersonal interactions, engage in team-based problem solving, harness diversity and build networks.*”⁹⁵ He spoke of the challenges of leadership of collegiate residential communities, noting that “*it requires a very different form of leadership (that) is at once a task of politics, pedagogy, and pastoral care. It is around the clock and semester long.*” A “*rich collegiate environment*” involves “*peer-to-peer learning*” and it is about “*forming the whole person.*”⁹⁶ Links, partnerships and collaborations with research institutes and faculties, as well as with on-line programs, can promote the residence as a living and learning community that fosters team based problem solving and exposure to an enriched liberal arts and sciences education.

While recognising their growth in the student accommodation market and their provision of “*a bed and a desk close to campus*”, Dr Black commented that he believed that such scholarly activity and development could not occur through commercially provided student accommodation which “*at worst ... create soulless ghettos for students of similar circumstances or ethnicities with little cultural exposure to Australia, a thin experience of community and inadequate support in times of need.*” While understanding the business model challenges, he urged that, whether provided by the universities or by private providers, new accommodation should at least come “*with sufficient common space for community and learning so that these places could evolve into more collegiate type communities even if that isn’t how they begin.*”⁹⁷

With the increasing demand for student accommodation and especially from overseas students; with the reputational risk of student isolation, loneliness and lack of support; with the undoubted enrichment of the student experience from cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural engagement; with the need for safety and care as well as the opportunities for intellectual and leadership development; with the proven strength of alumni commitment back to the university through a range of philanthropic support as a result of a positive collegiate residential experience; and with the making of lasting friendships across the globe, our universities must think and act strategically in terms of the kinds of communities in which their students should reside. Collegiate/ college-style residences, as scholarly communities of faculty, staff and student living and learning engagement, not only still matter, they matter even more. As places of belonging and being known, they are home and family; places of support and security while away from the family, friendships and familiarity of home towns and countries.

There will, of course, be need for change and cultural renewal, as evidenced by the recent survey and report into sexual assault and harassment in residences and on campus. In many ways, this will require, as former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Elizabeth

⁹⁴ Rufus Black *op.cit.* p.9

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p.8

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p.11

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.14

Broderick, notes in her report on the Sydney University colleges, strong and courageous staff and student leadership, working together.⁹⁸ While focusing on the critical areas that require strengthening, change and renewal, the Report also concluded that *“the Project Team heard much about the strengths of College life, the lifelong friendships formed, the rich and diverse extra and co-curricular activities on offer, and the strong academic support. In particular, the Project Team noted the feelings of belonging engendered in students from each College.”*⁹⁹

‘The republic of the mind’:

There needs to be encouragement of research and thought into the kind of leadership required for collegiate residential communities of the future – strategic, scholarly, visionary, caring and courageous, creative and relational headship; leaders in an educational profession that is more than mere management and function. Decidedly more than real estate and accommodation management. Leaders who engage intellectually; who belong, who know and are known. As the convenors of the first Collegiate Way International Conference, Martyn Evans and Tim Burt, write: *“T. S. Eliot once said that ‘We read many books because we cannot meet enough people’. In collegiate life we certainly read, but we do more than read – we can actually meet and converse with exponents of almost every form of scholarly interest in the wider world, ambassadors for every province in the republic of the mind.”*¹⁰⁰

Glyn Davis’ “creative meaningful links” could well be fostered and developed between collegiate and commercial operations; collaborative links explored that enable the sharing of ideas and resources in the interests of providing choice, but with the most appropriate care and support for and the overall wellbeing of all students in university residences.¹⁰¹

There needs to be in our universities committees of advice and reference that represent the cross-section of stakeholders in student residence, including the affiliated colleges; that promote not only standards of buildings and facilities, but (at least minimum) standards of supervision, care and community, and of aspects of collegiate residence that could be included in any residential development that seeks the stamp of university approval and/or association. Such committees could also take account of the issues of affordability and consider ways of addressing such need as well as the need for connection, care and support.¹⁰²

Older, more ‘traditional’ colleges and halls, while changing and adapting, can still be benchmarks of the best possible collegiate life. Faith-based affiliated communities can

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Broderick & Co, *Cultural Renewal at the University of Sydney Residential Colleges* Sydney NSW November 2017, p.64 <https://sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/news-opinions/Overarching%20Report%202017.pdf>

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p.61

¹⁰⁰ H. M. Evans & T. P. Burt (Eds) *op.cit.* p.77

¹⁰¹ E.g. there is a current partnership between the ANU and ‘UniLodge’ in the management and pastoral supervision of students living in the ‘SAS’ building – at this stage, an interim arrangement during the rebuilding of Bruce Hall; the ‘Greater Curtin Stage One’ project proposes to include a residential college, with links/support relationships with the other residential halls (and possibly with other WA university colleges). Combined/collaborative on-line/module and face-to-face leadership training (such as at ANU) can also develop.

¹⁰² Reports and articles highlight the very real issues of accommodation affordability, such as *ACT university students struggle with rents* ‘The Canberra Times’, Wednesday November 29, 2017, pp. 1 & 2

continue to have an important role in the engagement on our campuses of religion and society, the sacred and the secular.¹⁰³

'Such Friends':

Australian university collegiate residences still matter, and matter even more. The coming together in a community of scholars, with a sense of home and belonging; the sharing of meals¹⁰⁴ as members of a 'family' that embraces diversity of gender, cultures and disciplines; the opportunities for leadership, mentoring, intellectual engagement and service to the campus and wider community; spaces for special celebrations, discussion, study and informal gatherings; the building of character; the personal and professional networks and partnerships; and lifelong friends.

In his book *A Large and Liberal Education*, Don Markwell refers to Sir James Darling, a former Headmaster of Geelong Grammar School and Chairman of the ABC. Reflecting on his time at Oriel College, Oxford, James Darling wrote: *"And finally there are the friends one made, who are unlike the friends one makes at any other time ... friends came together from a real community of intellectual and spiritual interests ..."*¹⁰⁵ Lifelong friends.

At the conclusion of his address to the Association of Heads Conference at the University of Queensland in 1979, Davis McCaughey quoted from William Butler Yeats' poem *The Municipal Gallery Revisited*. With clear affirmation of what could be seen as the most significant reward of collegiate residential life – whatever else is gained and achieved.

Yeats reflects:

"You that would judge me, do not judge alone this book or that. Come to this place where my friends' portraits hang and look thereon; Ireland's history in their lineaments trace;

*Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had **such friends.**"*

¹⁰³ E.g. The Centre for Christian Apologetics, Scholarship & Education (CASE), New College UNSW; the Trinity College Theological School, Melbourne.

¹⁰⁴ Dining Halls are not always possible, but there can be a variety of ways that residents come together over a meal

¹⁰⁵ Donald Markwell 'The fellowship of friends: Sir James Darling and the college ideal' (The second James Darling Memorial oration, 17 September 1998) in *A large and liberal education: higher education for the 21st century* Australian Scholarly Publishing & Trinity College, University of Melbourne, North Melbourne VIC, 2007, p.115